

Itzehoe -- Ancient Castles, Free-Spirited Art, Heavy Metal

Itzehoe is the oldest city in the [Schleswig-Holstein](#) region of Germany. Its castle was founded all the way back in 809 by Egbert, a count of King Charlemagne. It has undergone several name changes (from Esseveldoburg to Eselsfleth and Ezeho).

It has also been destroyed and rebuilt at least three times over the centuries. The first time was in 1201 for unspecified reasons, but in twenty short years it was restored. Then during the [Thirty Years' War](#), the Swedes ransacked Itzehoe twice in 1644 and 1657.

But Itzehoe has risen again from the ashes and many historical buildings are still on display. The St Lawrence Church is one of the highlights of the town, dating back to the twelfth century. Other notable buildings include a convent from 1256, schools, and a hospital.

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A not-to-miss site is the Wenzel Hablik, which was established in 1995. Hablik was a pre-eminent German Expressionist painter, architect and craftsman from the early 1900s. The museum showcases his incredible art, and also his personal collections of different rocks, crystals and minerals.

Hablik was famous for saying “Your ideas should be as irresponsibly free as a bird... Let us create a fresh atmosphere, a pure aura of spirit, wit, and joy.” This is reflected in much of his work. His art depicts many imaginative and fantastic subjects, like flying cities and chasms made of crystal.

Itzehoe is a very cultural city that loves many different genres of music. It is best known for its “Metal Shuttle Bus” which transports visitors to the nearby Wacken Open Air festival. This festival is the premier event for head-bangers in Europe, and boasts over seventy bands during a three-

day period every August. Much of the crowd overflows into Itzehoe at this time.

Those who get a headache from loud music will find plenty of other easy listening options. Any day in Itzehoe will treat you to a cappella, jazz, orchestra, gospel or choir music.