



## EXPERIENCE

Welcome to Erkner, a charming little town right in between the vibrant metropolis Berlin and the tranquil natural landscape of Brandenburg. If you are looking for a place to enjoy culture, discover nature and do sports, you have found the right spot: either directly in town or in the surrounding area called Seenland Oder-Spree – shaped by its many lakes, meadows and forests.

A wide range of events offers special experiences year-round. Despite highlights such as “Spreetreiben” or “Heimatfest”, a variety of museums, associations and others present a diverse program. A fascinating, diverse landscape around the town provides the basis for many different sports and recreation opportunities.

If you plan to stay overnight or even for a longer vacation, private hosts as well as guesthouses and hotels will be happy to host you. Furthermore, you can enjoy Erkner’s many restaurants, cafes, bars and even a local coffee roastery.

More than 440 years in existence, Erkner is no longer a small fishing settlement. It has grown into a versatile cultural center that has managed to preserve its charming landscape of forests and lakes, close to the vibrant life of the capital Berlin.



## HISTORY

First traces of settlement prove that people lived in the area as early as the Old Stone Age. However, Erkner was not mentioned in documents until 1579, when mostly fishermen and their families settled here.

Later, during the Frederician internal colonization in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, three Palatinate families were relocated to the area. Shortly after, a mulberry plantation was laid out for silk farming. A single mulberry tree and the local history museum act as reminders of that time.

In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, shipping became increasingly important, as the transport of limestone from the neighboring village Rüdersdorf to Berlin lead through Erkner’s waters. It formed an essential basis of existence for many families in the area. However, it was the expansion of the railway in 1842 and the evolving industrialization, that led to the development into a popular residential and vacation spot.

Given its positive reputation, the artist Gerhart Hauptmann moved to Erkner in 1885 to aid his recovery from lung disease and lived here for about four years. Inspired by the area’s landscape and its inhabitants, his interest in writing arose. Hauptmann and his work left a huge impact, resulting in the city’s name affix in 2012. Likewise, the piano manufacturer Carl Bechstein or the Bakelite factory influenced the life and work in the municipality.

Yet, the outbreak of the Second World War abruptly stopped Erkner’s development, as many areas and buildings were destroyed. Right up until the mid-1970s, the town center remained in a state of disrepair. Thus, Erkner combines architectural styles from various epochs until today: art nouveau, Gründerzeit, the industrial structure of the GDR and modern buildings.

## DEVELOPMENT

9600 – 5300 B. C.	First traces of settlement, finds (e.g. at Flakensee) prove presence of Stone Age people	
2100 – 800 B. C.	Bronze Age settlement, e.g. at Sonnenluch	
January 28 <sup>th</sup> 1579	First documentary mention in church book of Rüdersdorf as “Arckenow”	
1711/1712	A post office and the first bridge built “on the Erkner” along the post route Berlin-Silesia	
1748	In the course of the Frederician internal colonization three Palatinate families were settled “on the Buchhorst” (today Neuseeland), the homesteads burnt down in 1761 and were built anew on Neu-Buchhorst	
1752	By order of Frederick II, a mulberry plantation for sericulture with 1,500 trees was laid out, located in today’s center	
1842	The Berlin-Frankfurt Railway (Niederschlesisch-Märkische as of 1845) went into operation, a station was installed in Erkner	
1854	Construction of the first school building	
1860/1861	Formation of the “Theerproductenfabrik” (tar factory) by Julius Rütgers	
1885 – 1889	Gerhart Hauptmann lived in Erkner in the “Villa Lassen”	
1889	The municipality was officially named “Erkner”	
1889	Construction of the “Villa Bechstein” as summer residence for the piano manufacturer (today’s town hall)	
1897	Consecration of the Protestant church of Gennesareth (Genezareth-Kirche)	
1910	Formation of the Bakelite GmbH and start of the industrial mass production of phenolic resins	
1911	Erkner became a self-administering municipality	
1914 – 1918	More than 130 residents died in World War I	
1919	Resolution to build the residential area “Siedlung Eigenheim”, today’s Bahnhofsiedlung	
1928	Erkner became final stop of the electrified Berlin S-Bahn	
1932	Consecration of the Catholic church St. Boniface (St. Bonifatius)	

