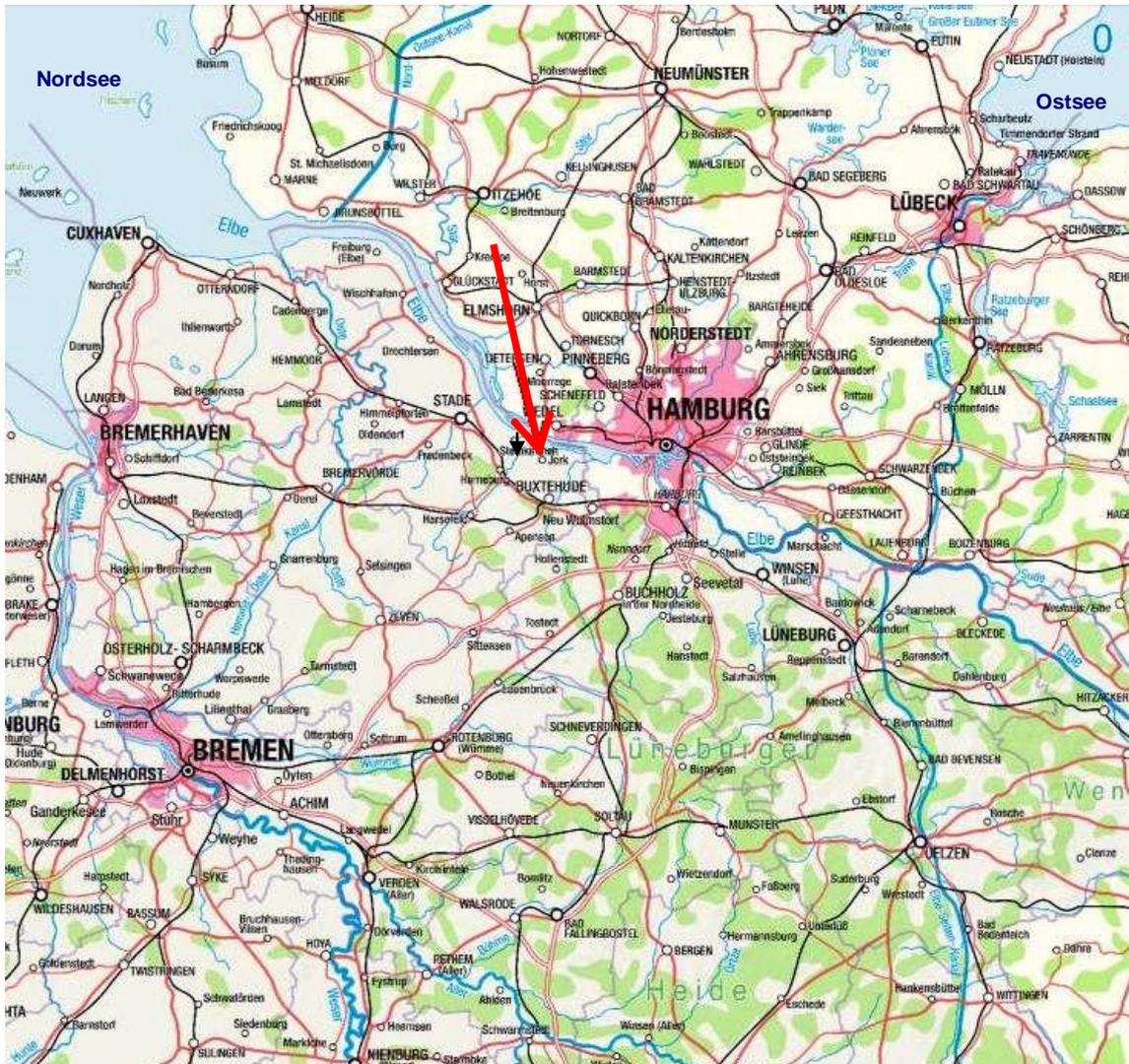
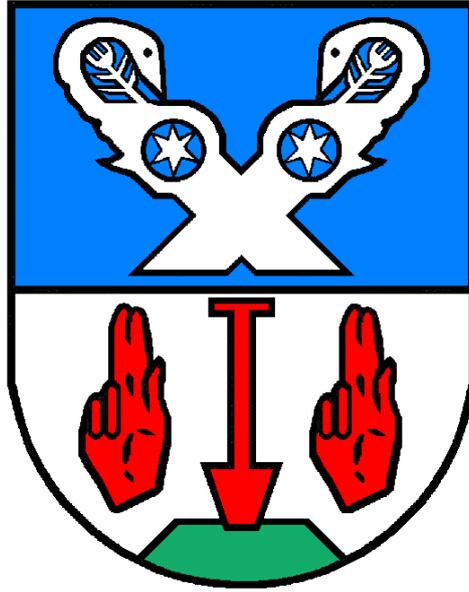


Gemeinde jork



Jork is a town in the "Altes Land", the largest, continuous fruit-growing area in northern Europe. The Lühe and Este, tributaries of the River Elbe, roughly divide the region into three "miles", that even today play a significant role in keeping the area's dykes and land safe from flooding.

Jork comprises the parishes of Jork, Borstel, Ladekop, Königreich, Hove, Moorende and Estebügge, which were originally separate communities, but they became amalgamated in 1972 due to large-scale government re-structuring.

The region's proximity to Hamburg makes the "Altes Land" an ideal local excursion and holiday area. Not only that, the numbers of tourists visiting it are increasing every year, especially in the summer months.



