

# Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

## Route 7 5 Stops

Put down the pint, the pretzel, and the sausage. The real German love affair is with asparagus, or Spargel. From April to June, you'll see it light up cozy food stalls and star on restaurant menus around the country—but particularly along the [Lower Saxony Asparagus Route](#). This 466-mile loop in Germany's northwest ventures from ancient cathedrals to dense forests to world-class museums and ornate palaces. The possible stops are nearly endless, but below you'll find a few of the most memorable—and most buttery—highlights.



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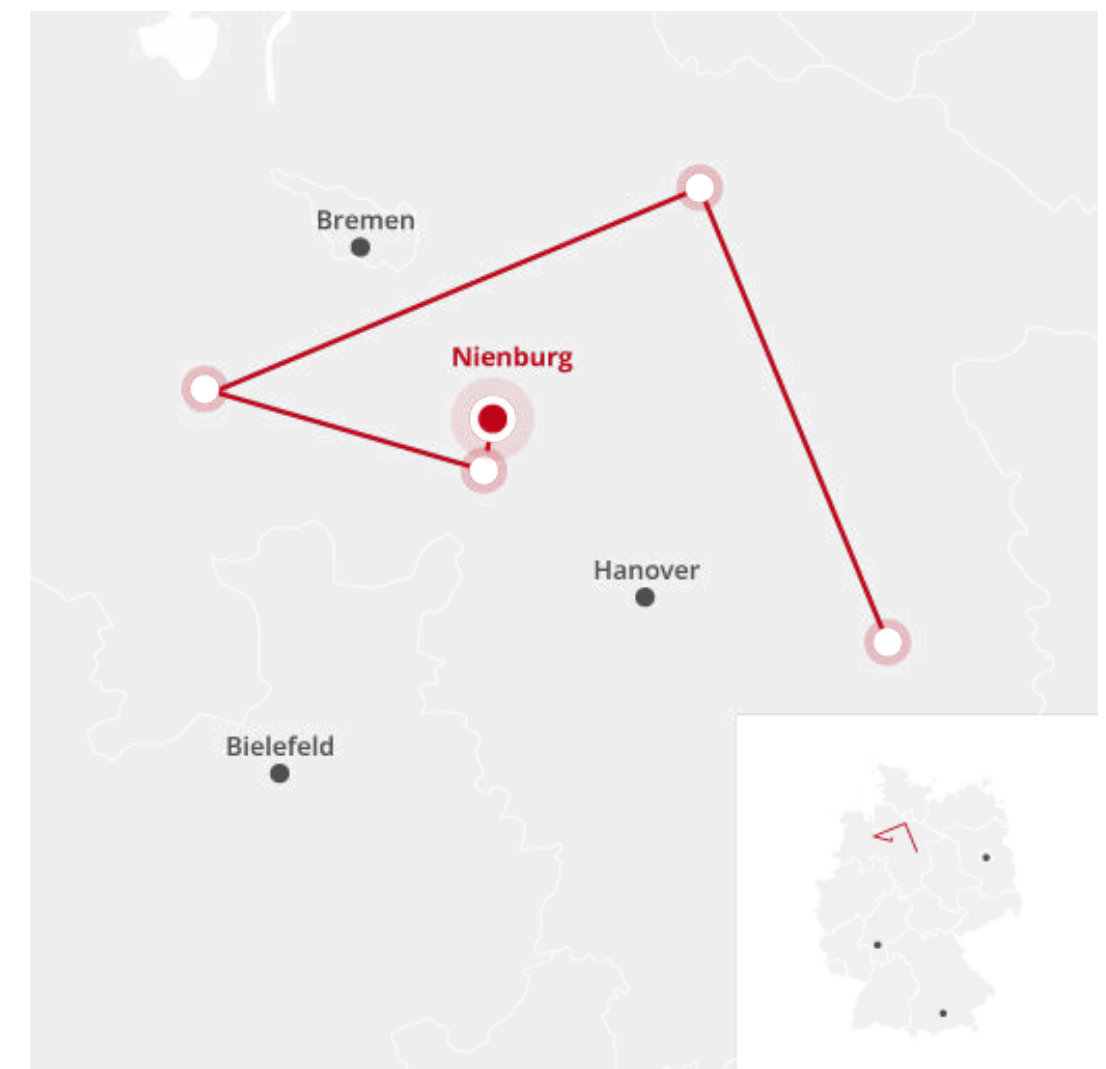
Stop 1 on Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