March 8 <sup>th</sup> 1944	An Allied bombing destroyed large parts of the town center and the area around the train station, killing more than 230 people	
April 21 <sup>st</sup> 1945	Erkner was passed on to the Red Army with little resistance	
1949	Consecration of the rebuilt church of St. Boniface	
1958	Consecration of the rebuilt church of Gennesareth	
1962	Opening of the Gerhart Hauptmann memorial	
1964	Foundation of the local history archive	
1977	Start of reconstruction of the destroyed town center	
1984	Inauguration of the Memorial for the Victims of March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 1944 on the cemetery	
1987	Opening of the Gerhart-Hauptmann-Museum on the occasion of the poet’s 125 <sup>th</sup> birthday	
1992	The new municipal coat of arms with a mulberry tree was confirmed	
1994	Inauguration of the Memorial for the Dead of the Bombing on March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 1944 as well as for the Victims of War, Fascism and Tyranny	
1995	Relocation of the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (Leibniz-Institut für Raumbezogene Sozialforschung) into the former Bakelite factory, built in 1913	
1995	Opening of the Bildungszentrum Erkner (convention hotel)	
1996	Opening of the “Museumshof am Sonnenluch” (farmyard with local history museum)	
June 6 <sup>th</sup> 1998	The municipality Erkner received its town charter	
2009	Erkner received status as middle order center	
2009	Opening of the “Autobahngeschichtliche Sammlung” (motorway history museum)	
2012	Introduction of the name affix Gerhart-Hauptmann-Stadt	
2021	Redevelopment of the square in front of the church of Gennesareth	

## HOW TO GET HERE

### BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Regionalexpress RE1 runs every 30 minutes, taking you to Erkner from Berlin Central station in about half an hour or from Potsdam Central station in about one hour. Alternatively, you can take the Berlin S-Bahn S3. Erkner is part of the fare zone C. Further information on public transport options can be found on [www.vbb.de](http://www.vbb.de).

### BY CAR

The motorway exit Erkner is located on the eastern part of the A10, from which the town center is only two kilometers away.

### BY BIKE

The Europa-Radweg R1 passes Erkner from west to east. The Spreeradweg, starting in Berlin, runs southwards.

### BY WATER

On the northern riverwalk of the Dämeritzsee there is a pier for cruise lines and nearby the landing pier “48-h-Sportbootliegestelle” for two boats only. At Rathauspark, just on the opposite bank, “Stadtanleger” offers several spots (first come, first served basis). The campground Jägerbude also has a landing pier.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**Town hall Erkner**  
Friedrichstraße 6 – 8  
15537 Erkner  
Telephone +49 3362 795-0  
[tourismus@erkner.de](mailto:tourismus@erkner.de)  
[www.erkner.de](http://www.erkner.de)  
Monday – Thursday 7 am – 6 pm  
Friday 7 am – 4 pm



## HISTORICAL FIGURES

- **Heinrich Catholy (1825 – 1894)** | He was the last hereditary mayor and, from 1874, the first elected community leader in the I. Rüdersdorfer Heidedistrict (officially referred to as “Erkner” from 1889).
- **Carl Bechstein (1826 – 1900)** | The Berlin piano manufacturer maintained a very close relationship to Erkner. He spent many days of rest in his mansion, received national as well as international music guests and acted as a benefactor of the small community.
- **Julius Rütgers (1830 – 1903)** | The formation of his “Theerproductenfabrik” (tar factory) laid the foundation for Erkner becoming a chemical site and supplied the industry with essential raw materials.
- **Hermann Spindler (1848 – 1922)** | Community representative, master plumber and founder of numerous associations, such as the Erkner volunteer fire department in 1889.
- **Gerhart Hauptmann (1862 – 1946)** | Nobel laureate in literature (1912) whose interest in writing evolved during his time in Erkner. Many of his works, e.g. “Bahnwärter Thiel”, are set in or around Erkner, and local residents as well as events are reflected in his characters and stories.
- **Leo Hendrik Baekeland (1863 – 1944)** | The chemist invented the phenolic resin Bakelite in 1907, the key materials for its production were obtained from Rütgers’ factory.
- **Prof. Dr. Albert Kieckebusch (1870 – 1935)** | As director of the prehistoric department of the Märkisches Museum Berlin, the archaeologist led or initiated many excavations around Berlin. He lived in the area of Hohenbinde for many years and was buried on the cemetery of Erkner.
- **Adolf Baumert (1895 – 1969)** | Significantly took part in the surrender of Erkner to the Red Army.
- **Walter Sawall (1899 – 1953)** | Professional cyclist and two-time motor-paced race world champion who lived and died in Erkner.
- **Dr. Bernd Rühle (1932 – 2014)** | Local historian, cultural director, director of the local history museum and honorary citizen.
- **Helga M. Novak (1935 – 2013)** | The well-known writer of prose and poetry spent her youth and final years in Erkner.
- **Sabina Grzimek (1942)** | Internationally renowned sculptor, painter and graphic artist temporarily living in Erkner.



