



## Bergisch Gladbach – delightfully different Between metropolis and country life



Stadt Bergisch Gladbach



<b>Table of contents</b> .....	<b>Page</b>
The Townhall in the city centre .....	4
Villa Zanders .....	
“St. Laurentius” Church with fountain .....	5
Community Centre “Bergischer Löwe” .....	
Gnadenkirche, Kulturhaus Zanders ..	6
Paper Mill “Alte Dombach” .....	7
Kindergartenmuseum NRW .....	
Schulmuseum .....	8
Schloss Lerbach .....	
Gartensiedlung Gronauerwald .....	9
Bensberg’s Townhall .....	11
Bergisches Museum für Handwerk, Bergbau und Gewerbe .....	12
Grandhotel Schloss Bensberg .....	13
Bauernhausmuseum .....	
Kardinal Schulte Haus .....	14
Church St. Johann Baptist .....	
Steinbreche .....	15
Saaler Mühle, Timbered houses .....	16
Herrenstrunden .....	17
The Strunde and its Lyrikpfad .....	18
“Schlade” – Geological path .....	19
Bergisches Wanderland .....	20
Citymap .....	22

## The urban centre of Bergisch Gladbach

People visiting Bergisch Gladbach for the first time might wonder why they are not welcomed by a mountain top panorama. Arriving from the neighbouring city of Cologne it does become hilly, but there are no real mountains. The name Bergisch Gladbach does not derive from geography but from history. Having said that, there is still a good 200-metre difference in altitude to the bay of Cologne – smoothly ascending from the Rhine valley to the hills of the “Bergisches Land”. The “Counts of Berg” settled here at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and gave the region its name.

Bergisch Gladbach is a green town – over 80 per cent of the urban spaces are green. That is why young and old, tourists- on active holidays, people interested in culture and architecture, those travelling on business and those searching for recreation all enjoy the comfortable feel Bergisch Gladbach has to offer.

The first documented evidence of the Gladebag municipality dates to 1271. Then in 1856, having grown to 5000 residents, Bergisch Gladbach was granted town ordinance. 1975 saw the towns of Bergisch Gladbach and Bensberg uniting under the name Bergisch Gladbach.

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

## The Townhall in the city centre <sup>1</sup>

The Townhall in the city centre



The old Townhall <sup>1</sup>, Villa Zanders <sup>2</sup> and Saint Laurent's church <sup>3</sup> are located in the heart of Bergisch Gladbach.

The Townhall <sup>1</sup>, a three-winged building, was built in the historic style of 1906. Its construction can best be viewed from Konrad-Adenauer-Platz. The pathway beneath the "Marienbogen" (Saint Mary's Arch) discloses striking views of the "Gefängnis" (prison) which is located behind it. Take a look into the staircase, the historic wedding chamber and the two official rooms. It is worth it!

The high street in Bergisch Gladbach's city centre comprises a pedestrian precinct, a commercial centre and varies sculptures portraying local lads and personalities dotted throughout it. Meet Jakob Altenrath – called "Hexe Köbes" – a second hand dealer and notorious character, a farmer's wife and her sheep as well as several local celebrities: musicians, poets, manufacturers and regional historians.



"Hexe Köbes"

## Villa Zanders <sup>2</sup>

Villa Zanders <sup>2</sup> was built for the widow of paper manufacturer Carl Richard Zanders, today it houses the municipal gallery. Maria Zanders was an energetic, culturally and socially engaged woman, keeping company with famous artists, musicians and academics, such as the composer Max Bruch, the painter Carl Ludwig Fehrbach and the graphic designer Alexe Altenkirch.



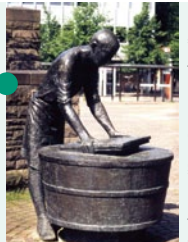
Villa Zanders

## "St. Laurentius" Church with fountain <sup>3</sup>

Konrad-Adenauer-Platz offers further points of interest. Bergisch Gladbach's industrial heritage is reflected by two works of art: The sculpture "Der Papiermacher" and the city fountain <sup>3</sup>, that's moveable upper part resembles the strainer used for hand papermaking.



