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# Hameln | Welcome

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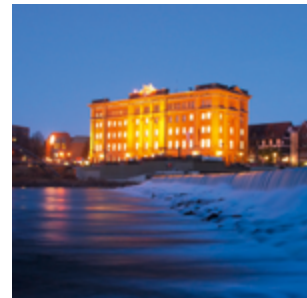
[www.hameln.de](http://www.hameln.de)

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Buildings in this architectural style, side by side in tight rows, can be admired here, e.g. the *Rattenfängerhaus* („Rat Catcher's House“), built in 1602, with its inscription about the children's procession, the *Dempterhaus*, built in 1607 and the *Leisthaus*, built in 1589, as well as two medieval towers and the city wall. The entire town centre with its richly ornamented, colourful patrician houses gives the impression of a large open-air museum, yet at the same time remains the focal point of life in town. The curved gables and oriel-like projecting structures attract tourists like magnets.



## An introduction to Hameln

With its population of 60,000, Hameln is the economic, cultural and touristic centre of the Weser Mountain area. The legend of the Pied Piper made Hameln world-famous. Yet the city's wealth was obtained due to its convenient position as a trading centre on the river Weser. Such prosperity resulted in the emergence of splendidly decorated houses erected by well-to-do merchants as evidence of their affluence. Thus, Hameln evolved into a jewel of Weser Renaissance architecture.





# The legend of the Pied Piper

In the year 1284, a strange man appeared in Hameln. He wore a gown of colourful cloth in many shades and claimed to be a rat-catcher, promising to deliver the town from all rats and mice for a certain fee. The burghers agreed to pay him the reward, and the rat-catcher produced a small pipe and whistled. Soon, rats and mice came creeping out from all the houses and gathered around him. When he was convinced that none had remained behind, he walked out of the town and into the river Weser; the whole pack followed after him, fell into the water and drowned. But when the burghers found they had been delivered from this plague, they regretted their promise of a reward, and they denied the man his money, so he left in anger.

On 26 June he returned, though, in the form of a hunter of frightful appearance, with an odd red hat, and while everyone had gathered in church, he once again let the sound of his pipe ring through the alleys. Soon, not rats and mice, but children, boys and girls aged four and older, came running in great numbers. Playing all the while, he led them out the eastern gate and into a mountain, where he vanished with them.

Only two children returned, because they had come late; of those, one was blind, so that it could not show the place, the other was dumb, so it could not tell anything. One boy had turned back to get his coat and had thus evaded the misadventure. It was said that the children had been led into a cave and come out again in Transylvania. In all, 130 children had been lost.

(Based on „German Legends“ by the brothers Grimm)



## Historic background of the legend

The „Pied Piper of Hamelin“ is considered the most famous figure of German legends in the world. The legend has been translated into approx. 30 languages, and is a standard work studied at school in many countries. Up to the present day, it has not been possible to shed light on its details. The most probable version is the colonization of Eastern countries (Silesia, Moravia, Pomerania, Prussia). In this, some nobles are supposed to have recruited citizens of Hameln to settle in those territories. Especially the Count of Schaumburg, who moved to the Olmutz area (now in Czechia), is mentioned frequently. This is based on the fact that at that time, a city's inhabitants were often called „children of the city“. The connection to the „rat-catcher“ may originate in frequent rat plagues at the time, which were tackled by rat-catchers, although with more realistic methods than in the legend. Both events may have blended into one another in tradition.

Of course, you can find out more about the Pied Piper legend at the Hameln Museum, in Osterstrasse 8/9.

## An old town centre close at hand

In Hameln, all tourist attractions to be paid attention to „at first glance“ lie close together, are accessible on foot and within a hand's reach in every sense.

Welcome to our beautiful old town centre! It was perfectly reconstructed and restored with great effort and dedication between 1969 and 1993. If absolutely necessary, you can „check it out“ within a good hour. Of course, a little more time will enhance your experience - of the visual impression made by the delightful 16th- to 18th-century sandstone and half-timbered buildings; of the feeling of following in the Pied Piper's footsteps; of the quiet charm of small alleyways; of the pleasures a shopping trip in the historic atmosphere brings; in short: of a city's aura which will keep you enchanted.



