

GENERAL INFORMATION

Delicious food in Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony)!

From down-to-earth to gourmet cuisine – in Niedersachsen, there is a lot to excite foodies

In Niedersachsen's cuisine, the state's specialities reflect its characteristic regions: from hearty green cabbage to delicate asparagus, freshly caught fish, and substantial miners' dishes. Tradition meets modernity as excellent star chefs tickle your palate with regional and international specialities.

Spring is asparagus season

From March, the whole of Niedersachsen eagerly awaits the asparagus harvest. One in five German asparagus spears comes from here, and many regions have become well-known because of this delicate vegetable. Asparagus from Nienburg, Burgdorf or Brunswick – the Lower Saxon 'Asparagus road' connects the most important cultivation areas of the white and green spears over a distance of 750 kilometres.

Fresh fish

Plaice, mackerel, herring or eel? Fried, steamed or pickled? Niedersachsen is the federal state of fish – as demonstrated by the largest lobscouse dinner in the world in Wilhelmshaven. Here, gourmands can come together in big groups to get to know and love this typical seafarers' dish. Fish abounds here: on the North Sea coast, in the eel territories in Lake Bad Zwischenahn and Lake Steinhude, large rivers such as the Elbe, Weser and Ems, and innumerable small ones – such as the oxygen-rich, cold spring streams in the Harz mountains, in which trout feel particularly at home. All in all, there is an impressive diversity of fish and seafood, which is typically served with roast, jacket or dill potatoes.

Green cabbage in abundance

The frost has finally arrived! Lower Saxons look forward to the first white frost which covers the fields in November, because this ushers in the start of their green cabbage season. On cabbage tours, you can celebrate hearty green cabbage stew with Bregenwurst or Pinkel, a typical north-west German grit sausage, after a walk or a Boßel match (a ball-throwing game lubricated by drinks) in the fresh winter air. You will definitely need a handcart, music and schnapps. Particularly popular trips take place in Oldenburger Land, the stronghold of the 'Oldenburg Palm', as the green cabbage is also known here. In Oldenburger Land, green cabbage is even inserted into chocolate to create the green cabbage praline.

World champions in tea drinking

It is part of the East Frisian cultural heritage: the ‘Teetied’ ritual is not primarily about quenching your thirst. Above all, the tea ceremony is a celebrated gesture of hospitality: according to traditional wisdom, the East Frisian incarnation of hygge always involves a cup of tea. And it all adds up: East Frisians drink an average of 300 litres of tea per year, far more than the Japanese and Chinese and around 12 times as much as the rest of Germany – a world record! This also impresses UNESCO, which recognises the classic tea with Kluntje and Wulkje (rock sugar and cream) as an intangible cultural asset.

Sweet and smooth

Niedersachsen likes hearty cuisine. However, those with a sweet tooth need not fear. Welf pudding, a sinful vanilla wine syllabub, derives its name from the famous Hanoverian noble house. Fresh, juicy butter cake is a must on every cake board, as is East Frisian cake, with plentiful cream and brandy currants, on the coast. Need something to wet your whistle? The Lower Saxons drink bitter beer, such as Jever, or smooth Bock beer. The residents of Einbeck invented this 600 years ago. Also popular in Niedersachsen is Korn liqueur – combined in Hanover with a beer to create a concoction called Lüttje Lage. It is usually consumed as part of a drinking game which requires considerable dexterity and prowess – it involves pouring schnapps into the beer whilst drinking simultaneously without spilling too much. It hasn’t been proven that a glass of mineral water from one of the many spa resorts in Niedersachsen helps combat the subsequent hangover, but thanks to its healthy minerals and trace elements, it’s definitely worth a try!

