

Tecklenburger Land -- Travel Through Westphalia's Past

Few [regions in Germany](#) are better suited for hiking and biking vacations than Tecklenburger Land. Tecklenburger Land stretches along the western foothills of the [Teutoburg Forest](#) in northeastern Westphalia, with portions of two of Germany's major cycling routes passing through it.

The 100 Castles and Palaces Route winds 1400 km (870 miles) through Tecklenburg Land and the neighboring districts, linking approximately 100 castles and moated mansions in stately parklands. The largest of the castles, Schloss Surenburg, is located just north of the town of [Hörstel](#) (Riesenbeck district).

Although cycling is popular with the citizens of Riesenbeck, their hearts belong to horses. Riesenbeck is renowned in the horse world as the site of the annual Carriage Driving World Championships, where magnificent carriages pulled by even more magnificent equine four-in-hands or pairs make an unforgettable sight!

Do you count yourself a horse lover? Then schedule a trip to the National Foal Championships at [Lienen](#) in the southeast corner of Tecklenburger Land. Or head for [Lengerich](#), where some hotels provide stabling if you travel with your own horse. The *Haus Marck*, a moated mansion in which the early negotiations which eventually led to the Peace of Westphalia occurred, is here on the Peace Route, the second of Tecklenburger Land's major cycling roads.

Lengerich lies on a floodplain at the edge of the Teutoburg Forest Nature Park. Just above it, on the crest of the forest ridge, sits Germany's northernmost mountain town, Tecklenburg.

Climb the Peace Route, and be transported back in time! Standing watch above you are the ruins of the 13th-century Burg Tecklenburg, now transformed into Germany's largest open-air theater. Tecklenburg's Old Town is a delightful maze of stairways and narrow alleys meandering through half timbered shops and houses. In one of them you'll find a remarkable museum of antique dolls.

The pure mountain air of Tecklenburg has earned it recognition as a *Luftkurort*, a health resort with outstanding air quality. You'll appreciate that fresh air if you leave your bicycle behind and tackle the 156 km (97 mile) *Hermannsweg* hiking path which runs along the forest ridge! Only a short distance down the trail from Tecklenburg you'll encounter the *Dörenther Klippen* or Dörenther Cliffs — some ancient sandstone rock formations which draw climbers from all over Europe!

The *Dörenther Klippen* lie about halfway between Tecklenburg and the city of [Ibbenbüren](#). Ibbenbüren's Motorcycle Museum and nuclear power plant might seem somewhat out of place in a region more suited to ancient castles, quaint village churches, and fairy tales. However, it is a modern city which treasures its past.

Stop and shop in one of the medieval market squares. During the summertime, cool off with a ride

down the summer toboggan run or a stroll along the shores of the *Aasee* (English: Lake Aa). If you Scuba dive, don't overlook the underwater park with its sunken wreck and Egyptian ruins! ;-)

About 12 km (7.5 miles) north of Ibbenbüren lies the protected wetland bird sanctuary of Recker Moor. Explore on foot or bicycle, or hire a horse-drawn wagon in the nearby town of Recke. Ask the locals about the legend of the *Heiliges Meer* (Holy Sea), which involves a monastery full of sinful monks being swallowed up by the waters around 1100 A.D.!

Finally, make sure you sample some classic Tecklenburger Land cuisine before returning home: fresh asparagus and potato salad, roast pork with crackling, and baked Camembert cheese with cranberry sauce — hmmm... a true Tecklenburger Land feast! :-)