

Gelsenkirchen Is Modernized With Nature

A city that was once known as the city of a thousand fires was the most important coal-mining town in Europe in the 20th century. Gelsenkirchen has since invested itself into solar power, and contains Germany's biggest solar power plant.

During [WWII](#) it featured a women's subcamp of the Buchenwald concentration camp. There are still many above-ground air-raid shelters found throughout the city today.

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On February 1st in 2005, a Jewish synagogue opened replacing the one burnt down in the anti-Jewish riots of *Kristallnacht*. Attached to the synagogue is also a community center and meeting place. In fact during WWII almost three quarters of this city was destroyed.

It has since become home to the famous football club FC Schalke 04, of which Pope John Paul II became an honorary member. He had celebrated a Mass before 85,000 people in Gelsenkirchen's *Parkstadion* in 1987.

For nature lovers, there are many hiking and cycling trails to ensure your discovery of the culture and charm of the city. There is an Opera House, *Musiktheater im Revier* ("MiR"), for a great night out. Be sure to call ahead for times and availability. The MiR is at the end of the main shopping district, with the train station at the opposite end. This makes for a convenient trip from nearby towns.

If venturing through Gelsenkirchen by foot or bicycle you will be sure to find the Red Bridge. This double arched bridge provides the ability to cross the *Rhein-Herne-Kanal*. The bridge can be found in *Nordsternpark*. The lush landscape was designed for the 1997 National Garden Show. The

northern side of the canal features contemporary gardens and many attractions, but to the south the park is kept more obsolete and natural.