

Oder River -- A Lifeline Of Recreation And Industry

The Oder River became the far eastern border of Germany after [World War II](#) for some 187km (116mi). The country's borders didn't change the river itself, it's still one of the longest in Europe going on for 866km — eventually flowing out into the [Baltic Sea](#).

The river might start somewhere else (in the Czech Republic, where the river's called the Odra — and fed by the Lausitzer Neiße and Warthe), but for those few hundred kilometers in Germany the Oder River is a lifeline of industry and recreation.

Your first glimpse of the Oder in Germany is in [Eisenhüttenstadt](#), sitting right on the Oder-Spree Canal in [Brandenburg](#) (the other canal along the Oder is the Oder-Havel Canal). The city likes a good festival or two, so hopefully you'll make it to the City Festival that's always on the last weekend of August.

Flowing northward, we take the Oder to [Frankfurt \(Oder\)](#). Look across its banks — yup, that's Poland. You'll find everything here from an Olympic Training Center and Sports Museum sitting right along with 13th and 14th century churches.

This is a [Hanseatic League](#) city, so join in on all the fun at the Hanseatic City Festival every July — then go check out the old brewery that's now a winter home for thousands of bats.

The Oder meanders around (some 12-20 miles wide at some parts) to [Schwedt](#), home to a Tobacco Museum, a Local History Museum, a Jewish Cemetery & Mikwe (a ritual bath), and even a medieval *Stadtmauer*.

Once you've gotten to Gartz, you've reached the Oder Lower Valley National Park — just 30km south of Stettin in Poland (where the Oder flows into the Baltic). After visiting the Local History Museum, the 13th century Church of St. Stephen, and the 18th century farmhouses you can choose to follow the Peene River, which is a branch of the Oder.

Taking this waterway you'll find yourself on the Island of [Usedom](#) that's filled with medieval churches, nature areas (in places like [Wolgast](#) & Lassan), and ferry boats that'll take you to Rügen.

But, don't run off before you've had the chance to say a proper goodbye to the mighty Oder. ;-)