Regional specialities: mutton from the heath-grazing Heidschnucken sheep, apples, shrimp & more

Gronau in Niedersachsen is home to the first recirculation system for sustainable saltwater aquaculture for crustaceans. The Neue Meere’s sustainable shrimp farm aims to conserve the earth’s precious resources and counteract overfishing. The company has produced its first sustainable foodstuff with its own shrimp known as Garnele 1, which is characterised by mildly sweet, mineral notes and salt on the tongue. But crabs have been in Niedersachsen for a lot longer than shrimp. You can get these straight from the cutter at the North Sea coast, and that’s how they taste best – fresh and shelled yourself.

In Lüneburg Heath, Heidschnucken mutton is the dish of the day. This breed of sheep is the heraldic animal of the region. They live outdoors all year round and, besides the heathland vegetation, eat other herbs such as wild thyme or marjoram, which give the meat a unique flavour. Heidschnucke mutton is milder than lamb in flavour but darker in colour, and is especially tender and lean. But the Lüneburg Heath has other delights to offer, such as heath honey. Furthermore, a good 40% of German potatoes come from here. More than 100 varieties grow here, and there is usually a potato variety and dish of the month.

Apples and cherries grow as far as the eye can see over 10,000 hectares in ‘Germany’s largest garden’, the Altes Land in the Elbmarsch, near Hamburg, which even has peaches. Vitamin-rich blueberries are cultivated in blueberry plantations in the Mittelweser region; the sea buckthorn, or ‘lemon of the north’, grows wild on the North Sea coast. The Leibniz biscuit started its triumphal conquest of the world from Hanover, and the bitter taste of buckwheat, once a modest cereal eaten by poor moor settlers and heath farmers, is now enjoying increasing popularity in many restaurants.

Distinguished, award-winning cuisine

Around 34 restaurants in Niedersachsen are currently listed in the Gault-Millau restaurant guide. Ten restaurants with one or two Michelin stars will seduce the gourmand’s palate, four of which are located in the state capital of Hanover, which has reclaimed its place on Germany’s culinary map.

Strange and unusual: Schoosollen and sausage pralines

Niedersachsen’s traditions are sometimes a little bizarre: in the County of Bentheim, around the New Year, people traditionally bake Schoosollen, a type of waffle, in old irons passed down from generation to generation. Hann. Münden is famous for its sausage pralines: chocolate filled with blood sausage or liver parfait. You can eat like the miners in the Oberharzer Bergwerksmuseum (Oberharz Mining Museum) in Clausthal-Zellerfeld: the traditional ‘Miners’ meal’ consists of dark bread, ground pork, sausage, lard and the rather pungent, acidic curd cheese Harzer Roller. And the Die Seesterne gastronomic association from Jeverland offers a very special experience in the summer: fresh plaice, fried directly in the tidal flats at low tide. Simply delicious.

Seaside arrowgrass tastes like kale that’s been on the shrimper: evocative of the tidal flats, salty, and a bit like coriander. The kale, which is also known as ‘hare’s-foot clover’, only grows by Niedersachsen’s North Sea coast. Unless you’re from Wurster North Sea coast, you’ll need a special permit to pick it. Seaside arrowgrass may only be picked in May and June for personal use. That’s firstly because the salt marsh plant is one of Germany’s endangered fern and flowering plants, and secondly because it grows in the protected areas of Niedersachsen’s Wadden Sea national park.

More information can be found at: niedersachsen-tourism.com/experience-discover/cultural-experiences/culinary-delights

Images at: niedersachsen-bilder.de

Sign up for our English newsletter for the travel industry here: niedersachsen-tourism.com/travel-insights

Further Information

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About Tourist Board Niedersachsen (TourismusMarketing Niedersachsen or TMN)

The TMN is the central point of contact for tourism in Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony). The company was founded on behalf of the Niedersachsen Ministry of Economic Affairs, Transport and Housing in 2001 and, since January 2014, has been a wholly state-owned company. The TMN's main task is to develop and implement measures for the future-oriented positioning of Niedersachsen in national and international tourism competition in cooperation with regional tourism stakeholders. The focus is on regional and national marketing of Niedersachsen as a tourist destination, the development of brand concepts, Internet portals and quality management systems for tourism offerings.