

Westphalian Mills Route -- 43 Reasons For Flowing With The Wind

What is it about windmills? Sure, when you think about them visions of a tulip blanketed countryside of the Netherlands come to mind. Would you believe me if I said you could get the same experience in Germany, just minus the tulips? This might be the reason that Germany created the Westphalian Mills Route (or the *Westfälische Mühlenstrasse* in German).

More than 43 mills dot the [North Rhine-Westphalian](#) countryside, all of which are in its [Minden-Lübbecke District](#). Along this route you'll see the best of the best of them. You'll also see some fantastic castles, churches, and enjoy some pretty awesome countryside. Sounds like a plan if I ever heard one.

Start of the Westphalian Mills Route

The Westphalian Mills Route is a 320km (199mi) circular route, so there's no worry about getting lost. But where to start?

How about [Preußisch Oldendorf](#)?

The one reason you're probably on this route is because of the 43 mills. But, Preußisch Oldendorf has a lot more going on — so hang tight, you'll see them. First, there's a Railroad Museum (who doesn't love trains?) and the St. Dionysis Church is over a thousand years old.

You'll also find not one, not two, but three castles (and a castle ruin)! Schloss Hüffe (built 13th century) is a lovely manor house with its own mill house. While technically a castle, Schloss Hollwinkel (another 13th century original) looks more like a castle, especially with the moat. Last (but certainly not least) is Schloss Crollage; where you don't have to be nobility to enjoy the classical music concerts in the courtyard.

All right, enough about that... it's time for the first windmill.

The most historical windmill on the Westphalian Mills Route is the Water Mill Hudenbeck, built in 1556. (You'll find it in its Bad Holzhausen district.)

I think we're off to a fantastic start, aren't we?

[Hüllhorst](#) is next and its motto says it all: *Leben in guter Atmosphäre*, Live In A Good Atmosphere. If you're not able to live here, thankfully you can at least visit. I might not be able to help you figure out what to see first. I can at least tell you what to see & do. But, taking a hot air balloon ride over makes an excellent start.

Whether you're looking at Hüllhorst by air or land, you'll see many half-timbered houses and the Andreas Church. The tower is the oldest part of the church which has been here since the early 14th century. That's nothing in terms of age compared to the archaeological finds in the village of Büttendorf dating back to the 3rd to 1st century B.C.

From the air you'll also get a great view of Hüllhorst's windmills, like the Windmill Struckhof (built 1799) and even an oldtimee water mill (aren't they romantic?).

Awesome! [Minden](#), our next stop, got four mills! but its *Rodenbecker Mühle* from 1821 is very robust. After that head over to the Weser river and inspect its unique *Schiffsmühle* (Ship Mill).

The town itself dates from the days of Charlemagne filled with little cobblestoned streets. Nice, right? The Dom Cathedral is still beautiful after a millenia. Actually, just like us humans, it gets more beautiful as the years go on. As lovely as the church is, that's how much fun the Minden Puppet Museum will be.

The Lahde neighborhood of [Petershagen](#) has a gorgeous 19th century Dutchman Windmill (it's called *Klostermühle*). OK, that might not seem very old, but a windmill has stood on this spot since 1292!

There's another historical windmill in the other neighborhood of Petershagen, Neuenknick, a village of only about 850 people. The Windmill Neuenknick is not your average looking windmill, but who cares... it's almost 300 years old. Totally unrelated to windmills, Neuenknick has this Stone Gallery — an array of huge boulders laid out in the neighboring forest.

In Großenheerse, another district of Petershagen, the Westphalian Mills Route meets up with the Weser Cycle Track. You'll also meet up with a charming octagon windmill and a Dutchman Windmill built in 1863. If you're hungry, the Miller House is a good cafe an restaurant.

Petershagen proper is pretty awesome with its 19th century glassworks, a local history museum, old mines, Bueckeberg Castle, a Helicopter Museum, Schloss Petershagen, and eleven (yes, 11) windmills. Whewwww! Pretty awesome, no?

Over in Nordhemmern (part of [Hille](#)) it's not the Windmill Nordhemmern that'll stick in your mind. I know this is the Westphalian Mill Route but, the unassuming 13th century chapel with its white walls & red tile roof will steal the show.

Your second to last town on the Westphalian Mills Route is Rahden. Never heard of it? Too bad, this town pound for pound has the most spectacular sightseeing imaginable with thousands of years of history all in one place.

Don't believe me? How about we start with the Bronze Age burial mounds? Then we can jump

forward more than 15 centuries to the 13th century St. John Church, 14th century Windmill Rahden-Wehe, and 19th century Castle Rahden (now a nursing home). Which shouldn't be confused with Castle Rahden-Kleinendorf. Built in the 13th century, this castle was destroyed in the winter of 1878.

But if you're going to see anything it should be the Museumshof Rahden, a "collection" of farm buildings and equipment, as well as a mill. It also has a brick oven from the 16th century.

Rahden is more than just history, though. Many motorcycle enthusiasts enjoy the winding roads in the far north of North Rhine Westphalia — and all sorts of art exhibitions and cultural events are always taking place.

Moreover, in the Tonnenheide district of [Rahden](#), sure you'll see an awesome 19th century Dutchman Windmill (where you can get married if you like) and a bunch of framework houses. But, you'll also see a billion year old rock. No, really — the Great Stone is a billion years old (weighing 350 tons) carried here by the last ice age from Scandinavia.

The last stop on the Westphalian Mills Route is set between Opperwehe and Stemwede. Opperwehe is a part of [Stemwede](#), but worth an honorable mention in its own right. Known not only for its mills, Opperwehe is famous for its asparagus and moorlands.

And you'd think that because this is the Mills Route that Opperwehe's landmark would be, well, its Opperwede Windmill (built 1705). But, it's not. It is the Oppenweher Klus, a tiny half-timbered chapel from the 13th century. The one standing today is a replica, but the spirit of it is the same as the original.

Moving over to Stemwede, you can end your trek on the Westphalian Mills Route with WINDMILLS and so much more! The Windmill Destel is picture perfect, so remember to snap lots of photos.

The Evangelical Church St. Mary is another photo-op, as will the 15th century Holy Cross Chapel. Save some film for the Schloss Haldem, once used as a school for the Hitler Youth.

With any luck you'll be here for one of Stemwede's festivals. One of the most popular is the Stemwede Outdoor Festival where some 20,000 people flock to the town in August. Just as popular is the Waldfried en Wonderland Music Festival.

Well, well, look at that. You came to the Westphalian Mills Route looking for a bunch of mills and you walk away with so much more. It's so fantastic, you might just want to follow this route twice. ;-)