

## Riesa Is A Sports Center With A Giant Legacy

How was this lovely area of Riesa formed? A scientist might mention something about glaciers or natural erosion, but the citizens of this town will tell you differently. Riesa was, of course, shaped by giants.

The story goes that a giant once took a stroll through the [Elbe River](#) valley. Tired from his journey, he sat down on the left bank of the river and took off his boots, which were filled with sand.

Emptying out his boots formed the sandy areas around the river, and the imprint of his boots caused a small hill to be formed. And so Riesa (from the German word *riesig* or gigantic) was created.

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The giant has naturally become the town's mascot. Tourists can climb the *Riesenhügel* ("giant hill") or order *Riesenbräu* ("giant brew") from the local pubs. Tchotchke shoppers will be sure to pick up a *Räuchermännchen* (an incense burner shaped like the giant) or any number of small soft toys.

And of course, every August there is the *Riesenfest*, "giant festival" where visitors can meet this famed giant-personage in the flesh! ;-)

But Riesa is not only famous for its beloved giant, it is also the pasta center of Germany. A pasta museum will show you all about the history, origins and production of this favorite food. You can find over one hundred pasta varieties here. One of the most popular local restaurants is the Mediterranean-styled Macaroni.

Another famous place is the *Erdgasarena*. This large sports hall is testament to Riesa's love affair with sports. It has hosted sumo wrestling matches, ice hockey, boxing, gymnastics, motocross and weight-lifting. It even doubles as a concert arena, with such guests as Elton John and AC/DC.

There's plenty to see as you meander about the town streets. Don't miss the lovely old monastery complex and the superb Wilhelminian style buildings.