

Esterwegen -- A History Lesson And Beyond

Belonging to the Samtgemeinde Nordhümmling, the town of Esterwegen these days are quite different from what you would have found during the turbulent years of the 1930s. And while many of these pages of [German towns](#) are supposed to be about all its wonderful things to see & do, and not a history lesson, sometimes they're one in the same.

For a dozen years, Esterwegen was the location of a notorious concentration camp, housing a number of political prisoners. One such prisoner being Carl von Ossietzky, a handsome man whose only crime was to "expose" Germany's re-armament.

During Hitler's Germany, this was a treasonous offense, but eventually earning Mr. von Ossietzky a Nobel Prize.

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Think of him as you walk along the former road leading up to where the camp stood — and now where a memorial stands in his (and so many others) honor. The natural greenery where the old barracks stood is a wonderful way to bring beauty and peace to the horror of what was once here.

Now that I think about it, there are many areas in (and around) Esterwegen that invoke quiet reflection. The Franciscan Monastery's "room of speechlessness" in the chapel is but just one of them. I'd say the Leegmoor Nature Reserve is another, and also quite vital to many an endangered species.

As thought-provoking and historical as you'll find Esterwegen at this point, don't let it escape you that it's also quite lively. The Erikasee is great for all kinds of fun — great for swimming, campfires, miniature golfing, fishing, and even a BBQ.

Ha, I haven't even mentioned all the festivals yet, either. Ohhh, I'd never forgive myself for leaving one out — so let me double check everything...

Ok, so here's the goods on what Esterwegen has going on: May brings the *Frühlingsfest* (Spring Festival) and Maypole celebrations, June's the month for the Harbour Festival and Corpus Christi Processions, while September's when the combined *Kirmes*/Autumn Market take place, followed up by Reformation Day events in October, the *Winterfest* in November, and the *Nikolausmarkt* and Christmas Market in December.

While you might get a history lesson (or two) in Esterwegen, I sure hope you'll stay for everything else you'll find in this wonderful northern German town.