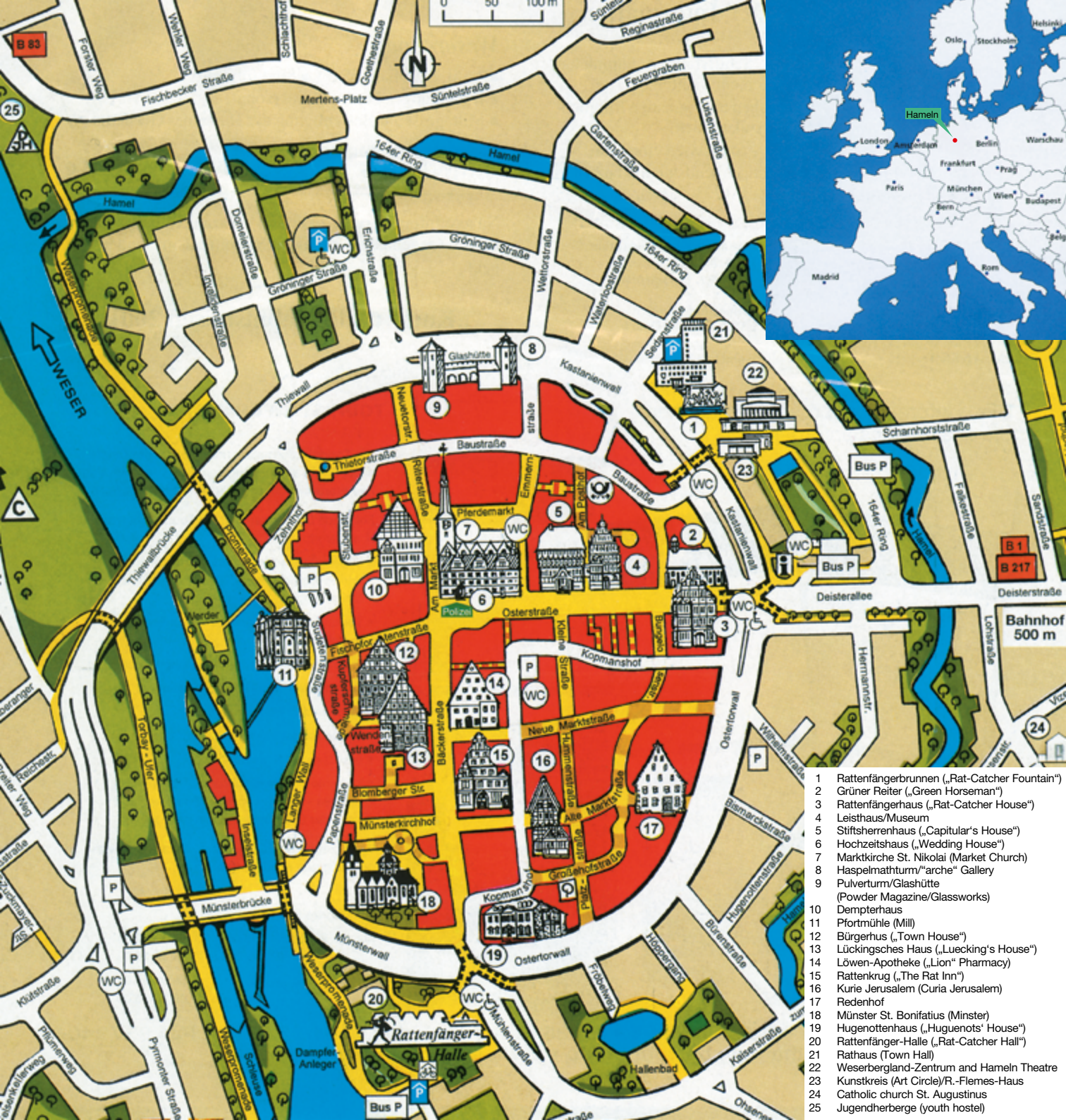
And if you're thirsty, hungry, or simply your legs are tired, the doors of many hospitable establishments are open to you, including street cafés and beer gardens in the warm season.



