

## Soest -- The Thousand-Year Old, Modern Town

Soest is well over a thousand years old. Some speculate that people could have been living here four thousand years back, although the earliest mention of the city is from 836. Surely, such an old place must have a rich and interesting history, so let's find out... ;-)

In the 11th and 12th centuries, Soest was a metropolis of its time, with well over 10,000 residents! While it was at the height of its wealth and power, the Archbishop of [Cologne](#) (who ruled over the city) demanded greater taxes. Understandably angry at the thought of higher taxes, the Soest citizens refused to pay.

Instead, they set up an alliance with the Duke of [Cleves \(Kleve\)](#).

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The archbishop besieged the town but Soest had excellent defenses and the recent arrival of a holy relic — the bones of Saint Patrokus — kept the morale high. Ironically, after several years without the taxes from its wealthy underling, the Cologne Archbishop was no longer able to finance his war and had to withdraw in shame.

Patrokus had been martyred in France in the year 275 AD. It was the Archbishop of Cologne who sent his holy bones to Soest as a gift, apparently before the whole taxation and siege debacle. The relic was to be placed in a new Romanesque church, which is one of the architectural highlights of Soest.

Other sites that are worth exploring are the beautiful Baroque town hall with a statue of — who else? — St. Patrokus and Osthofentor, the only remaining gate from Soest's medieval wall. A Byzantine-influenced church called St Mary's on the Hill and the Gothic St. Mary in the Meadows are both

gorgeously-restored structures.

And don't forget the pride of Soest — a walking tour along its old town wall. A stroll around town will show you how perfectly it manages to blend the old and new. Many of its historical buildings have new life as restored and converted modern businesses.