

Hamburg:

Multicultural and Modern

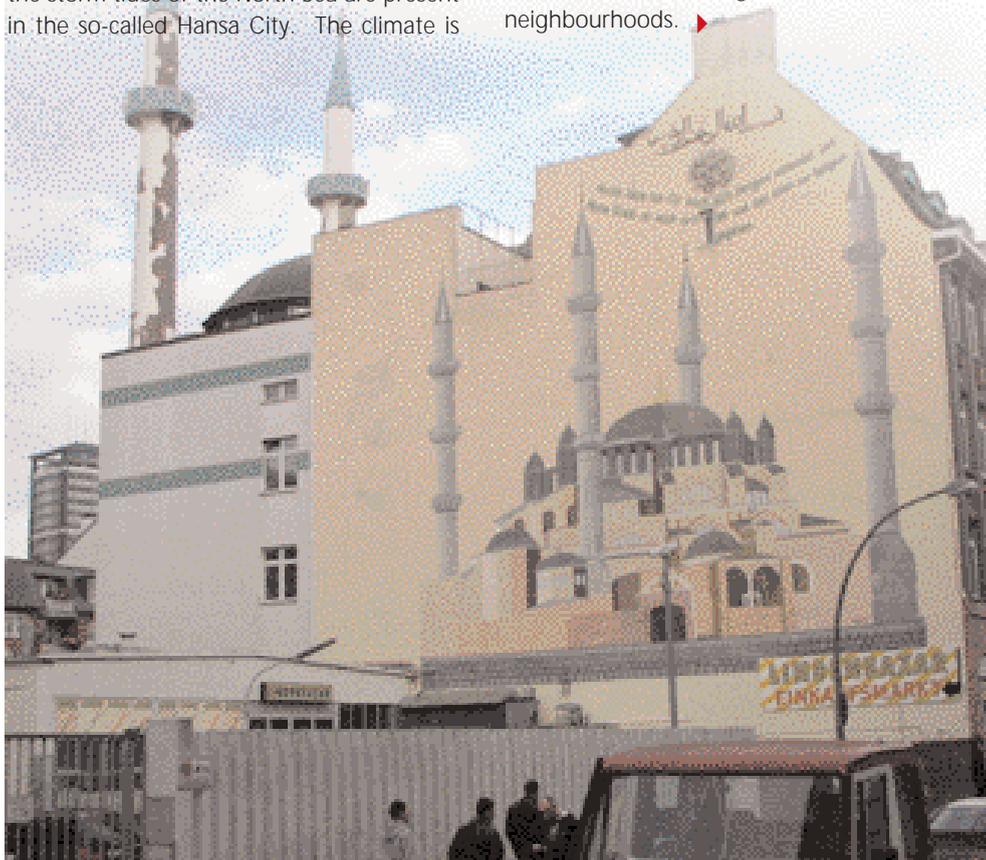
> Johannes Bardong

Germany's second largest city with the largest German harbour is called "Gateway to the World". Trade and shipping brought the metropolis on the Elba River in the northern plains of Germany wealth and urbanity and a cosmopolitan flair. In Hamburg you will find at least sixty mosques.

The broad natural expanse of the Elba in the centre of the city is the basis for the formation of the largest harbour in Germany. Although it is another 110 kilometres before the Elba reaches the North Sea, the maritime flavour of Hamburg is noticeable all over the city. The tides and the storm tides of the North Sea are present in the so-called Hansa City. The climate is

typically mild but constantly varying and often foggy and rainy.

The parts of town on both sides of the Elba are connected by bridges and tunnels. The Alster, a tributary of the Elbe, has been dammed in the city centre into Alster Lake. Before the extensive construction of embankments, flooding often covered entire neighbourhoods. ▶



Centrum Mosque



Inside the Centrum Mosque في داخل المسجد المركزي



Visitors are always welcome in the Centrum Mosque الزوار يستقبلون بالترحيب في المسجد المركزي



On the way to the Centrum Mosque في الطريق إلى المسجد المركزي

المسجد المركزي



Shops at Hansaplatz where you can feel the oriental touch

محلات شرقية في الهانزبلاتز



Hansaplatz

الهانزبلاتز

History

Due to the rights granted to Hamburg to run a harbour and conduct trade, the city developed into a flourishing trade centre. Hamburg was the founding member of the Hanseatic League, an alliance of trading guilds that established and maintained a trade monopoly over the Baltic Sea, to a certain extent the North Sea, and most of Northern Europe for a time in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period, between the 13th and 17th centuries. Despite occasional setbacks through times of occupation by Denmark, France and Russia, the Elba Metropolis remained the most important seat of trade in northern Germany. The extensive bombings in World War II and the storm flooding of 1962 could not take away Hamburg's position. Today Hamburg is a leader not only in shipping but in producing aircraft and the site of media corporations.

