

OHI (BRIEF) HAPPY HOLIDAY: SYLT-HAMBURG

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OTTALIL
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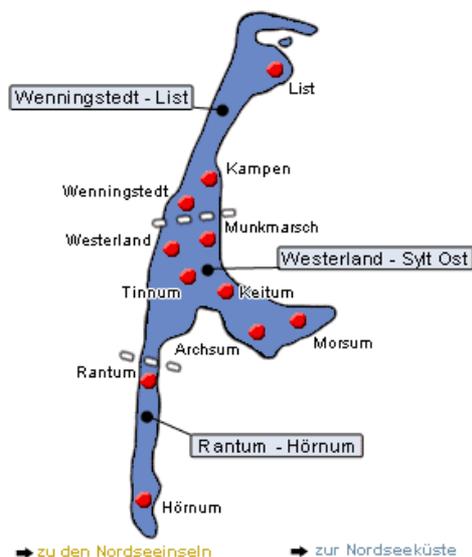
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1. INTRODUCTION

The advertisement welcoming tourists to Sylt proclaims it to be the "Top of Germany - for Body and Soul"! The abrupt decision to have a break and visit Sylt and Hamburg was that of my daughter Regina.

The comfortable, fastest and easiest way to reach Sylt is by train, via the 12 km long Hindenburgdamm.



However, we took the more strenuous and complicated drive by our BMW with our lovely four-legged doggie, "Sita". Driving for over seven hours on a bright and sunny day, we reached Sylt



over Hamburg passing through Dortmund, Hanover, Bremen, Rendsburg and Flensburg on the A-7 along the west coast, and using the 45 minutes car-train service from Niebüll-Hindenburgdamm to Sylt (The 11 km long Hindenburgdamm, constructed in a period of four years and accessible only to trains, connects Sylt with the mainland of Schleswig-Holstein. It was inaugurated on 1st June 1927 by the then German Reich President Paul von Hindenburg, whose name it carries. Over 500,000 motor vehicles are

transported by the auto-train-service every year).

2. SYLT

Located on the tip of North Friesland, Sylt, lying on the western coastal area of Schleswig-Holstein up into Denmark with 95 square kilometres, is the largest of the North Frisian Islands. Known for its fresh sea air, spa facilities and water sports, Sylt is unique. Fine sand beaches, dunes, splendid colourful meadows, blooming heather and the magnificent views over the seemingly never ending North Sea - that is Sylt, for body and soul.

We stayed at a beautiful rented bungalow in Westerland, from which we visited various interesting beautiful spots in this island:



Sylt "aerial view"

2.1. List

At the far north of Sylt is this treasure of List with its shifting sand dune, open sea, unique and fascinating landscape, colourful harbour, atmosphere, miles and miles of sandy beaches and we in the midst of it all.

List offers a great variety of activities: extensive walks or sportily bicycle tours to the Ellenbogen (we spent a whole day walking on its extensive sandy beach, covering the whole circumference), a fascinating nature reserve, and visits to the Königshafen to watch the colourful fishing boats.



Beach Basket

The west coast invites swimmers and the mile long beach offers space for all sun seekers: families, nudists, and the lot. It is the ideal children's paradise: swimming, beach activities - everybody will find a personal beach adventure.

Accommodation is family friendly, the restaurant cater for all tastes and the private spa centres offers a wide range of facilities and the cure treatments: massages, thermal exercises, inhalations, beach gymnastics - you name it!

One of Sylt's best kept secrets is the beach sauna at Ellenbogen. When you have boiled yourself in the sauna, the idea is to run naked into the chilly North Sea - heavenly feeling!

List with a population of 2.800 offers accommodation for 2.700 guests. The Kurverwaltung (spa administration) assist with advance booking of accommodation and the beach baskets (a very typical German beach chair - that must be tried).

2.2. Westerland

Westerland is the heart-beat of the Island: events for all, night clubs, theatre, concerts, cinema, traditional local evenings and dance balls. But of course wherever you are on Sylt you are never far from the sea. Stroll along the promenade, onto the wide, sandy beach, a playground for young and old. Watch the play of the waves from a beach basket and inhale the fresh sea air while enjoying your holiday reading. 4,000 beach baskets are waiting for the guests on the 7 km long beach. Recharge your batteries while walking or cycling along the many secluded paths or take in the sophisticated cure facilities.

Westerland is the largest town in the island and offers that entire one can expect from a cosmopolitan spa resort. Sophisticated shopping, restaurants for every taste, rustic pubs, and cosy cafes and of course the small »Imbiß« where you can eat fish straight from the sea. This is where one meets, where one comes to be spoiled.