## EVENTS

Given a wide range of events, such as concerts, theater performances or bicycle tours, almost every week has something special in store. Besides those highlights mentioned below, Baeke-landtag, Pfingstkonzert or IRONMAN 70.3 Erkner are just a few other major annual events. For more dates and details, please visit our website.

### SPREETREIBEN

Starting from a bridge in Neu Zittau, the participants of this special Easter event drift on the river Spree for about 5 km until they reach the finish line in Erkner. Not only do they face the cold waters, they also have the most curious costumes and swimming aids imaginable. At the finish, a blazing Easter bonfire, hot drinks, thrilling music and a stunning firework do their best to warm everyone up again. It is a long-standing event attracting not only more than 200 participants but also hundreds of spectators.

### HEIMATFEST

The city festival in early summer, with its numerous attractions, showmen, market stalls and diverse program, is a rare gathering of almost all participants of social life celebrating the city’s history and culture. A festival parade is traditionally held on Saturday, including the unique illustration of the local history by actors in historical costumes. For example, the first citizen is joined by Frederick II of Brandenburg or figures from Gerhart Hauptmann’s stories. The little ones will especially enjoy the children’s festival on Sunday.



### KOLONISTENFEST

The Kolonistenfest at Museumshof am Sonnenluch refers to the settlement of colonists in Erkner in the 18th century. A historical lecture and a short play illustrate aspects of that time. Those fascinated by the precious costumes will enjoy the dance act, as it gives an impression of what it was like attending a ball in the court of King Frederick II of Brandenburg.

Strolling through the yard filled with market stalls, you may note traditional craftsmen at work or enjoy palatinate specialties, offered along with fresh bread, hand-made butter and cakes from a wood-stove. Besides, there are opportunities for children to do arts and crafts or play around, feed the sheep or ride the ponys.

### LITERATURE & CULTURE IN HONOR OF HAUPTMANN

Lectures, readings, concerts, film screenings and a regular writing workshop have long been part of the Gerhart-Hauptmann-Museum’s event calendar. Although the traditional Gerhart-Hauptmann-Days will not take place due to the museum’s renovation, cultural and literary events will still be offered on the occasion of the writer’s birthday.

### WEIHNACHTLICHER MARKT & LICHTERFEST

The Christmas market at Museumshof am Sonnenluch is the local kick-off for the holy season, featuring a little cultural program. Taking place the Friday of the first weekend in Advent, it has a special cozy atmosphere inviting everyone to stroll through the market stalls offering Christmas decorations and handcrafts as well as delicacies. Despite crafting and painting activities, children will especially enjoy a talk with Santa Claus.

The Lichterfest starts on Saturday afternoon when the lights around town are switched on. It features a diverse stage program, market stalls, a lantern parade and the traditional cutting of a giant Christmas stollen.



## ACTIVITIES

### HIKING

Even Gerhart Hauptmann loved strolling through Brandenburg’s lonesome forests, serving as a unique source of inspiration. Visitors can choose from a variety of hiking trails, leading through the area’s characteristic landscape of forests and waters.

### CYCLING

Erkner is the starting point for numerous bicycle tours, both taxing as well as easy. Following Spreeradweg, Europaradweg or Oder-Spree-Tour day trips or multi-day tours are possible.

### WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Various lakes and streams offer opportunities for fishing, swimming and picnicking. Those wanting to explore rather hidden spots by water may rent a boat, canoe or SUP board. Others might enjoy a ride with a local cruise line.

- Fishing license** BigFish Angelshop
- Boat rentals** Bootshaus Burchardt, Badebar Erkner, mietdeinboot
- Cruises** Reederei Kutzker

If you plan to stay a little longer, you should explore the surrounding areas, such as the wildlife reserve Löcknitztal or the limestone quarry in Rüdersdorf. For further information see [www.seenland-oderspree.de](http://www.seenland-oderspree.de).

### IMPRINT

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## HISTORY | CULTURE | NATURE

**Erkner**  
Gerhart\_Hauptmann\_Stadt



**discover**



## THINGS TO SEE

Get a taste of history walking along the central Friedrichstraße. Some of the spots to see are listed below, including highlights for culturati just as well as lovers of nature.

### 1 VILLA BECHSTEIN (TOWN HALL)

Approaching from the train station, one of the first things to see will be the town hall with its historic neo-Renaissance part. Having chosen Erkner as his summer residence, the piano manufacturer Carl Bechstein had it built in 1889. A Bechstein piano from 1909 can still be found inside the town hall, a commemorative plaque is attached to the facade of the building as a reminder. Several halls of the complex serve as areas for ever-changing exhibitions of art. The tourist information is located on the main floor.

Friedrichstraße 6 - 8 | +49 3362 795-0  
tourismus@erkner.de | www.erkner.de  
Monday - Thursday 7 am - 6 pm | Friday 7 am - 4 pm

### 2 RATHAUSPARK

Bechsteins former backyard now serves as a public park with some rare trees even dating back to his days. Enjoy a picnic amidst unique trees such as ailanthus or Caucasian wingnut and let your eye wander over the Dämeritzsee.

### 3 KUNSTSTOFF- UND CHEMIEKABINETT (EXHIBITION OF PLASTICS AND CHEMISTRY)

The showroom hosts a changing exhibition on everyday objects made from Bakelite as well as about the chemical industry of Erkner and the area. A permanent exhibition can be found at Museumshof am Sonnenluch 10.

Beuststraße 1 | +49 3362 6533480  
chemieverein.erkner@gmx.de  
www.chemieforum-erkner.de  
Wednesday 2 - 5 pm

### 4 MULBERRY TREE & FLORAL CLOCK

The more than 270-year-old tree is the only original from the days of Frederick II of Brandenburg and his internal colonization. Given its resilience through time and war, it was chosen to be the key element of the municipal coat of arms. The large floral clock in the background also attracts attention, as its seasonal planting changes the area's appearance throughout the year. On the other side of the street, you can find a copy of a former Prussian post milestone 5.

### 6 EVANGELISCHE GENEZARETH-KIRCHE (PROTESTANT CHURCH)

The neo-Gothic church was built out of lime and brick in 1897, under the patronage of the German Empress Auguste Viktoria. The property had been donated by Carl Bechstein and the church bells were a gift by his sons. Except for its foundations and the steeple, the church was destroyed during a bombing in 1944. After reconstruction, the consecration took place in 1958. Shortly after, in 1961, an organ from the German manufacturer Sauer was installed. The church also hosts events, such as concerts and exhibitions.

Friedrichstraße 24 | +49 3362 3335  
evangelus@ekkos.de | www.evangelus.de  
May - September | Monday - Saturday 1 - 4 pm



### 7 GERHART-HAUPTMANN-MUSEUM

The Villa Lassen, built around 1870, was home to Gerhart Hauptmann from 1885 to 1889. The museum and its permanent exhibition with information about the life and work of the Nobel laureate in literature, who wrote his very first novels in the premises, was opened in 1987. The museum features a small park with sculptures by Sabina Grzimek and hosts cultural events such as the Gerhart-Hauptmann-Tage, theater plays or guided bike tours.

The museum will be closed for a couple years due to reconstruction, events are hosted elsewhere (see website for details).