# Nienburg

Lying on the Weser River between Hanover and Bremen, Nienburg is a sizable town—population: 32,000—with a rich and turbulent history. It's been occupied several times over the centuries, even briefly becoming part of the French Empire during the Napoleonic Wars. Perhaps the best remembered historical incident, though, was in 1625 during the Thirty Years War, when a group of daring locals snuck into the camp of occupying commander Graf von Tilly. They made off with a tent and a flag, an escapade you can still enjoy to this day—it's reenacted annually here in town.

Visitors will also want to explore the Fresenhof, the handsome two-story timbered building that hosts the Nienburg Museum. Afterward, be sure to stop by a local restaurant to sample regional dishes, like Nienburg asparagus with ham, kale with Braegenwurst, and sauerkraut with smoked pork.

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Stop 2 on Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

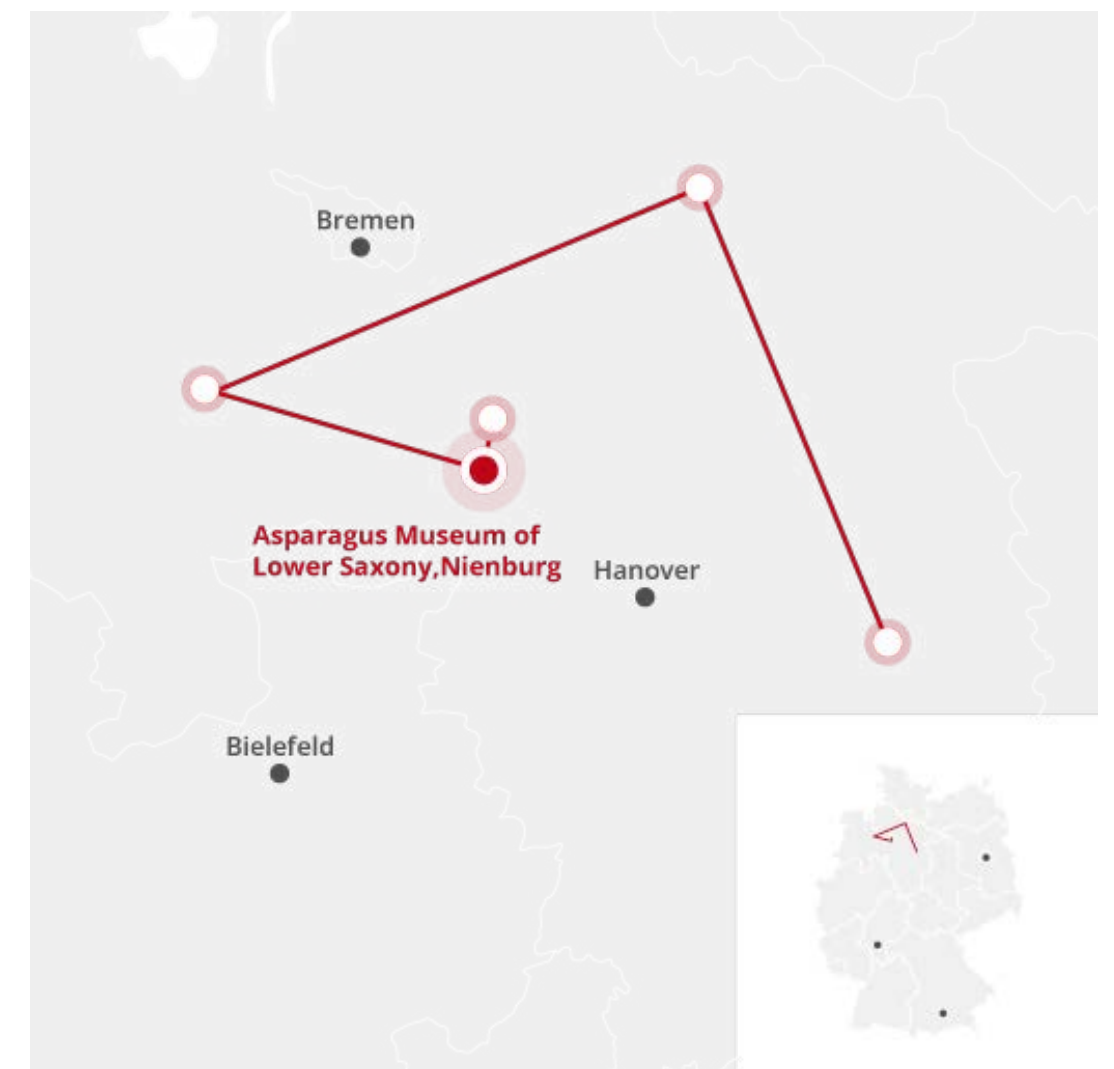
# Asparagus Museum of Lower Saxony, Nienburg