The new leisure pool »**Sylter Welle**« with artificial waves, massage and whirlpools, the sophisticated sauna landscape and a relaxation area invite the visitors to get away from it all. Come to be regenerated and spoiled, to soothe your body and relax your soul.

The spa facilities are open all year round, and even in winter guests find taking in treatments and pampering their body. Westerland offers something for everybody: shopping trips to modern boutiques, swimming pools of all kinds, spa and sport facilities for all tastes and the famous Westerland casino, where one can relax over a game of Roulette, Blackjack or the many fruit machines. Westerland with a population of around 10,000 offers holiday accommodation for 23,700 guests in various kinds of hotels, guests-houses, private homes or holiday flats (where we too found our peace).



2.3. Kampen

Kampen is contrasts. It is the meeting ground of the rich and beautiful, but also unrivalled natural beauty and simplicity. Experience the individual Kampen, the beauty of the Frisian architecture, the thatched houses, and secluded walk ways, extraordinary nature coupled with international designer boutiques, art galleries, exclusive restaurants, and relaxed bistros.

Kampen is pure individuality - a harmonious coexistence of pure activity and pure nature, the cosmopolitan flair and the rural idyll all combined in Kampen. Situated between the steep cliffs and the heather moors, the pure beauty of the landscape fascinates one



Lighthouse, Kampen



and all - the recuperative energies that this idyll generates, not only in summer but in all seasons, makes one want to come back for more and more of Kampen. Swimming in the refreshing surf, horse riding along the deserted beaches, walking into the vast landscape of the Wattenmeer, improving your handicap at golf, afterwards meeting in one of the many restaurants, bistros and cafes to warm up the spirits and to enjoy life at its purest - that is Kampen. You will not want to leave - and if you do -you'll be back. The small population of approx. 600 caters for up to 2,300 guests. Kampen offers all: from the excitement of the Kampen Jazz Festival and the Music-Summer, to various sporting activities and endless beaches for all (nudists, families and even dogs).

2.4. Wattenmeer (Wadden Sea)

Wattenmeer (Wadden Sea) of the North Sea extends along a 500 km (312.5 miles) stretch between the Dutch Den Helder and the Danish Esbjerg. With usually more than 10 km (6.25miles) of width and a total area of about 8,000 square km (3,088 square miles) it is the world's biggest coherent habitat of its kind and one of the last unspoilt countryside in Europe, with varied and extensive symbioses in the Wadden Sea. Likewise a lot of people understand by Wadden Sea just the area, which falls periodically dry at low tide and gets flooded again. But there is much more to be found. The Wadden Sea includes the salt marshes along the coast line as well as the islands and dunes of the North Sea.



2.5. Wenningstedt/Baderup

Wenningstedt/Braderup is a family resort. The most northerly German seaside spa resort, Wenningstedt, lies between the Red and the White Cliffs, between the surf of the

North Sea and the calmness of the Wattenmeer. The old centre of town, filled with thatched houses surrounding the idyllic village pond, is home of sophisticated spa facilities. Everything a tired body longs for: swimming, tennis, table tennis, horse riding, beach gymnastics, mini-golf, cycling and walking plus modern cure facilities for young and old - this is Wenningstedt. The spa facilities are open all year round. Miles and miles of beaches cater for all - nudists, traditionalists, and even dogs. Kids are in good hands with a plenitude of fun opportunities, while the grown-ups meet at events organised by the Kurverwaltung. And here is plenty to see as well - nature and culture lovers will enjoy a visit to the 7,000 year old megalithic burial ground or simply stroll along the nature reserve »Braderuper Heide«. But most of all - Wenningstedt is peaceful relaxation, a place where you'll come to refresh your senses. With a population of approx. 1,500 Wenningstedt offers accommodation for 8,000 guests.

2.6. Rantum

On the south side of the island, between the surf of the North Sea and the extensive Wattenmeer, lies Rantum, the narrowest point of Sylt. This cosy, small village with thatched houses, authentic hotels and guest houses hidden by a fascinating dune landscape is the ideal family resort. Those in needs of relaxation will find it while enjoying long walks or bicycle tours. The beach offers freedom for all and the events organised by the Kurhaus: painting classes, concerts, slide shows, theatre, dances, and kids' entertainment will leave them no time to get bored. Beaches as far as the eye can see especially the nudist beaches »Samoa« and »Sansibar« promisingly called, are a heaven for sun seekers. Rantum is quiet and relaxed with a population of approx. 500 and beds for 2,700 guests. No wonder that right here you'll find the source of the Sylt mineral water. A well balanced mix of minerals and trace elements should be tasted here at the Drink-Hall.