The "Michel", the Town's Landmark

The highest point over sea level in Hamburg is 100 meters. Thus, its skyline is characterized by the towers of the five main churches and the towers of the town hall, completed in 1897, with the appearance of a castle. The tower of St. Michael is called "Michael" and is the landmark of the city. It is possible to climb the tower, where a fantastic view of the surroundings awaits.

Religion and Multiculturalism

The city with 1.8 million inhabitants has

always strived for the greatest freedom possible for trade and for political independence. The economic importance of Hamburg as regards exports led to the establishment of more than one hundred consulates. And as a result of shipping and the large number of immigrants who have been arriving in Hamburg since the 60s, many languages are spoken. In the suburbs of Altona, St. Georg, Veddel and Wilhelmsburg, Turkish, Kurdish, Portuguese, Russian and Polish are to be heard. Today approximately 250,000 Hamburg residents are not German citizens. Two-thirds are Muslims. At Hansa Square, the spirit of the Orient can be experienced with many shops featuring Arabic specialties, cafes and barber shops – a kind of bazaar with a touch of Hamburg. There is also a Turkish bath. If you don't mind the stiff price, you can have yourself pampered in true Arabic style at Feldberg Square.

Since the Reformation, Hamburg and all of northern Germany are mainly Protestant. But Hamburg has always been open to all denominations. As early as 1834 the first Baptist community was established. Even though the number of Catholics is less than 10%, 1995 Hamburg boasts of a bishop and a cathedral. St. Marien is on the edge of the suburb of St. Georg. The area which lies outside of what was once the city walls was an area at high risk of flooding. Catholics and a number of Seventh Day Adventists were located here.

Not far from the cathedral the Centrum Moschee (Mosque) is to be found with the largest congregation of Muslims in Hamburg. There are more than 60 mosque communities in Hamburg – 13 of them are in St. Georg. The first mosques were set up in inner court yards.

Mosques

In 1957 the Fazl-e-Umar Mosque was the first mosque in Hamburg and also the first mosque in Germany. The most famous Hamburg mosque is the Imam Ali Mosque on Alster Lake, which was erected only slightly later in 1961 with the support of the clerics in Qom, Iran. It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful in Germany. It is a free-standing sacred building, not like the normal mosques erected in courtyards away from the main streets.

The building received financial support from the Iranian Community in Hamburg. Hamburg is the most important market for carpets worldwide. The 20,000 Iranians residing in Hamburg can trace their history to the carpet trading of the 19th century. The State President Hojjatolislam Seyyed Mohammad Khatami was head of the congregation of Imam Ali Mosque in Hamburg for two years in the 80s.

The Centrum Mosque in the suburb of St. Georg is run by the Milli Görüs Organization, and this organization enjoys popularity among the large number of Turkish residents of Hamburg. Although ▶

the building is not completely free-standing, its two minarets and the wall paintings on the façade make it recognizable from a distance. Visitors of all faiths are welcome and will find hospitality and a barber's shop, a book shop, and a beautifully decorated prayer room. Questions regarding Islam and the mosque will be gladly answered.

Sightseeing, Events and Shopping

The cultural and shopping possibilities in Hamburg should not be ignored. The life of luxury can be seen at the Jungfernstieg. In the northeastern side of downtown, you will come upon canals connecting the city to the harbour which used to be important for transport in the city. At the harbour, the Warehouse City can be admired, the Landungs bridge, the "Old Elba Tunnel", the Hamburg Fish Market and the Fish Auction Hall and then a lovely walk (or ride) to the Blankenese Village with its conglomeration of houses winding up a hill with stairs from house to house. The harbour is of such interest that it draws 8,000,000 visitors a year and is thus one of Germany's most popular attractions. Every few minutes you can pick a boat for a roundtrip where you will learn much about the harbour mixed with some typical cock-and-bull stories. ■



One of the many theatres near the main station

واحد من المسارح العديدة قرب المحطة الرئيسية

Tips and Information

There are twenty theatres numerous cinemas and about 50 museums.

You will find musicals such as The Lion King, boat rides, a museum with the world's biggest model railway, fish markets, and make sure you take time to enjoy the wonderful restaurants to be found in Hamburg.

Click on <http://www.hamburg-tourism.de/Sightseeing> to find more information about what to see.

StattReisen offers thematic city walks in the German language and is able to manage individual tours in English, see: www.stattreisen-hamburg.de.

If you have the chance visit the St.-Pauli Fish market each Sunday from 7 to 10 am (in winter) where you will be able to enjoy numerous delights.



Only the towers of the five churches dominate the city on a foggy morning

فقط أبراج الكنائس الخمس ترى في أيام الضباب