

## Hildesheim's Glory Has Been Recreated

Hildesheim, in the [Lower Saxony](#) area of Germany, is a city that has risen from the ashes of [World War II](#) to become a beautiful and historic place once again. It was founded around a monastery in 815 and has had a stormy history.

It was passed from the Kingdom of Hanover to the [Kingdom of Prussia](#) before finally becoming part of present-day Germany. The town fathers prided themselves on preserving the exquisite medieval architecture in the center of town until March 22, 1945. The city was heavily bombed by an Allied air raid that night and most of the historic town square was demolished.

When the war ended, many people in Hildesheim thought that speed of reconstruction was more important than beauty, and the town was hastily rebuilt using mostly utilitarian concrete structures. Care was taken to restore the town's many churches during the 1950's, however.

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By 1980 people began work to bring back some of the town square's original charm. Many of the unattractive buildings were removed and several new shops and houses were built as replicas of the original architectural style found there in days gone by.

By 2007 the decision had been made to rebuild a famous half-timbered house called the *Umgestülpter Zuckerhut* (upended sugarloaf). This unique building with its unusual shape should be completed by the time you're reading this.

Now there are several beautiful buildings in the center of the city that are worth seeing. After painstaking work during the last half of the 1980's, the Hildesheim Markt (market place) that was once considered one of the most beautiful in the world, has been almost fully rebuilt.

The *Knochenhaueramtshaus* or Butchers' Guild Hall was painstakingly recreated and now closely resembles its original glory. Its exterior surfaces are covered with bright murals and wise German proverbs. You can eat at a fine restaurant when visiting there, and see the city museum.

St Mary's Cathedral and St. Michael's Church are two more structures that have been lovingly restored since the bombing raids more than 60 years ago. St Mary's is known for its unique bronze doors and inspiring architecture. St. Michael's claim to fame is a 1,000-years old rose bush, said to be the world's oldest, which grows in its garden. Both houses of worship are listed as World Heritage Sites.

If you go to Hildesheim, be sure to spend some time walking down its narrow, twisting, residential streets. There are several hundred houses still in use that date back to the 1500's or even further! So be prepared when you meet a knight in armor or a wizard performing spells just around the next corner. (Don't say I haven't warned you! ;-)