Gerhart-Hauptmann-Straße 1 - 2  
Administration: Friedrichstraße 67 | +49 3362 3663  
info@hauptmannmuseum.de  
www.hauptmannmuseum.de

8 The MEMORIAL FOR THE VICTIMS OF WAR, FASCISM AND TYRANNY and the 9 SOVIET WAR MEMORIAL were built to commemorate the events and victims of World War I and World War II.



### 10 MUSEUMSHOF AM SONNENLUCH (LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM)

Embark on a journey through history: The exhibition in the listed half-timber house provides information on local history, including fascinating artefacts and other items. Visitors can also wander through a fully furnished living room and kitchen as they looked like in GDR times. A former barn houses exhibitions on crafts and trade in Erkner, the beginnings of plastic and especially Bakelite, as well as changing special exhibitions.

Heinrich-Heine-Straße 17 - 18 | +49 3362 22452  
info@heimatverein-erkner.de | www.heimatverein-erkner.de  
March - October | Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday 1 - 5 pm  
March - October | Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday 12 - 4 pm  
guided tours on request

### 11 KATHOLISCHE KIRCHE ST. BONIFATIUS (CATHOLIC CHURCH)

Built in 1932, the church was reason for pilgrimages until the 1950s, as it had received a relic of St. Boniface in 1936. In the attack of 1944, the church was partially destroyed. Following its reconstruction in 1949, an organ by the company Sauer was installed.

Hessenwinkler Straße 2  
www.bonifatius-erkner.de  
not open to public

### 12 EXHIBITION HISTORICAL S-BAHN

The train station Erkner was opened as part of the train line Berlin-Frankfurt (Oder) in 1842. It also became the last stop of the electrified Berlin S-Bahn in 1928. The former motor coach hall now houses over 20 historic trains, some older than 80 years, that have been restored elaborately.

Bahnhofstraße 10  
info@hisb.de | www.hisb.de  
preregistered groups only

### 13 BAHNHOFSDIEDLUNG

The concept of the settlement north of the train station, which was built in the 1920s, is based on the garden city movement. The barrel and mansard roofs, the different types of houses and the street network are striking. The latter remains in its original condition to this day.

### 14 LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT FÜR RAUMBEZOGENE SOZIALFORSCHUNG (IRS | LEIBNIZ INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON SOCIETY AND SPACE)

The institute, located in a building of the early Bakelite factory, regularly hosts exhibitions with guided tours.

Flakenstraße 29 - 31 | +49 3362 793272  
www.leibniz-irs.de

### 15 AUTOBAHNESCHICHTLICHE SAMMLUNG DER AUTOBAHNMEISTEREI ERKNER (MOTORWAY HISTORY MUSEUM)

The museum is located right next to the eastern part of the Berlin orbital motorway, which was opened in 1937. It presents the history of the motorway, from its conception to its present implementation. The former GDR and Brandenburg are in the focus of the exhibition. Moreover, various technical devices are exhibited outside.

An der Autobahn 1 | +49 173 6481687  
info@autobahnmeisterei-erkner.de  
www.autobahnmeisterei-erkner.de  
admission by appointment only

### 16 ABOVE THE ROOFTOPS

Upon request, you can climb the stairs to the observation tower of the Bildungszentrum Erkner. Overlooking the town center, lakes and forests of Berlin and Brandenburg, you might spy the Berlin TV tower on sunny days.

Seestraße 39 | +49 3362 7690  
empfang@bz-erkner.de  
www.bz-erkner.com



## HIKING TRAILS

### A GERHART HAUPTMANN · ORTE (ca. 5,6 km | 2,5 h)

Ten signs spread around town explain the significance of the particular location for Hauptmann's life and work. The route can be chosen individually.

### B LEISTIKOWWEG (ca. 1,4 km | 0:30 h)\*

The trail - named for the landscapist Walter Leistikow - starts at the parking lot at Fangschleusenstraße and goes round Wupatzsee until it reaches the river Löcknitz at a little bridge.

### C WUPATZ' LEHRPFAD (ca. 3,6 km | 1,5 h)

Wupatz, the forest gnome from Wupatzsee, leads through forest, meadows and waters. Following the trail through the Löcknitztal, visitors experience a mix of environmental education, forest bathing and mini adventures. Display boards surprise with exciting facts about nature, while activity stations require all senses and great skills.