The region's main attraction is the cherry and apple blossom at the end of April and during early May, when acres of trees are transformed into a sea of white and delicate pink.

Autumn is another special time to visit Jork, when all the different apple varieties are ripe for picking. Popular annual events with a fruit theme are: the "Blütenfest" in Jork (Blossom Festival) on the first weekend in May, the Cherry Market in mid-July and the "Altländer Apfeltage", from early September until the beginning of November, when the apples are harvested.



Some interesting facts about fruit-growing in the "Altes Land":

Accounts of fruit-growing in the area go as far back as 1320. By 1657, just 202 hectares (2.02 km² or 0.78 ml²) were held for fruit-growing but, by 1787, "apples, pears, cherries, plums, nuts and many other fruits in enormous quantities" were documented as being cultivated in the region. Today, approx. 900 fruit farmers produce an average of 275 000 tonnes of apples on 10,500 hectares (105 km² or 40.5 ml²) of land.

Cherries (sweet and sour), plums, pears and soft fruit are also grown. 70% of the harvest is marketed via three producer organisations and three co-operatives; and roughly 40 fruit wholesalers market their fruit direct, while 15% of the harvest is sold on the spot, from farm shops or at local markets.



The apples in the area are fine-skinned and have a comparatively high sugar:acid content due to the region's mild, humid climate. It is this that makes the fruit more aromatic and sweeter to the taste than that in warmer areas.

In recent years, average annual investments in new trees, cold storage, sorting and packing machinery etc. were between € 8 and € 10 million. Jork is also home to the North German Competence Centre for Fruit Production, where a staff of 60 carry out research, consultancy and training.

The large farmhouses are typical of the area, with their traditional white, half-timbered façades and neatly-kept front gardens. The "Museum Altes Land" is housed in one of these buildings. The Museum has numerous sections and exhibits that illustrate what local rural life was like in the past.



The region can best be explored by bicycle or inline-skates, as there is an extensive network of purpose-built by-ways and cycle paths. The "Elberadweg" is a cycle path that follows the course of the River Elbe and passes through the area, giving a special perspective to life on and by the river. Walks along the dykes – or levees – of the Elbe, Lühe or Este also give a wider-ranging view of the region.

The ever-rising numbers of day tourists and over-night visitors demonstrate just how popular Jork has become. Many even choose to get married here.

The Jork Town Hall, the traditional-style "Gräfenhof", is noted for its registry office, that has become a special attraction for couples from further afield.

The town's most famous bridegroom was the poet and writer Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who was married to Eva König in Jork in 1776. Nowadays it is film stars and show-business personalities who choose Jork for their marriage ceremonies.



The history of Jork's Town Hall, its "Gräfenhof", goes back to the 12th century. The oldest part of the building, a traditional longhouse, with stables and working quarters, no longer exists. It was replaced when the building was restored between 1974 and 1978, and an extension half the size of the original building was added. When it became too small for the council offices, a new building was erected next to the town-hall, which now houses the administration offices.

Jork not only draws tourists, it is also an attractive place to live. This is borne out by its steadily-growing population. It has a well-developed infrastructure, with two primary schools, and a centrally-situated school centre for both secondary and comprehensive schools. The nearest grammar school is in the neighbouring town of Buxtehude. Jork also has five kindergartens, and a church-run playgroup in Estebügg. Jork and Estebügg have an additional after-school care centre, where children can get meals and afternoon supervision.

The Stade region, to which Jork belongs, has been part of the Hamburg Verkehrsverbund (HVV, the mass transit association) since 2006. At the end of 2007 regional rail services were extended as far as Stade. This means that the train stations at Buxtehude-Neukloster, Buxtehude, Dollern and Horneburg now connect the area to Hamburg by public transport. In addition there are ferry connections over the River Elbe from the jetties at Lühe and Cranz.

Jork has numerous societies, associations and fine arts events, all of which enhance the town's social and cultural life. There are three rifle clubs with a long tradition and the rifle guild in Estebügg even dates back to 1612. The town's various sports clubs offer a wide scope of activities for members of all ages.



A wide variety of cultural events are also held in the town, such as regular classical concerts in the Museum, exhibitions and the annual "Lessing-Gespräche", a series of talks that commemorate the famous writer.

If the above information has made you curious, why not come and visit us? When you do, we wish you a most enjoyable stay. Also, if you choose to move here, we hope you enjoy every minute in the area.

Jork's town homepage can be visited on www.jork.de. We also have a tourist office that offers a wide assortment of regional information (see: www.mein-altesland.de).

And – most important of all – we are open for any complaints you may have. Just let us know.

And – most importantly of all – if something displeases you, do not hesitate to tell us!



Gerd Hubert, Mayor

Facts and figures about Jork:

<i>Location:</i>	<i>"Altes Land", District of Stade, Lower Saxony</i>	
<i>Area:</i>	<i>62.3 km² (24.05 sq. miles)</i>	
<i>Population:</i>	<i>11 875</i>	
<i>Population per km²:</i>	<i>190.7</i>	
<i>Commercial sectors:</i>	<i>Agriculture and forestry</i>	<i>11.5%</i>
	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>4.1%</i>
	<i>Building and construction</i>	<i>8.9%</i>
	<i>Trade, catering and hotels, transport</i>	<i>41.3%</i>
	<i>Services sector</i>	<i>34.1%</i>
<i>Major business sector</i>	<i>Fruit-growing</i>	

Produced by:
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