Photo: Shutterstock/beats1

Nienburg is also the best place to get an overview of the Lower Saxony Asparagus Route itself. Your prime destination: the Asparagus Museum (one of three such museums in the country—proving just how much Germans love their Spargel!). It's comprehensive and atmospheric, largely thanks to its setting inside a 17th-century Rauchhaus (smokehouse) surrounded by a pleasant Biedermeier-style garden.

True to its name, the museum covers everything you'd ever need to know about asparagus. There are models and films, an original harvesting machine, and the very first asparagus-peeling machine. Space is, of course, given to local asparagus production in Nienburg, Braunschweig, and Burgdorf—which dates back some 150 years.

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Stop 3 on Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

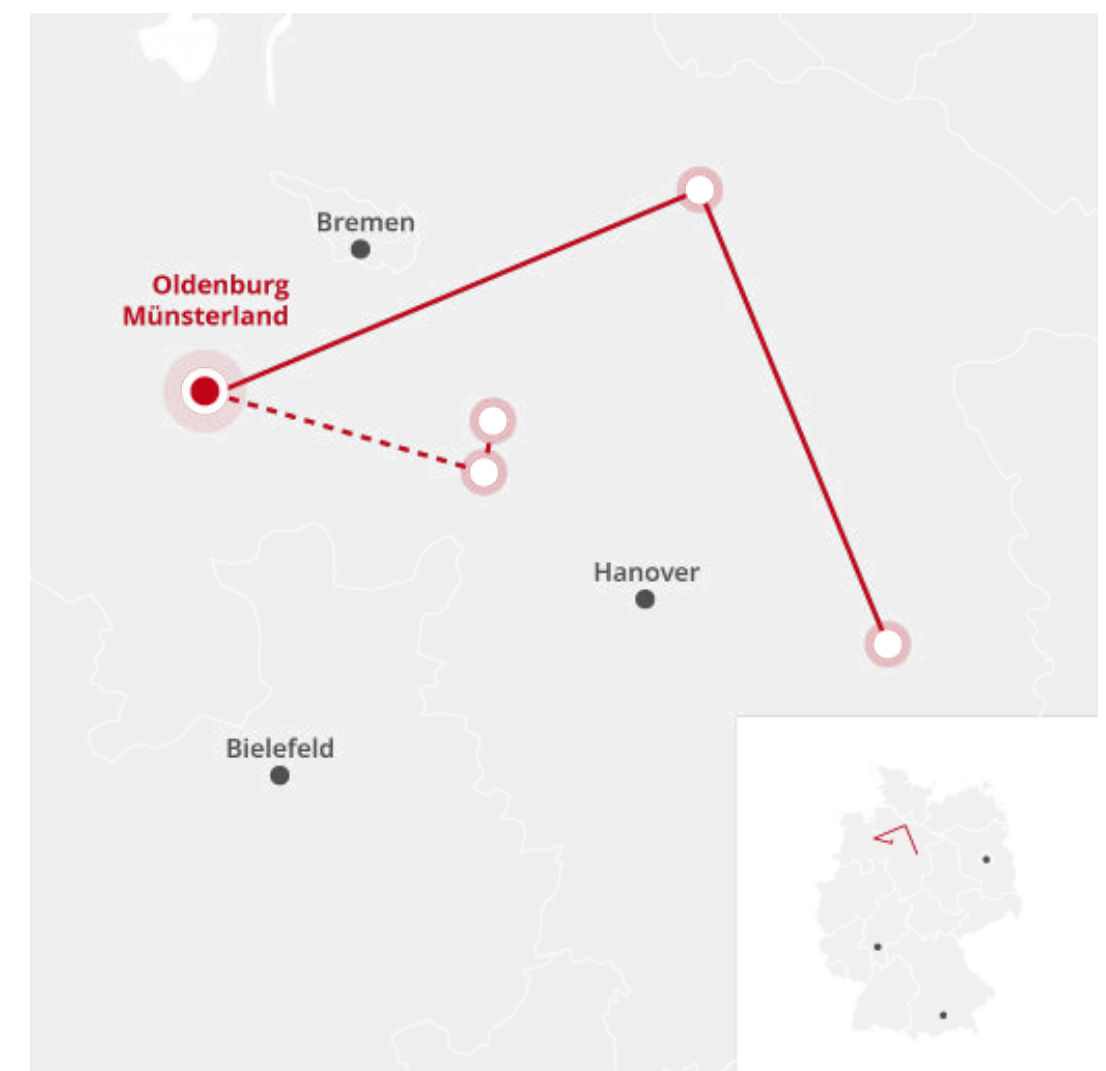
# Oldenburg Münsterland

Photo: Francesco Carovillano / GNTB

The Oldenburg Münsterland is a dream for cyclists. Over 60 trails crisscross the region, many of them organized by a savvy numbering system that reduces the need for maps. Trails range from short and looping to longer-distance paths like the Three Lakes route, which runs for 160 miles through the Dammer Mountains, along fields of heather and geest, and to scenic areas like the Zwischenahner Sea and the Ammerland.

It also stops by small towns like Cloppenburg—which has the oldest museum village in Germany—and Münster, with its striking 13th-century cathedral, Gothic city hall, and Pablo Picasso Museum. At Lohner, the Industrial Museum tells the 200-year-old history of the town, while the Wildeshauser Geest Nature Park has woodlands and sand dunes to explore in addition to moors and heathlands.

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Stop 4 on Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