Thousands of rats show you the right direction on your way through Hameln. The „rat trail“ leads you to the most significant sights, which are described in greater detail on signboards (text in German and English).







- 1 Rattenfängerbrunnen („Rat-Catcher Fountain“)
- 2 Grüner Reiter („Green Horseman“)
- 3 Rattenfängerhaus („Rat-Catcher House“)
- 4 Leisthaus/Museum
- 5 Stiftsherrenhaus („Capitular's House“)
- 6 Hochzeitshaus („Wedding House“)
- 7 Marktkirche St. Nikolai (Market Church)
- 8 Haspelmathurm/„arche“ Gallery
- 9 Pulverturm/Glashütte (Powder Magazine/Glassworks)
- 10 Dempferhaus
- 11 Pfortmühle (Mill)
- 12 Bürgerhaus („Town House“)
- 13 Lückingsches Haus („Luecking's House“)
- 14 Löwen-Apotheke („Lion" Pharmacy)
- 15 Rattenkrug („The Rat Inn“)
- 16 Kurie Jerusalem (Curia Jerusalem)
- 17 Redenhof
- 18 Münster St. Bonifatius (Minster)
- 19 Hugenottenhaus („Huguenots' House“)
- 20 Rattenfänger-Halle („Rat-Catcher Hall“)
- 21 Rathaus (Town Hall)
- 22 Weserbergland-Zentrum und Hameln Theatre
- 23 Kunstkreis (Art Circle)/R.-Flemes-Haus
- 24 Catholic church St. Augustinus
- 25 Jugendherberge (youth hostel)



# Weser Renaissance

is the charming north German variety of a serious Italian architectural theme: this is a way of describing the peculiar building style which can be admired in such consistency mainly in Hameln and the surrounding area.



The term was coined by Richard Klapheck in 1912 in his book „Alt-Westfalen“ („Old Westfalia“). Typical characteristics of this building style are lavish gable decorations with diamond-shaped stone ornaments and volutes, masks and gargoyle-type reliefs, borders with coats of arms and inscriptions, and especially the richly decorated oriel constructions („Utlucht“). The best examples of this architectural style are the *Rattenfängerhaus* („Rat-Catcher House“), *Leisthaus*, *Stiftsherrenhaus* („Capitular's House“), *Hochzeitshaus* („Wedding House“) and the *Dempterhaus*.



## Rattenfängerhaus

(„Rat-Catcher House“)

Osterstrasse. Built in 1602-1603 for councillor Hermann Arends. Its large hall indicates conscious representation, just as the rich façade ornamentation. The entire front is covered with a multitude of small-sized ornamental forms of the late Weser Renaissance style. The house got its name from an inscription about the children's procession.



## Stiftsherrenhaus („Capitular's House“)

Osterstrasse. Built 1556-1558 for councillor Friedrich Poppendieck. The half-timbered eaves building originally had four storeys. Otherwise, the façade appears to have been preserved in its original form. The wood carvings on the slanted brackets or so-called cleats are the central elements of the carved decorations (God the Father, Christ, Apostles, David, Simson, Cain and Abel and ancient planet gods).



## Leisthaus (Museum)

Osterstrasse. The house was built 1585-1589 for merchant Gerd Leist. Above the attic, it features a bizarre, jagged volute gable. Due to its mouldings, the broad, two-storey Utlucht (oriel) blends in with the rest of the façade. In the gable niche of the Utlucht crown, a fully rounded Lucretia sculpture is placed below an overhead scallop.

## Hochzeitshaus („Wedding House“)

Osterstrasse. In the years 1610 to 1617, municipal self-government had this mighty banqueting hall building erected for its citizens. The renaissance building is characterised by its solid compactness, high voluta gables on the front sides and three commanding gable lucarnes in the roof construction of the southern eaves. Below the lavishly decorated gable lucarne gables, there used to be the portals of a winehouse, to the council's weigh scales and to the pharmacy. At the latter, Friedrich-Wilhelm Sertürner, discoverer of morphine, used to work. In the western front corner room of the first floor, Tilly and his officers are supposed to have had the memorable discussion in winter 1630/31 which led to the assault on the Magdeburg fortress.



