

The Weser River -- Where Tall Tales And Fairy Tales Abound

Germany's Weser River could not have chosen a more perfect place for its source. The [Fulda River](#) and the [Werra River](#) converge to form the Weser, as it begins its 452 km or 282-mile journey to [Bremerhaven](#) and the [North Sea](#), in the wonderfully preserved town of [Hannoversch Münden](#).

Abbreviated as Hann. Münden, but locally called just "Münden," it has houses which have stood for six centuries. Its location, according to 19th-century German explorer Alexander von Humboldt, made Hann. Münden one of the world's seven most beautifully situated cities! At the 16th-century Welfen Palace is a local history museum.

From here, the Weser snakes its way through the [Saxony](#) countryside, where riverside meadows, more unspoiled country towns, Renaissance palaces and medieval castle ruins all create the impression of a land forgotten by time! Yet during the late 16th century, the Weser Valley was immensely wealthy thanks to its grain production, as some of its merchants' homes from that era still attest.

About 10km (6 miles) north of Hann. Münden, on the opposite bank of the Weser and accessible by ferry, is the district of Hemeln. Downstream from Hemeln is the 12th-century (complete with a 14th-century bell) Benedictine abbey at Bursfelde.

Here, along the western bank of the Weser, are the heavily oak-forested hills of the Reinhardswald. About 22km/13mi inland from the river, on a high plateau, is Sababurg, aka "The Sleeping Beauty Castle" or *Dornröschenschloss*, where the Brothers Grimm heroine herself holds court every Sunday.

Next on the Weser's journey the Germany's 2nd-oldest porcelain factory at Fürstenburg. There's a Porcelain Museum in the Renaissance Palace, but you'll get even more Renaissance atmosphere down the river at [Höxter](#).

Höxter's ancient city walls protect the Kloster Corvey, which dates from 822 A.D. Founded by Charlemagne's son, it was once a center of culture for all of Northern Europe.

The Weser continues meandering northeast to [Bodenwerder](#), the birthplace and burial site of the notorious weaver of tall tales, Baron von Münchhausen. The Münchhausen Museum is devoted to his flights of fantasy.

About a mile inland from the riverside village of Emmerthal, in the [Weserbergland](#) Nature Park, is the remarkably preserved late 16th-century Hämelschenburg Renaissance Palace. The entire Palace complex is open for public tours.

Just ahead is [Hamelin](#). You may know it better, as most of us do, as Hamelin of the Pied Piper

legend. The Weser enters its wildest stages about 40 km (25 miles) to the northwest at [Porta Westfalica](#), where it has carved a 600m/2000-foot wide gorge on its descent from the Weserbergerland to the flatlands of [North Germany](#).

Before reaching [Bremen](#) and the final leg of its journey, the Weser passes through [Verden](#), a training center for Germany's dressage horses. The river's next stop is its most impressive, at Bremen, "The Rome of the North."

Bremen and its sister port of [Bremerhaven](#) are actually Germany's smallest state. Bremen, founded in 789 by none other than Charlemagne himself, was once a [Hanseatic League](#) town and today, following [Hamburg](#), is the 2nd largest German port.

Bremen even has its own Grimm Brothers fairy tale, the *Bremen Town Musicians*, immortalized in the dog, cat, donkey, and rooster figures of the *Bremer Stadtmusikanten* statue in the Market Square!

The four musicians, of course, never made it to Bremen, because the little cottage in which they took shelter was much too pleasant. It must have been right on the bank of the Weser River!