

Unkel -- Endless Possibilities In The Nature Park

On the right bank of the Rhine River, lies the town of Unkel — a proper place to be if you love all kinds of German festivals, or if you're into historical old buildings.

Hey, there's got to be something to the place, both Konrad Adenauer and Wily Brandt lived here.

I know, I know, who's Konrad Adenauer and Willy Brandt? Mr. Adenauer was the Chancellor of West Germany, partially responsible for West Germany's [Wirtschaftswunder](#) (the Economic Miracle experienced after [WWII](#)); and good old Willy Brandt was once mayor of West Berlin, and also a Chancellor of Germany.

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As for good old Willy, the Willy Brandt Forum acts as a Local History Museum, and it's a great place to learn how his statesmanship helped to “reconcile West Germany with the Soviets.”

Unkel's history dates back long before these 20th century guys decided to come live here. The *Freiligrathhaus*, once home to the famous German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, dates back to the mid-17th century, so it's a lovely Baroque home of the time period.

Even older is the *Fronhof*, whose origins take you back to the 11th century (yeah, that's a thousand years ago), and the *Eschenbrender Hof* might be a hotel these days, but it was private home centuries before now. These old manor homes sure are pretty, and in addition you'll find some awesome half-timbered houses (like the ones on Pützgasse) while you're making your way through town.

I think my favorite of all Unkel's historical buildings is the *Gefängnisturm* (Prison Tower), a round

grey stoned building whose Baroque dome reminds me of a bottle cap. No, maybe it's the St. Pantaleon Church, a 13th century building built over an even older one. For being over 700 years old, the place is quite pretty.

As for Unkel's outdoorsy stuff, the Rhine Promenade is a good place to start. And with some 160km of hiking trails, you're sure to find just the right place to sit for a spell. You can't go wrong no matter which trail you choose — you are awfully close to the *Naturpark Rhein-Westerwald*, after all.

Oh, and Unkel is also known as a Red Wine Village, so maybe one of the vineyards is the right place to sit for a while.

No, at a quiet table under a tree during the *Wein- und Heimatfest* is the perfect place to be for a while, which is always held on the first Sunday of September. A few weeks before that is both the Park Festival (2nd weekend of August), followed by the Rhine Swim a week later. Of course it wouldn't be right not mentioning the Rhine in Flames (1st weekend of May), or the *Scheurener Kirmes* on the first weekend of July.

By the way, the Scheurener Dom, as it's called, is a cute chapel found on Scheurenstraße if you're here for its *Kirmes*.

Unkel has managed to inspire statesmen, a poet, and a simple writer like myself — just imagine the possibilities you can experience on your visit.