

## Neustrelitz Is Where Baroque Royalty Meets Modern Times

Neustrelitz emerged from the ashes of a much older village, Strelitz. It was burned to the ground in 1712, along with its castle and 500 years of Mecklenburg-Güstrow rule.

The new duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz consequently decided to move the seat of power to their hunting lodge on Lake Zierk in 1733. The town of Neustrelitz (New Strelitz) formed like a star around them, becoming the region's capital in 1736.

It speaks to the resilience of local residents that they rebuilt and redefined their lives so resolutely after such a tragic disaster. Today, you can visit the old palace gardens, the *Schlossgarten*, with its many wells, old trees, sculptures and romantic pathways, although the palace itself was lost to fire in 1945.

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One structure which did survive from those early days is the Town Church, constructed in 1778. It is located on Market Square, serving as an excellent example of 18th-century baroque architecture.

Another stop you will want to make is the 19th-century neo-gothic Castle Church. In May through October, it features displays of art and sculpture, and each summer the surrounding grounds are given over to a festival of popular classical operettas, attracting tens of thousands of visitors.

Culturally, another interesting attraction is the Old Tiled Stoves Factory. It is a monument to local industry that hosts a variety of film festivals, concerts, readings and exhibits.

Neustrelitz also has its own German Dance Company. The troupe mixes traditional and modern dance. Meanwhile, down by the town harbor on the lake, an ongoing series of open-air concerts

draw bands and solo artists from around the world.

For outdoor lovers, there is Mueritz National Park flanking Lake Zierk. In season you can enjoy canoeing, hiking, cycling, picnicking and camping.

There is also a smaller lake nearby, Glambeck See, where swimming is possible throughout the summer. A restaurant overlooking its shore will afford you a lovely view as you relax and enjoy lunch, just like a modern-day Duke or Duchess!