



# Hamburg & the North

## Includes »

Hamburg .....	648
Schleswig-Holstein .....	673
Lübeck.....	673
North Frisian Islands....	687
Schwerin & the Mecklenburg Lake Plains.....	692
Coastal Mecklenburg – Western Pomerania.....	699
Stralsund.....	705

## Best Places to Eat

- » Sgroi (p22)
- » Matsumi (p663)
- » Schiffergesellschaft (p678)
- » Restaurant Esszimmer (p708)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Wedina (p660)
- » Kamps (p690)
- » Hotel Reingard (p704)
- » Altstadt Hotel Peiss (p707)

## Why Go?

Head to Germany's north because you love the water. From the posh joy of Sylt in the west to the fabled Baltic heritage of historic towns like Lübeck, Wismar, Stralsund and Greifswald. Here you can sense the legacy of the Hanseatic League in beautiful old quarters created with iconic black and red bricks.

Even inland there is water. Mecklenburg's lakes are a maze of places to paddle. But really, most visitors will be happiest right at the edge of the sea. There are beaches everywhere, and while the temps aren't tropical, the drama of the crisp sea crashing onto the white sand is irresistible.

Finally there is Hamburg, a city with a love of life that explodes in its fabled clubs. Here, being close to the water has not only built the city and its harbour but continues to invigorate it today.

## When to Go

Summer seems the obvious time to hit northern Germany but let's be honest, just because it's August doesn't mean you won't be wrapped up in a blanket on a Baltic beach. So free yourself from bikini-clad fantasies and go to the coast anytime to enjoy its often breathtaking beauty.

The best reason to go in summer is for the days that go on and on and on. Sitting outside a Hamburg cafe and enjoying the passing pedestrian parade in daylight at 10pm is a delight.

## Smokin' Fish

It can be almost sensuous, the smooth and oily fillets of northern fish that are smoked for hours until they have tangy, buttery softness that melts in your mouth. No wonder people love it. Here are some good places:

- » **Hamburg** There's smoked fish by the ton at Hamburg's Sunday Fischmarkt (p23) or order some house-smoked eel at Alt Hamburger Aalspeicher (p663).
- » **Sylt** Just saying 'Gosch' (p690) brings knowing nods of satisfaction from those who've had this seafood legend's smoked fish in its many varieties.
- » **Wismar** Ancient techniques dating to Hanseatic times make the young smoked eel here especially succulent (p703).
- » **Binz** Just follow your nose to the glorified beach hut, Fischräucherei Kuse (p711).
- » **Stralsund** The harbour (p705) is ringed with boats smoking fish for sale.
- » **Wieck** Right at the sea, this tiny town has some excellent smoked-fish stands and Fischer-Hütte (p714) specialises in smoked herring.

### DON'T MISS

In Hamburg you can have a dramatic contrast of experiences within a 10-minute walk: at **St Michaeliskirche** you can see the horrible cost of war, at the **International Maritime Museum** you can find out what made the city what it is today and finally you can just be a kid at **Miniatur-Wunderland**.

There's more fun at **Lübeck's puppet theatre** and its puppet museum. Get out on the open water with a ferry ride between the **North Frisian Islands**.

Back on land, the number of bricks that built the beautiful **Bad Doberan** is impossible to comprehend. Further along the coast, scale the spiralling staircase of **Warnemünde's 19th-century lighthouse** or choose fresh fish for a picnic from the boats in **Wismar's harbour**.

Enjoy fish without eating them at the vast aquariums at **Stralsund's Ozeaneum**. Head out to the boonies of **Usedom Island** to find a trail to call your own.

## Regional Train Passes

The **Schleswig-Holstein ticket** (€26) is good for rail journeys from 9am until 3am the following day (from midnight on weekends) anywhere in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.

The **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern ticket** (single/group up to 5 people €18/26) is good for rail journeys from 9am until 3am the following day (from midnight on weekends) in Hamburg and the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which stretches along the northern coast and includes Schwerin, Stralsund and Usedom Island.

## STRANDKORB

Only a country with a love of engineering would invent the *Strandkorb*, the iconic German wicker beach chair complete with its own roof and awning to deflect seaside breezes.

## Fast Facts

Combined totals for Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania:

- » Area: 39,728 sq km
- » Population: 6.2 million

## Beaches

- » **Sylt** Almost the entire island is ringed in beautiful sand perfect for hiking or just lazing (p688).
- » **Amrum** Mellow island that's half sand (p692).
- » **Warnemünde** Fabled pearly white strand with a hopping scene at night (p701).
- » **Göhren** Ride a steam train to reach the beach on Rügen Island (p711).

## Resources

- » Hamburg Tourismus (www.hamburg-tourismus.de)
- » Schleswig-Holstein (www.sh-tourismus.de)
- » Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (www.mecklenburg-vorpommern.eu)