

Coesfeld Is A Picturesque Location Off The Beaten Path

Settling in to Coesfeld, you can't help but feel the worries of the world slipping away. The pealing of the church bells from St. Lamberti tower echoes through the nearby forest and up over the mountains. As the oldest full peal bell set in all of [North Rhine-Westphalia](#), these bells have been tolling for more than 500 years.

Cast in Belgium, some of the bells weigh more than two tons!

The bells aren't the only long standing tradition Coesfeld has kept alive over the years. Yet it hasn't always been easy. The town was a major staging ground in the 30 Years War, an Anabaptist stronghold, and an Allied target in [WWII](#).

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Even if you aren't a history buff, the traditional structures so carefully preserved by the locals are impressive. Everywhere you turn, there are picture perfect gems just waiting for you to capture on camera.

You can start by getting the sunrise over nearby Coesfelder mountain. Pick up the round towers of Castle Valgar and the square ones at the Benedictine Abbey Gerleve. Nazi's stormed both in the war and used them as temporary camps, imprisoning locals who complained about their presence.

As you walk back through the center of Coesfeld, the large Market Cross in the town square marks their protest. Put up in 1472, the Nazi's knocked it down for scrap metal, but the locals promptly put it right back up!

However, all the bombing and destruction during the war was not without some benefit. Wider

roads and trails make it easy to cover all of this town on bicycle. In the summer the bike traffic is heavier than the regular traffic. One popular ride to make is out to the birthplace of local mystic Anna Katharina Emmerick.

A highly religious town with many churches and abbeys, Coesfeld's unofficial pilgrimage site got official recognition in 2004. Anna Katharina Emmerick was beatified, so pilgrims now hike or bike to her house and the St. Jakobi church where she was baptized. Her own house from the 1800's is completely preserved, and the way her family lived and farmed is continued in the surrounding fields and farms.

The traditional ways make for amazing meals — the locally raised meat and produce make dinners truly memorable for gourmands and chow hounds alike.