

Ellrich -- WWII Memorials On The Harz Mountains

If you were to read an encyclopedia story on places like the [Thuringian](#) town of Ellrich, you'd learn things about its geography (how it's near the town of [Nordhausen](#) and that it borders [Lower Saxony](#)); about how it's only about 69 square kilometers; and that it has a population of around 5,600 people.

What gets lost is its human connection. Isn't it the people who've lived and died here that make the town?

Yeah, I think so too. I will be honest, not all of Ellrich's history is pretty; but that doesn't change that the fact that places like its Hospital Church (built in 1506) was used as a Parish Church long before it became a modern day concert and events venue.

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It's nice to know that the Church of St. Viti offers services in a stunning Baroque church once a month, right? Wouldn't it be interesting to hear how the tiny 8th century St. Mary Church on the Frauenberg was once used to house horses — and better yet, why?

And yes, an encyclopedia story might tell you about the memorial site over at the *Juliushütte*, but not explaining that it sits on the very spot of a crematorium of a World War II Concentration Camp (a subcamp of Buchenwald). And how its 8,000 prisoners were shipped off to Bergen-Belsen on a Death March on the last days of the war.

A good bit of Ellrich's history can be learned at the Museum Ellrich, which breaks its exhibits into grouping like nature; crafts; and early history. Even better the museum is housed in a charming half-timbered building.

Ellrich's countryside (it's right on the edge of the [Harz Mountains](#)) is also as varied as its history. One of its biggest outdoor attractions is the *Waldbad*, an outdoor swimming area (the season opens in May) that's got a real fun waterslide for the kids, or you, if you got the nerve.

Anyone wanting to stay dry might prefer to take one of the marked hiking trails instead. The Sulzberg route is probably one of the shortest for anyone not all into the whole walking thing.

So you see, whether you live here, or you're just visiting, are the ones who truly make towns like Ellrich what it is — and you won't find that on any encyclopedia page, will you?