

Hattingen -- Winding Streets And Half-Timbered Houses

Historic Hattingen sits in a magnificent loop of the [Ruhr River](#) in [North Rhine-Westphalia](#) within its old town walls. Just as it has for centuries.

As part of the [Hanseatic League](#) of medieval traders, this was once a very important trading town, and the maze of winding streets in the town center are rich in that history.

Some of the huge number of half-timbered houses in town are barely five meters wide at their base — spreading out wider as they gain height. A great example in the *Altstadt* is the regularly photographed *Bügeleinsenhaus* at a fork in the road. This gravity-defying building has upper floors that are protruding nearly a meter further out into the street than its base!

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Wandering through the busy little streets can certainly while away several hours. Sitting down outside in one of the many cafes to rest gives you a chance to admire the local buildings. And if you haven't already, keep a look out for the old *Balkenköpfe* around you. These brightly colored "faces" are carved onto the exterior of some of the buildings.

To the northern edge of Hattingen, it's a completely different story: The great *Gewerbepark Henrichshütte* — a huge trade area named after one of the greatest industrial employers of the past two centuries.

After its collapse, the area is now growing as a center for tourism, with new ventures reusing the environment. Many of the old "works" have been brought up to date with light shows and industrial tours of the area. There are also some very peaceful walks to be had on this side of town.

Outside of Hattingen itself, you can find yet more history if you want to, with three castles dotted in the surrounding low hills. Castle Blankenstein (13th century) and House Kemnade (16th century) — which is moated — are great to explore set in their surroundings. Castle Isenburg is now just ruins, but situated on a prominent outcrop, it is certainly a place to admire the view from.