Weststrand (Beach), Rantum

2.7. Hörnum

Hörnum is the far south of the island: the surf of the North Sea in the west, the calmness of the Wattenmeer in the east and the mile long beach in the south. Here lies the seaside spa resort of Hörnum. Hörnum, awarded for its family friendly facilities in 1990 by the German Ministry of Youth, Family and Health, lives up to these standards. Family friendly accommodation, comfortable holiday homes, cosy hotels and restaurants catering for all tastes are found here. The overwhelming landscape for long guided nature walks in the dunes and the Wattenmeer. The miles of beaches for nudists, traditionalists and even dogs, call for a dip in the refreshing North Sea, and the sporting facilities invite the sporting enthusiasts: sailing, surfing, volley ball, beach tennis and heated swimming-pools, saunas and sun beds. The port of Hörnum with its manifold crab trawlers, sailing and fishing boats is the ideal backdrop for a relaxed excursion or shopping trip. Embedded in the extensive dune landscape is the camping ground of Hörnum.



Sailing Regatta in Hörnum

2.8. Sylt-East

The villages of Archsum, Keitum, Morsum, Munkmarsch and Tinum or easier: the green lung of Sylt. Here you have the contrast to the overwhelming sea. The historic and romantic facets and the authentic charm of the rural villages merge with the ever present nature. Tour de Nature - that is Sylt-East.

2.9. Archsum

The smallest and quietest village on the island is characterised by its rural charm. The Frisian customs and the traditional way of life are ever so present here. City-dwellers find this the ideal place to recharge their batteries and it promises pure fun for kids.

2.10. Morsum

Morsum is the place for the classical Sylt vacation. The traditional Frisian village is surrounded by meadows, dykes, marshes, fields and heather. Long walks through nature and visits of the Morsum Cliff, to admire 10 Mio years of natural history, make an everlasting impression of the natural Sylt. This is holiday from the first day onwards and it is a holiday for the family, where each member will find his niche.



Situated in a picturesque bay, directly on the Wattenmeer, this is Munkmarsch, a secret treasure for all those sailing and surfing enthusiasts. Here many have taken their first lesson on board a sailing boat and many will in future. If you are not so keen on the water element, what better way to enjoy the beautiful landscape than on a back of a horse, riding along the extensive beach.

2.11. Keitum

It is hard to resist the charm and beauty of Keitum, the pearl of the Wattenmeer and the green heart of the island Sylt. The idyllic charm of the village, pride and romanticism, thatched houses, art and traditional culture, all merge in Keitum in perfect harmony. Strolling along the picturesque narrow streets, passing pottery workshops, luscious gardens, traditional old houses and the ever present sea breeze - this is Keitum, a feast for the senses.

2.12. Tinum

Tinum, adjoining Westerland, is a popular family resort with many private holiday homes and apartments. Here you can find the largest bird sanctuary in Germany and the historical Tinnumburg. Tinum offers activity for all the family: from beach and sporting activities, over long walks along the Rantum dunes and the second oldest remaining house on Sylt, to shopping trips to the town centre.

3. HAMBURG

Hamburg, with its principal Harbour, is Germany's second largest city (after Berlin). The official name *Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg* (Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg) recalls its membership in the medieval Hanseatic League is one of Germany's sixteen *Bundesländer*.

The state and administrative city cover 750 km²; with 1.8 million inhabitants, while another 750,000 live in neighbouring urban areas. The Greater Hamburg Metropolitan Region (*Metropolregion Hamburg*) including nearby districts of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony covers 18,100 km² with a population of 4 million.



The city of Hamburg is situated on three rivers, the Alster, the Bille and the Elbe. The city centre is beautifully situated around two artificial lakes, the Außenalster and the Binnenalster, formed by the River Alster. 100 km to the North-West, three islands, Neuwerk, Scharhörn and Nigehörn in the North Sea, also belong to the city-state. The *burg* part of the city's name is similar to the English word *borough*. The *Bürgerschaft* (City Assembly) is the Parliament of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (official name, German: *Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg*), is elected for four years. The *First Mayor* of the City (*Erster Bürgermeister*) as Head of the Senate, currently Ole von Beust, is elected by the Bürgerschaft (City Assembly) and is thus Head of the City State.

The most significant economic basis for Hamburg in the past centuries has been (and still is) its harbour, which ranks second in Europe and ninth worldwide with transshipments of 7 million standard container units (TEU) and 115 million tons of goods in 2004. International trade is also the reason for the large number of consulates in the city.

