

## Vreden -- Home Of The Most Northerly Flamingo Colony!

Protruding into the Netherlands in north-west Germany is the park-like landscape of Vreden. Filled with meadows and forests, moors and heathland, this region is certainly one for the outdoor type.

The heart of the city itself is based on its medieval roots with the circular walls setting out the divided districts. Set north of the river Berkel, the old center is where the great architecture is and where best to start your vacation!

Vreden is filled with a large baroque mansion, the remains of a great castle, the Stiftskirche St Felizitis (a women's monastery with underground crypts), and the delightful old town hall — and don't forget the miniature Shoe Museum!

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There is a wonderful pedestrianized town center as with many of these historic locations, allowing you the time and the space to wander the streets and relax in the streetside cafes. Take your time to investigate all the nooks and crannies and get yourself some fantastic photos along the way! The architecture here is very impressive.

There are many museums in town here if it's a rainy day — or even if it's sunny! The Aviation museum, the Fire-Fighters museum, the Silhouette museum, the Farmers museum — the list goes on and on!

However, when the sun shines, take a stroll down to the new Blue Moon City Beach! 250 tonnes of sand were brought in and sprinkled on the edges of the Berkelsee lake to create a new "City Beach." Deckchairs and ice-cream are everywhere in summer, so make a day of it if you're there!

Just outside of Vreden is a different type of wetland — the great *Zwillbrocker Venn*. This large wetland nature reserve is home to the worlds most northernmost flamingo breeding colony, and you won't regret a visit out here to see them.

Other animals feature heavily in this region — the horse and cart! A very common site on these endless flat roads and country lanes are carts filled with people and produce — and why not!

Give it a go yourself by hiring one and getting yourself a *Reitroutenkarte* — a map of the horse-friendly routes across the region. Not so brave? Then get yourself on a bike and use pedal power instead. :-)