

## Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park -- Land Of 40 Lakes

It's interesting how the Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park, or *Naturpark Lauenburgische Seen* in German, in the southeastern section of [Schleswig-Holstein](#) was once a German border. More specifically, the inner German border as it sits right up against [Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania](#).

Long before there was the [Cold War](#), and an [East & West Germany](#), the Lauenburg Lakes area was here. Heck, it was here before there was an official Germany since it was created from the last Ice Age.

At some 470 square kilometers, the Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park is pretty big too. Most of it is forested, but there are also 40 lakes within its "borders," one of which is the famed Ratzeburger See.

The Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park is not only a haven for all sorts of wild animals and birds (like heron and kingfishers), but it has a couple of scenic routes (the *Naturparkweg* (Nature Park Trail) and the [Old Salt Road](#)).

Animals and forest make the Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park a partial biosphere, yet that didn't stop anyone from settling down and making a village or two.

OK, it's a lot more than two. And all the people that live here now (not to mention all the ones that visit) love the area for all its hiking, bicycling, fishing, sailing, and horseback riding.

And I haven't even gotten to the festivals within the nature park yet. ;-)

Going counter-clockwise around the park, let's start in Salem (Lauenburg). Lake Salem is one of those 40 lakes I mentioned, but it's also got a wonderful church to see and an old granite retaining wall.

[German engineering](#) at its best, I would say.

The town of Ziethen (Lauenburg) is the one that was occupied by the British after [World War II](#), but the Village Church (built 1591) has been here much longer than they were.

Do yourself a favor at this point. Go find yourself a quiet inn or guesthouse in [Ratzeburg](#). You're going to need it, because you'll be here on this island city for a while.

Ratzborg, as its called in Low German, is a medieval town lovers dream city. If you think its 12th century Cathedral is old, the St. George Church is even older. And there are a number of museums (like the *A.-Paul-Weber-Museum*), plus this town too was once an inner German border town in a divided Germany.

From here it's on to the bison enclosure in Fredeburg, on the Old Salt Road, and to yet another one of the lakes in the Lauenburg Lakes, the Pinnsee.

Bordering Fredeburg is [Mölln](#). Not only is this place on the Old Salt Road too, but it's a Kneipp spa town (great, cause my feet are killing me) and along the Ziegelsee. Yup, another lake.

I gotta tell ya, the fact that Mölln has a medieval *Altstadt*, spa gardens, and a bunch of festivals (like the bi-annual Folk Festival) — it's the Eulenspiegel Festival that got my attention.

Every three years, Mölln holds this huge festival about this Lower Saxon medieval story (it's been translated into a number of languages, so no excuse not to read it).

Hard as it is to leave, it's time to head toward Lehmrade, which is a little to the south of the Oldenburger See.

As if all these lakes aren't enough, the Lauenburg Lakes Nature Park also finds itself along the North/Baltic Seas Watershed.

The last town we're heading to is Sterley, an old farming town. I'm sorry — but once I saw Sterley's stone and wood St. Johannis Church, I just couldn't go any further.

You can feel free to stop anywhere you like though — it's not like you'll go wrong.