### D OBERFÖRSTERIEWEG (ca. 3,2 km | 1 h)\*

Starting at the railway crossing near the cemetery, this trail leads through the forest all the way to Grünheide.

### E THEODOR-FONTANE-WEG | WALDPOESIE-PFAD

(3 km | 1 h | ca. 1,3 km | 0:30 h)\*

Parallel to the river Löcknitz, the trail features 10 signs presenting authors and tree species, by which the poets were inspired to write lyrical works. The trail can be continued up to Woltersdorfer Schleuse (lock).



### F ALBERT-KIEKEBUSCH-WEG (ca. 3 km | 1 h)\*

The trail, named after the archaeologist Prof. Dr. Albert Kiekebusch, begins on Hohenbinder Weg. Going past Karutzsee and Karutzhöhe it leads to Hohenbinde. As loop trail Märkische Runde (ca. 8 km | 2:30 h) the route can be combined with Alte Poststraße.

### G ALTE POSTSTRASSE (ca. 2 km | 0:45 min)\*

The path is part of the former post road from Berlin to Frankfurt (Oder). It starts at the sports ground on Gerhart-Hauptmann-Straße and currently ends at the motorway A10 (option: return by Märkische Runde).

### H BRETTERSCHER GRABEN (ca. 5,5 km | 1:45 h)

The trail follows a man-made channel, that was dug in 1752 to drain the fields and meadows of the colonists. It starts at Rathauspark and leads all the way to the Spree. One can either use Neu Zittauer Straße or Wuhlhorster Straße to get back.

### I 66-SEEN-WANDERWEG (ca. 17 km | 5:15 h | ca. 41 km in Erkner)\*

You can walk a section of the long distance trail, e.g. from Erkner to Hennickendorf. Starting at the parking lot at Fangschleusenstraße, you will hike along Flakensee, Kalksee and Stienitzsee up to "Lange-Damm-Wiesen", one of Germany's oldest nature reserves.

### J JAKOWSWEG (ca. 5 km in Erkner | 1:20 h)\*

Passing Dämeritzsee and Erkner's center, the trail leads towards Fangschleuse. It is part of a project connecting Berlin, Erkner, Frankfurt (Oder) and Poland.

\* with no way back

## CANOING TOURS

### I NEW VENICE (ca. 10 km | 3 - 4 h)

Crossing Dämeritzsee you reach Müggelspree, where a branch leads into the canal system of New Venice. It is a former marshy meadow area with small bridges, plenty of weekend cottages and private houses.

### II RAUCHFANGSWERDER (ca. 28 km | 9 - 10 h)

Crossing Dämeritzsee, the route follows Gosener Kanal - passing a nearly untouched nature reserve - up to Seddinsee. Using the Oder-Spree-Kanal you reach Krossinsee. Going round Rauchfangswerder you sail right into Zeuthener See and then back to Seddinsee and Gosener Kanal.

### III MÜGGLBERGE (ca. 32 km | 9 - 10 h)

Circular tour with many beaches for swimming and taking a break: Circular Dämeritzsee via the Gosener Canal to Seddinsee, further via Langer See. Dahme and Spree to Müggelsee and then along the Müggelspree to the starting point - or vice versa.

### IV CHAIN OF LAKES GRÜNHEIDE (ca. 24 km | 7 - 8 h)

Starting at Dämeritzsee, use Flakenfließ to get to Flakensee. Keep right following the southern bank and turn right shortly after into Löcknitz. Via Werlsee and Peetzsee you can go up to Möllensee. Use the same route to get back to Erkner.

### V STIENITZSEE (ca. 25 km | 7 - 8 h)

Through Flakenfließ and Flakensee via the lock in Woltersdorf to Kalksee (boat tow). Continue over the Mühlenfließ past the museum park to the Stienitzsee and back to Erkner.

### VI OLD SPREE (ca. 26 km | 7 - 8 h)

A great all day activity is a tour on the Spree, which can be booked with boat transfer. Take the Regionalexpress RE1 until the stop Hangelsberg. Pick up your canoe from the rental station and within minutes you will be in the waters. The tour leads you downriver to Erkner - through all the typical windings of a naturally kept river.

The aforementioned times are based on experienced paddlers and may vary.