"St. Laurentius" Church with fountain



Sculpture "Der Papiermacher"





## Community Centre "Bergischer Löwe" <sup>4</sup>

Built back in 1903 according to plans by architect Ludwig Bopp the public building was extended in 1977 by Pritzker laureate Professor Gottfried Böhm. Today the centre is the town's cultural heart. Its stage hosts theatre, ballet and music performances. And its facilities also serve for trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars and even public and private parties.



## Gnadenkirche <sup>5</sup>, Kulturhaus Zanders <sup>6</sup>

You find the **Gnadenkirche** <sup>5</sup> (church of grace) opposite the **Kulturhaus Zanders** <sup>6</sup>, another ancient residential building of the Zanders family. Today it hosts the Zanders Foundation – Collection of paper history – and the Altenberg Cathedral Society, which assists in preserving and restoring the abbey situated about 10 km northwards.



## Paper Mill "Alte Dombach" <sup>7</sup>

The paper mill **Alte Dombach** <sup>7</sup> (Papiermühle Alte Dombach), one of the Rhineland's industrial museums, is located in one of over 30 mill sites dotted along the stream "Strunde". It was these paper mills that were responsible for the rise in Bergisch Gladbach's prosperity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An obsolete paper making machine donated by the paper manufacturer, Zanders serves to illustrate the ancient art of paper making. Permanent and special exhibitions around topics about the history of paper, the museum's educational service and talks about the venue's history make up the museum's programme.



## Kindergartenmuseum NRW <sup>8</sup>

The town's culture is enriched by two further unique museums. **The Kindergarten Museum** <sup>8</sup>, on Quirlsberg in the centre of town which displays the story of education in kindergarten and all-day nursery from past to present day.



The Kindergarten Museum

## Schulmuseum – Sammlung Carl Cüppers <sup>9</sup>

Located in a former primary school building, the Katterbach **School Museum** displays the **Cüppers collection** <sup>9</sup>. This fascinating collection of historic school utensils is complemented by special exhibitions regarding the history of school education. Very popular with visitors are the authentic historic school lessons that deliver insight into pedagogy during the times of Germany's Emperor.



The School Museum

## Schloss Lerbach <sup>10</sup>

**Schloss Lerbach** <sup>10</sup> was built in the country-house style of an English Manor house. Completed in 1898, it served the Zanders family as a place of residence until 1992 when it was turned into a top-class hotel. Lerbach Park has been classified as one of the most well-preserved and outstanding parks in the Rhineland.



Schloss Lerbach

## Gartensiedlung Gronauerwald – leafy residential area <sup>11</sup>

Richard and Anna Zanders were once the largest employers in Bergisch Gladbach. In 1898 they constructed a 30-hectar housing estate for their employees, inspired by the contemporary idea of garden settlements. They planted trees and established greens around a central square. Despite some changes this urban settlement is still recognisable as a typical representative of Rhineland housing.



Gartensiedlung Gronau





## Bensberg's Townhall <sup>12</sup>



Bensberg's Townhall

Bergisch Gladbach and Bensberg have been united since 1975. Bensberg is the more southern and elevated district of Bergisch Gladbach. It is dominated by two significant buildings: The Baroque castle and **Bensberg's townhall** <sup>12</sup> (Rathaus Bensberg) with the tower of the medieval Earl's castle, which was integrated into 20<sup>th</sup> century's architecture.

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the prospering mining industry resulted in the soaring population of Bensberg. The town received its charter in 1947, and the merging with the adjoining town of Bergisch Gladbach took place in 1975.

The Townhall was built in the sixties and became generally known for its architectural design. Master-builder and architect Prof. Gottfried Böhm planned the building using the so-called "old castle's" basic structure, a castle complex from the 12<sup>th</sup> century having previously been used as a widow's domicile by the Count of Berg.

Today, the building is used as a base for the town's technical departments. The large council chamber with its historic walls is used for council meetings and many other events.

## Museum für Bergbau, Handwerk und Gewerbe Bensberg <sup>13</sup>

Leaving the Townhall's courtyard and circling around the building, the Burggraben with its pretty timbered houses provides access to the town's **Museum for mining, handcrafts and trade** <sup>13</sup>. It is a local history museum encompassing a number of historic buildings replicas. There is a baker and a primary school classroom, barns, a mine and craftsmen's workshops. Traditional trades are occasionally demonstrated.



