

## Leine River -- Winding Its Way Along Industrialism And Fauna

Want to boat your way down the Leine River? I don't want to be the bearer of bad news, but you can't — at least for the most part. You *can* boat for the last 94km.

Don't let something as crazy as not being able to boat the entire 281 kilometers (175 miles) stop you from making your way from its source in [Leinefelde-Worbis](#) and to its end in Schwarmstedt, just north of Hanover. There are plenty of biking trails.

The picturesque *Ringquelle*, the source of the Leine in Leinefelde, brought fame to the town. And while it's really famous for its bear sanctuary, I like the Japanese Garden and the Burg Scharfenstein, too.

For forty kilometers the Leine now winds its way through northern [Thuringia](#), and one of its last stops before leaving the state is classy [Heilbad Heiligenstadt](#).

What's this city got worth seeing? Uh, how about its Literary Museum, its Jewish cemetery, the St. Mary Church, and the altar of the St. Giles Church.

Oh yeah, and its Mainz Castle. It's too nice here to leave — but I must. [Göttingen](#) in [Lower Saxony](#) is waiting...

Göttingen is not only a university town, it's where you'll find a number of scientific institutions. But it's the nature reserves, the Squire Tavern (15th century), the Goethe Institute, and its churches that keep bringing people here year after year.

A bird sanctuary awaits in [Northeim](#), as one of the Leine's tributaries, the Rhume River, makes its way through the center of town. You can criss-cross the river all you want to see Northeim's *Heimatmuseum* (Local History Museum), its *Altstadt* (Old Town), the Protestant St. Sixti Church, and its *Wierterturm* that's an observation tower.

Because it's a true water town, Northeim hosts a whole bunch of sailing regattas, and even has its own port.

The curving Leine River meets the [German Framework Road](#) in [Einbeck](#). Oh yeah, lots and lots of half-timbered houses. Two of the most beautiful buildings are the Old and New Town Halls — but make sure you see the St. James Church, the St. Alexandri Church, and the City Museum and *Stadtmauer* before you skip town.

We're getting closer to Hanover, because the next town of [Alfeld \(Leine\)](#) is part of the Hanover

Metropolitan Region. It was also one of the smallest towns that belonged to the famous [Hanseatic League](#).

An interesting town, Alfeld. It's enough to put you to sleep — not only because of its mention in a Brothers Grimm fairytale, but also because it's home to the Snoring Museum.

I do not make this stuff up. ;-)

Hold on for a second... So far along the Leine River we've found a [university](#), a [castle](#), a [scenic route](#), countless [churches](#), and now we're ready to meet up with a real [German UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) — which you'll see when you go to the St. Michael Church in [Hildesheim](#).

There are other sites, in case you're curious — including a Cathedral Museum with a real 9th century cathedral, and plenty of half-timbered houses. Drop that — I'm psyched about Hildesheim's annual Jazz Festival and its Christmas Market.

Next up along the Leine is the capital city of Lower Saxony, [Hanover](#). This town (called *Hannover* in German) has sparked a number of other towns around the world with the same name — but none are like this here in Germany.

Hanover is home to the Lower Saxony State Museum, and a slew of art, theater, music, and sport events. But, if you want to see the top 36 sites of this epic city, follow the 4.2km long *Roter Faden* (Red Line) that leads you along all of them.

One site is the Aegidienkirche ruins, which was destroyed during [World War II](#), and kept that way as a memorial.

Our trip along the Leine ends in the town of Schwarmstedt, smackdab in the middle of the Aller-Leine Valley — and along the edge of the [Lüneburg Heath](#).

You could most likely get lost (in a time sense, not a literal one) along the 100km of biking trails that ride through the bogs and the banks of the Leine River as it empties into the Aller.

Biking isn't all that you can do, though, as sport fishing is big in Schwarmstedt, and so is swimming, canoeing, and kayaking.

Forget the fact that you can't boat your way along the entire Leine River. Look at what you'd have missed otherwise. ;-)