## Dempferhaus

Am Markt. The house was built 1607-1608 for mayor Tobias von Dev-enter (or Dempfer). Two storeys are built in ashlar masonry alternating with smooth strips. Above the portal's round arch, there is a pair of coats of arms. The third storey and the gable are half-timbered and richly carved. The elegant *Utlucht* (oriel) with its bizarre crown enhances the lively picture of the sandstone façade.

## Further sights



Marktkirche St. Nikolai  
On the market square. The church, approx. 800 years old, was destroyed almost completely by artillery fire in 1945. Rebuilt between 1957 and 1959. Among other features, the Pied Piper mosaic window on the south side is worth seeing.

## Bürgerhus

Kupferschmiedestrasse. The atypical building with continuous floorboards (entrance portal and back exit are diagonally staggered) was constructed around 1560. For a long time, it was used as a brewhouse. The building's lively style is created by its splendid colours and ample use of typical renaissance half-timber motives.



## St. Bonifatius Minster

Near the old Weser bridge. The oldest remaining building part is the *Krypta Romanus* (Roman crypt) dating back to approx. 1120. After several reconstructions, begun in the second half of the 13th century, its current shape of a church with naves of equal height, but unequal width, developed gradually.



## Experience numerous events

If you come to Hameln between mid-May and mid-September, you can experience the world-famous **Pied Piper open-air performance** (Rattenfänger-Freilichtspiel) on Sundays at 12.00 noon.



On average, 3,500 visitors from many countries watch the approx. 80 actors in historic costumes perform the story of the procession of the Hameln children. The 30-minute performance on the *Hochzeitshaus* terrace (in the middle of the old town centre) is free, by the way.



Three times a day (1.05, 3.35 and 5.35 p.m.), the legendary character can be seen in the form of a **Pied Piper clock-work figure** on the façade of the Hochzeits-haus.

More about the Pied Piper and his secrets you can find out at the **Hameln Museum** in Osterstrasse. Open daily (including Sunday) from 11 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Closed on Mondays. Guided tours upon request.  
[www.museum-hameln.de](http://www.museum-hameln.de)

In a historic location, the Pulverturm (powder magazine tower), you find the **Hameln Glashütte** (glass-works), a fascinating world all around glass manufacturing. From a spacious spectator stand, it is possible to take a look at glass-blowers practising their ancient craft.

Tel.: 05151/27239

[www.glasblaeserei-hameln.de](http://www.glasblaeserei-hameln.de)



The best way to enjoy the beautiful Weser landscape is a boat trip. From mid-April to mid-October, round trips and a scheduled service on the river Weser are offered.

Tel.: 05151/939999

[www.flotte-weser.de](http://www.flotte-weser.de)

Situated 12 km to the south of **Hameln, Schloss Hämelschenburg** (Hämelschenburg Castle) is said to be one of the most beautiful castles of Northern Germany. In 1588, the Hämelschenburg was constructed as a moated castle in the Weser Renaissance style. Tours are offered daily (except Mondays) from April to October.

Tel.: 05155/951690, [www.schloss-haemelschenburg.de](http://www.schloss-haemelschenburg.de)





# Tourist Information Hameln Weserbergland



You find the modern, ecologically innovative Info Centre in Deisterallee, on the edge of the historic town centre.

## The Tourist Information Centre offers you the following services:

- Information and brochures about Hameln and the Weserbergland
- Organisation of guided city tours (German, English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish or Russian)
- Pied Piper tour or introduction in German or English
- Large souvenir shop, with maps and gift articles on offer
- Organisation of event programmes with or without accommodation.
- central accommodation service (free of charge)



- Conference organisation and advice service
- free film show: „Sagenhaftes Hameln - Märchenhaftes Weser bergland“ (Englisch, French, Japanese or German) on a large screen approx.3x2m)

It is our pleasure to help and advise you!

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