Museum of Mining, Handcrafts and Trade, Bensberg

inside the museum



## Grand Hotel Schloss Bensberg <sup>14</sup>

Johann Wilhelm II, elector of Palatinate and Duke of Jülich and Berg, had the "new castle" built as a hunting lodge by the Venetian architect Matteo d'Alberti in 1703. The Duke did not live to see the completion of the building. Schloss Bensberg has never served as a residence; its history was very varied. The Baroque building was used as a military hospital, a cadet education institute, then as a Belgian secondary school and a dwelling for refugees from the Balkan wars. Finally, after complex renovation work the Baroque castle opened as **Grand Hotel Schloss Bensberg** <sup>14</sup> in August 2000.

Goethe visited Bensberg and wrote in his autobiography "Truth and Fiction", 14<sup>th</sup> book: "... I do well remember a journey to the hunting lodge in Bensberg, situated on the right side of the Rhine river, enjoying a splendid view."



Grand Hotel Schloss Bensberg

Grand Hotel Schloss Bensberg



## Bauernhausmuseum <sup>15</sup>

An excursion to Oberkühlheim near Herkenrath leads to the **farmhouse museum** <sup>15</sup> of the Clemens family where you can visit a farm that is true to an original 17<sup>th</sup> century one.



farmhouse museum

## Kardinal Schulte Haus <sup>16</sup>

**Kardinal Schulte Haus** <sup>16</sup> is another landmark on Bensberg's panorama. Built between 1926 and 1929 by architect Bernhard Rotterdam, the property first served as a major seminary for the Archdiocese of Cologne and later as a military hospital during the Second World War. The building offers a stunning panoramic view over the bay of Cologne and hosts facilities for Catholic adult education and a hotel.



Kardinal Schulte Haus

## Church St. Johann Baptist <sup>17</sup>

**Saint John the Baptist** <sup>17</sup> in Refrath is the town's oldest church and a special gem. On the site of earlier buildings from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century the third sacral building from 1200 has survived until today.



Saint John the Baptist

## Steinbreche <sup>18</sup>

Red and black limestone – also called “Refrath marble” – was quarried at the **Steinbreche** <sup>18</sup> and utilised for the construction of the “Bensberger Schloss”. “Haus Steinbreche” was built in 1712 as a manor house. Today it hosts a restaurant and a civic centre for various cultural and private events.

A grey cast iron sculpture in front of “Haus Steinbreche” depicts their 18<sup>th</sup> century proprietors, the three Siegen sisters. They were not only popular for their expert salesmanship, but also for their practise of all 3 of them leaving their house under one large, red umbrella.



Steinbreche





## Saaler Mühle<sup>19</sup>

**Saaler Mühle<sup>19</sup>** is the town's most popular local recreational area. People go for a jog, walk their dogs, circle around the "Bensberger See", hire the barbeque hut for fun summer festivities or relax in the thermal baths and saunas of **Mediterrana<sup>19</sup>**, a lakeside Spa centre. More visitors are attracted to the "Saaler Mühle" by the adjacent ice rink and one of Germany's finest golf courses nearby.

## Timbered houses

If you say "Gladbach", don't forget the "Bergisch". "Bergisch" stands for a special type of architecture. Timbered houses with black beams, white walls, green shutters and black slate roofs; typical for this region. There are still many to admire, mostly on the outskirts of the town in the more rural areas. They are well worth looking out for!



Timbered houses at Paper Mill "Alte Dombach"

## Herrenstrunden<sup>20</sup>

**Herrenstrunden<sup>20</sup>** lies on the eastern edge of the town and is home to the source of the stream Strunde. This source was re-designed during Regionale 2010 and is the starting point for the Strundeweg – the Strunde trail. No sooner do you set off down this trail than you are met by the first sights; the Malteser Komturei which was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and today is a hotel and restaurant overlooking a picturesque lake. The Maltese mill with its thatched roof is a private property; pass by and you will reach the village pond with a view of Burg Zweifel, a former knight's manor with an 800-year history.



