



Der Kromlauer Park

Where the landscape is constantly reinvented

Quacking with the frogs – Along with all of the frogs in the diverse nature around the “Froschradweg” (Frog Bike Path) that gave it its name, there are, of course a lot of cultural aspects to be discovered in northern Upper Lusatia. The traditions of the Slavic Sorbs have become inseparably connected to the region, which not only bilingual location and street signs hint at. But also the density of castles and parks surprises. Even the UNESCO has become convinced of their quality.

Sorbs and mining – After the Second World War, **Hoyerswerda** grew out past its borders due to brown coal strip mining. Sites to see in Hoyerswerda’s old town are the market square and the castle. Originally a border fortification between Bohemia and Brandenburg, it was later the residence of Princess Ursula Katharina von Teschen, a mistress of Augustus the Strong. Today it is a museum with continuous exhibits of Sorbian folk art. Located inside the former castle park there is the municipal zoo. The landscape around was heavily influenced by brown coal strip mining. Numerous pits have been flooded to form the “Lausitzer Seenland” (Lusatian Lake District). After crossing the Spree River, you come to the area around Schleife, whose Sorbic culture is very original and has its own individual character.

Great garden culture – In the middle of the 19th century a great landscape park was created in **Kromlau**, which is recognized with its rhododendron, azaleas and tulip trees. Within the park there is also the Kromlau Castle as well as the final station of the Muskauer Waldeisenbahn (Muskau Forestry Railroad). This locomotive goes through the Muskau Heath and onto **Bad Muskau**. Fürst-Pückler-Park in Bad Muskau is one of the most beautiful landscape parks in Europe, a masterpiece of garden art, and has belonged to the world cultural heritage of UNESCO since 2004. In villages further along the tour, the production of pitch played an important role in the industry. In **Pechern**, deriving its name from pitch-making and stretched

along a hillside, some of the last houses from such pitch makers can be seen. Interesting to see is the timber-framed church, which only displays one façade of this unbelievably dynamic architectural wood style within Upper Lusatia. Continuing along the Neisse you come to **Rothenburg**. The municipal park is landscaped in an English garden style and displays influences from Pückler. Unfortunately, the corresponding castle was, like so many other mansions, destroyed due to ideological reasons after the Second World War.

Innovations out of wood – Located on the most eastern point of Germany and a bit off the bike path, close to Zentendorf, there is the so-called Kulturinsel Einsiedel (Cultural Island of Einsiedel). Out of the enterprise of artistically forming wood, a unique leisure activity park has been created, which is also home to the first tree house hotel in Germany. Again on the Froschradweg you ride past the lovely fortified church of **Horka** from the 12th century. Another historical building worth seeing is the former Horka Castle which today houses the office of the local government. The planned city of **Niesky** was a creation of the Moravian Church. At the listed Zinzendorfplatz, eye catchers are the modest church and the ‘Umgebendehaus’ (a merger of German half-timbered and Slavic block house) which is being used as a museum. Within the center of the city, numerous wood houses can be seen all of which were built by Niesky entrepreneurs Christoph and Unmack before the Second World War. The Jewish architect Konrad Wachsmann also played a key role in the building of these houses. Living in the USA, he later brought methods for building houses using prefabricated pieces to perfection.

Noble landscape – To value its worth, the UNESCO decreed the unique nature north of Bautzen to a biosphere reserve. The two story Milkel Castle was built from parts of moated castle in 1720. With its two huge round towers on either ends, it resembles Moritzburg Castle. The Baroque Neschwitz Castle, which also started out as a moated castle, was also used as a hunting lodge. Its garden was erected in a French style. Not all that far away, you can even stay in a mansion, the Weissig Bats’ Castle.

Island of Catholicism – Past Bernsdorf you can reach the Dubringer Moor, where you can wander along a path to the “Versunkenes Schloss” (Sunken Castle). The area around **Wittichenau** is a haven for Catholic Sorbs, which cannot be missed considering all of the crucifixes on the boundary ridges. Only in this area did the re-catholicization from the Marienstern Monastery have success within the homeland of the reformation. A trip with the Lausitz “Grubenbahn” (mining locomotive) to the coal mining museum Knappenrode, a unique monument to the industrial uses of brown coal, is a rather special experience. After a break at Lake Knappensee you can ride back to Hoyerswerda and thereby complete the tour.

Bicycle Tour - Length: approx. 260 km
www.schloesserland-sachsen.de



Die Kulturinsel Einsiedel



Das Barockschloss Neschwitz