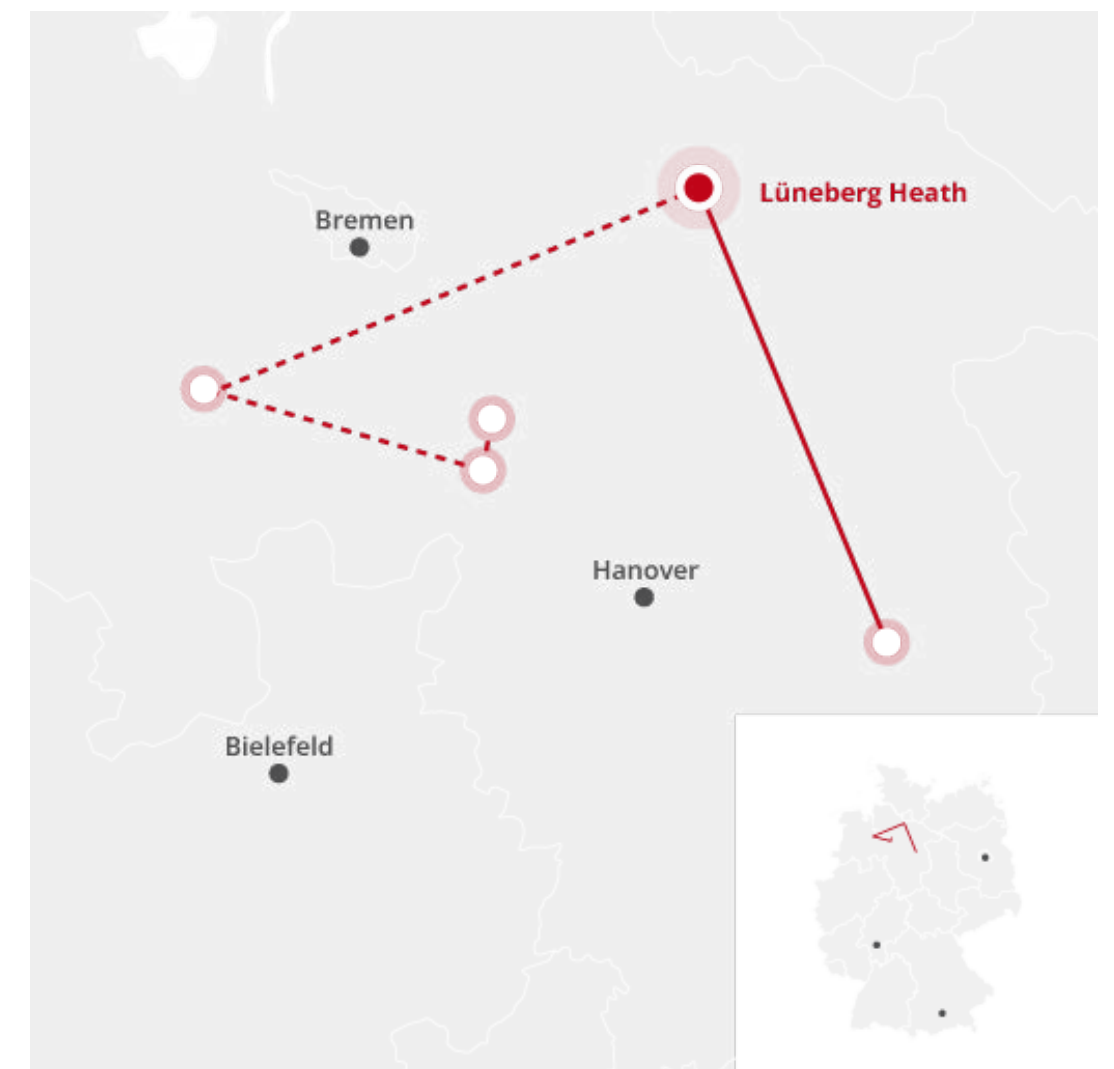
# Lüneburg Heath

Photo: Markus Tiemann / Lüneburger Heide GmbH

Lüneburg Heath lies in the northeast of Lower Saxony, easily accessible from Hamburg, Hanover, and Bremen. Named after the charming town of Lüneburg, the majority of the area is a nature reserve rife with dense forests, sprawling meadows, and cultivated fields that brim with purple heather. These landscapes are dotted with picturesque traditional villages and historic farmhouses that still sport thatched roofs.

The Lüneburg Heath Nature Park—the first of its kind in Germany—is a generous 265,000 acres, and it's one of the best places to admire the heather when it blossoms in August and September. Visitors can also enjoy Celle's striking ducal palace; the old town of Lüneburg itself, with its impressive brick-Gothic buildings and stunning town hall; and, especially if you have kids, the vast Heide Park amusement park. There are plenty of walking and cycling trails in the region as well.

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Stop 5 on Lower Saxony Asparagus Route