Other important industries are the aerospace company Airbus, which has one of its two assembly plants here, and media businesses, most notably three of Germany's largest publishing companies, Axel Springer Verlag, Gruner + Jahr and Heinrich Bauer Verlag. About one half of Germany's nation-wide newspapers and magazines are produced in Hamburg. There are also a number of music companies (the largest being Warner Music-Germany) and Internet businesses (e.g. AOL and Google-Germany). Heavy industry includes steel, aluminium and Europe's largest copper plant, and a number of shipyards like Blohm + Voss.



In the 1520s the city authorities embraced Lutheranism, and Hamburg subsequently received Protestant refugees from the Netherlands and France. At times under Danish sovereignty while a part of the Holy Roman Empire, in 1768 it gained full Danish recognition as an Imperial Free City.

Annexed briefly by France (1810 -14), Hamburg suffered severely during Napoleon's last campaign in Germany, but experienced its fastest growth during the second half of the 19th century, when its population more than quadrupled to 800,000 as the growth of the city's Atlantic trade helped make it Europe's third-largest port.

Hamburg was destroyed by several fires, notably in 1284 and 1842. The last and worst destruction took place during World War II. In response to Germany's levelling of Coventry two days before, the Royal Air Force began to bomb Hamburg on November 16, 1940. Later, in "Operation Gomorrah" the British bombed Hamburg on July 28, 1943 which caused a firestorm that killed 42,000 German civilians. By the end of the war at least 50,000 Hamburg residents had died in Allied attacks.

Today's inner city therefore hosts almost no buildings from before 1842 and even few from before 1945. In February 1962 the city's low-lying areas were devastated by severe flooding, in which more than 300 people died and thousands became homeless.

The city boundaries were extended in 1937 with the *Groß-Hamburg-Gesetz* (Greater Hamburg Act) to incorporate neighbouring Wandsbek, Harburg-Wilhelmsburg and Altona.

The population of the city proper peaked in the mid-1960s at 1.85 million, but has recovered from a mid-1980s low of less than 1.6m. Growth is now concentrated in the suburban areas. The Hamburg Harbour remains the prize asset of the city and is one of the largest deep-sea ports for container shipping in the world.

3.1. Hamburg Harbour

Hamburg Harbour, the deep water port on the river Elbe, is Hamburg's "*Gateway to the World*" and is the largest sea port in Germany. According to the numbers of containers handled in 2004, it is the second-largest in Europe and the ninth-largest worldwide.

The harbour is strengthened by the Elbe splitting into *Northern* and *Southern* streams, creating an ideal place for a harbour complex for warehousing and transshipment.

Currently, the so-called Freihafen area also enables toll-less use. Historically, the harbour has been the core asset of Hamburg and the justification for its location and importance.

Hamburg takes its name from the first permanent building on the site, a fort that Charlemagne ordered built as a defence against Slavic incursion. The fort went up in 808 on some rocky ground in a marsh between the Alster and the Elbe. It was named *Hamma Burg (Fort)*.

Hamburg was designated the seat of a Bishopric (834), whose first Bishop, Ansgar, became known as the Apostle of the North. In 845 a fleet said to number 600 Viking ships came up the River Elbe and destroyed Hamburg, at that time a place of around 500 inhabitants. Two years after that Hamburg was united with Bremen as the bishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. In 1030 the city was burned down by King Mieszko II of Poland. The see was finally moved to Bremen after further raids in 1066 and 1072, this time by Slavs from the east.



Frederick I "Barbarossa" is said to have granted free access up the Lower Elbe to Hamburg in a charter of 1189. Hamburg's proximity to the main trade routes of the North and Baltic Seas quickly made it a major port of Northern Europe and its alliance (1241) with Lübeck on the Baltic is considered the origin of the powerful Hanseatic League of trading cities. However, Frederick's document, still at display at the town museum, is known to be a fake from around 1265. Therefore Hamburg does not hold city rights.

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Because of its location 110 kilometres away from the mouth of the Elbe, some ships at times have difficulties accessing the port. In face of larger and larger ships, Hamburg may lose some container traffic and has proposed to deepen the Elbe River in response, but this plan is very controversial for ecological reasons. In part due to cooperation with Lower Saxony and Bremen to build a new container seaport (*JadeWeserPort*) in the deep waters of Jadebusen in Wilhelmshaven, after the change of government in 2001 Hamburg withdrew this plan.

We returned home on the late evening of 21st, reflecting and musing over the refreshing experience!