Malteser Komturei



Burg Zweifel



Gut Schiff

The "Herkenrather Tor" – Herkenrath's Gate kitchen yard, the Roman parish church, the "Old Swimming pool" with its historically listed facade dating back to the 1930ies. It is worth spending some time in Herrenstrunden to take in the special character this suburb enjoys.



## The Strunde and its Lyrikpfad <sup>21</sup>

**The Strunde** <sup>21</sup>, a stream that flows through Bergisch Gladbach, has been called "Germany's most industrious river". A hiking or cycling path (20 km) leads from its source at Bergisch Gladbach's eastern-most outskirts to the Rhine in Cologne. You will discover a variety of sights and impressions including forest and marsh, inner-city parks, ancient mills, factory buildings from the Wilhelminian period, picturesque residential areas and much more.

**The poetic trail** <sup>21</sup> at the upper end of the stream is very popular. It displays a variety of poems from local authors on small panels along the banks of the stream.



The Strunde and its Poetic trail

## The valley of the "Schlade" – Geological path <sup>22</sup>

A journey into the world before our times: experience this on the **Bergisch Gladbacher Geopfad** <sup>22</sup>. This route was marked out as a national geotope: palms, sandy beaches and breaking waves from a tropical sea where the Townhall stands today. About 375 million years ago Bergisch Gladbach was situated on the edge of a past continent, on the shore of the warm and shallow sea near the equator. What has remained from those times?



Geological path



Chalk in troth-like earth layers originating from deposits in primeval riffs which formed from sea creatures and skeletons from Devonian times. The chalk was removed for centuries but the quarries – Trockental der Schlade -can still be enjoyed by hikers today. Bergisch Gladbach's geological path guides hikers from the city centre passing delfts and lime kilns to heights east of the city centre and back to the lovely "Strunde Valley", which welcomes visitors with more evidence of chalk and ore mining.



## Idyllic Nature and Architecture in “Bergisches Wanderland”

One information sign of “Bergisches Wanderland”



Hikers are not only invited to discover ancient times: the “Bergisches Wanderland” unlocks idyllic nature with its meadows, forests, streams, dams, half-timbered villages, old castles and churches. Two long-distance quality hiking trails and scores of connecting trails form a whole network of long-distance paths. “Bergisch Rambling” beckons with a number of local specialties. Within the borders of Bergisch Gladbach, the “Bensberger Schlossweg” covers approximately 10 kilometres starting at Bensberg’s baroque castle and passing monuments, soldiers’ graves, streams, ponds as well as quaint and cosy restaurants along the route.

[www.bergisches-wanderland.de](http://www.bergisches-wanderland.de)





# Bergisch Gladbach's treasures and where to find them...

1. Rathaus Stadtmitte  
The Townhall in the city centre
2. Kunstmuseum Villa Zanders  
Villa Zanders
3. St. Laurentius mit Stadtbrunnen  
"St. Laurentius" Church with fountain
4. Bürgerhaus Bergischer Löwe  
Community Centre "Bergischer Löwe"
5. Gnadenkirche  
Church of grace
6. Kulturhaus Zanders
7. LVR-Museum Papiermühle Alte Dombach  
Paper Mill "Alte Dombach"
8. Kindergartenmuseum NRW  
The Kindergarten Museum
9. Schulmuseum Bergisch Gladbach  
School Museum – Cüppers collection
10. Schloss Lerbach
11. Gartensiedlung Gronauerwald  
Gartensiedlung Gronauerwald – leafy residential area
12. Rathaus Bensberg  
Bensberg's Townhall
13. Bergisches Museum  
Museum for mining, handicrafts and trade
14. Grandhotel Schloss Bensberg
15. Bauernhausmuseum Clemens  
farmhouse museum
16. Kardinal Schulte Haus
17. Taufkirche St. Johann Baptist  
Saint John the Baptist
18. Haus Steinbreche
19. Saaler Mühle/Mediterrana
20. Herrenstrunden
21. Lyrikpfad
22. Tal der Schlade – Geopfad  
The valley of the "Schlade" – Geological path

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