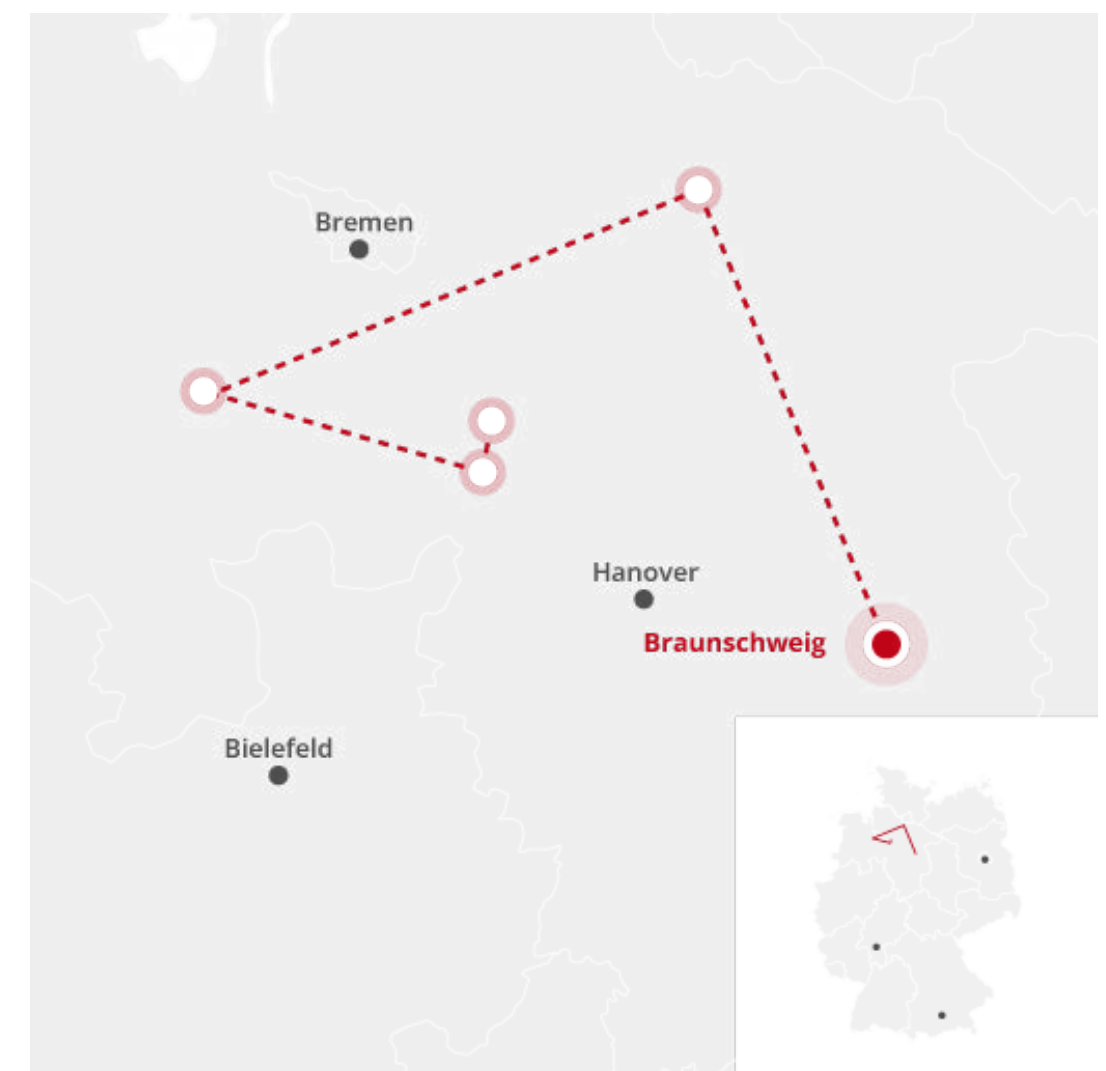
# Braunschweig

Photo: Shutterstock/Rene Hartmann

Dating back to at least the 11th century, the town of Braunschweig—also known as Brunswick—lies north of the Harz Mountains. Part of the Hanseatic League, it was an important trading town in medieval times, famously ruled by Henry the Lion, whose son (Otto of Brunswick) became the German emperor in 1209. The town's main landmark is a replica of the Lion of Brunswick, which sits on the Burgplatz, adjacent to Dankwarderode Castle—the original lion statue is housed in the soaring Brunswick Cathedral.

Other sights to seek out include the grand Brunswick Palace, home of the Schlossmuseum, and the Raabe-House, where renowned German author Wilhelm Raabe lived for almost a decade until his death in 1910 (it now functions as a museum and venue for literary events). The town also offers the world's oldest Jewish museum, the State Natural History Museum, and the Museum of Photography.

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