

Brüggen Is Strictly German Despite The French

Brüggen on the River Schwalm in [North Rhine-Westphalia](#) sits very close to the border of the Netherlands. The town's *Schwalmforte* is the former town gate for those arriving from Spain, the Netherlands, and all points east.

The centuries old town was once occupied by the French in the early 19th century who went on to sell Brüggen's 13th century castle right out from under them (it remains to this very day in private hands). Since the 1970's the castle has housed the regional hunting and natural history museum. There are also many art exhibits held in its Cultural Hall and is the center for tourist information.

Those cheeky French in 1802 even went on to abolish the monastery that had made Brüggen its home since 1479 (it's now the place of Brüggen's Town Hall).

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At least the French didn't sell the *Borner See*. Not a natural lake, but man made since it was formed by all the peat digging from the 16th through 18th centuries. Today it's a popular recreation spot for families, both local and visitor.

Brüggen's sightseeing isn't limited to only the castle museum or one of the three medieval churches (but they are definitely worth a visit!).

The Parish Church Saint Peter and the Catholic Church Maria Himmelfahrt were built in 1136 and 1166 respectively. The Parish Church Nickolaus was built in 1479 but a fire caused it to be rebuilt in the 1750's in the popular ornate Baroque style of the time.

After all that religious stuff head over to the *Borner Mühle* — once a grain and oil mill from around

1412, it's now a popular restaurant and hotel since 1960.

On top of the historical sights, Brüggen boasts "Sales Sundays" from March to October on the Monastery Route (pedestrian district) for some great shopping (and eating!).

And, Brüggen's Nature and Wildlife Park is quite popular for kids of all ages.

Take that, France! ;-)