

Juist -- Car(e)-Free World In The Mudflats

What if I told you there was a way to get away from it all, yet never have to give up all the creature comforts of the modern world? Would you want to go? Of course you would, so it's off to the town (excuse me, island) of Juist.

While tourism is its main "bread & butter" here in Juist, it isn't some mega, gigantic resort destination—quite the contrary as this small island boasts a low-key, laid back atmosphere.

Located in the [North Sea](#), and part of the [East Frisia](#), Juist lies within the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park (*Niedersächsisches Wattenmeer National Park*)—which means things like mudflat hiking. And walking is something you might want to get used to, as Juist is a car-free island.

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Don't roll your eyes at having to (ick!) walk, even an auto loving fool like myself can appreciate strolls along trails like the *Otto-Leege-Pfad*. Part art, part science, this informative scenic route of sorts takes you along the island's salt marshes (and more) dotted with sculptures along the way.

Just be careful walking in areas near the Hammersee, a freshwater lake on the western side of the island. Why? Quicksand. Don't ask me why I just mentioned that, but that stuff just freaks me out. ;-)

Anyway, the eastern side of Juist is great for bird watching instead of watching your step. Migratory birds call this place home, and some areas only allow access with special tours. Consider this a positive, you'd be getting to see some pristine landscape pretty much untouched by the modern world.

In less-regulated areas of the island, you can be as active as you wish. During the “bathing season” you can do stuff like beach nordic walking, or Zumba on the beach, and other seaside activities to keep you fit while away on vacation.

Want to throw the whole workout thing out the window while your away, but want to keep your brain active? Good, then it’s off to one of Juist’s museums. The *Küstenmuseum* isn’t exceptionally large, but it’s filled with exhibits on everything from the island’s flora & fauna, as well as information on things like oil and natural gas deposits in the North Sea.

And because cars are forbidden on the island, you’ll see quite a number of horse-drawn carriages. Seems like a reasonable spot for a Carriage Museum then, huh?

As if this isn’t enough, Juist also has a number of annual cultural events, too. December 6th is the time for St. Nicholas, an annual event for the kids—and come the Saturday before Easter when there’s a beach bonfire that’s steeped in tradition and folklore.

Steeped in tradition (along with lots of food, beer, and music) is May Day. Come to the area of Loog for an annual event that’s full of yummy smelling sausage, libations, and watching the procession of those famous horse-drawn carriages.

At least with this you only have to watch your step for horse... oh, nevermind, at least it won’t be quicksand. ;-)