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Headline ideas:

48 Hours In Hamburg: How To Nail This Underrated City Break

Where To Stay, Dine And Shop In Hamburg, Germany's Second City

Why Hamburg Deserves To Be On Your Weekender Hit List

Intro [with suggested links]:

With such a wealth of city break ideas in Europe, Germany tends to get a little left behind. Italy's got Rome, Venice and [Milan](#); Spain's Barcelona, [Madrid](#) and Valencia beckon seductively, and there's no denying the allure of [Paris](#) - but, when it comes to a 48-hour trip to Germany, the city on everyone's lips is [Berlin](#).

Yes, Berlin has an impressive arts and culture scene, with a distinctive style and world-famous institutions - from Berghain to the East Side Gallery - but Hamburg has a lot to offer, too. The prettier, greener little sister, Hamburg is Germany's second city and still cosmopolitan with a population of nearly 2million people, a major underground system and busy airport - conveniently located only 15 minutes drive out of the city.

But, enough on the boring bits - why is Hamburg worth the (only an hour from London, by the way) flight? At its centre is the huge, beautiful Alster lake which sets the tone for this idyllic city; towards the top you'll find chi-chi neighbourhoods with cafes and boutiques often referred to as 'little [Notting Hill](#)', while towards the town's centre are waterside boating clubs which are bustling in summer with Aperol Spritz drinkers, dipping their toes.

Hamburg's personality is multi-faceted. With strong maritime connections (it was once called the 'gateway to the world' as the country's main port), there's also an industrial harbour with gritter, edgier nightlife; a design district of interior stores and studios; and the Schanze, which is Hamburg's answer to [Shoreditch](#), with late-night bars and gallery-cum-coffee shops. Every neighbourhood has its own hook, with plenty to do in each - you just need to explore them.

WHERE TO STAY

Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten

The Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten is by far Hamburg's swankiest, and most well known hotel, with a history that dates back to 1897. If you're looking to push the boat out or just love old-school glamour, this a sumptuous option that won't leave you disappointed. Its position is unrivalled; just a few minutes walk from the town square and with gorgeous views of the lake.

Staying here feels a little like slipping into a Wes Anderson film with wooden elevators, waiters in white tuxedos and curious details - like the meticulously accurate miniature of the hotel which was created anonymously and left silently outside the staff entrance one night, now proudly on display.

One of the most enchanting spaces is the smoking bar, a pocket-sized hideaway with room for around 30 people. Here, seats are fashioned from Rolls Royce upholstery and walls are lined with vintage antelope skin. Even if you don't smoke, it's worth a look - few hotel bars feel this cinematic. What's more, the in-house restaurant, [GRILL](#), is a Hamburg institution, revered for its steak and newly installed martini bar, which brings a wink of James Bond glamour. Order the Chateaubriand to share - it arrives perfectly rosy and barely needs a knife.

Bedrooms are traditionally beautiful, adorned with fresh flowers and daily baked sweets from one of the hotel's many in-house patisseries. If you can, book a balcony room overlooking the Alster; morning coffee tastes better with swans in view. And, downstairs the spa impresses with products from [Augustinus Bader](#) alongside Landsberg First Class Aesthetic treatments, offering everything from deep relaxation to high-tech facials. Beauty aficionados will want to book in for a skin analysis, followed by the JetPeelPro Duo with lymphatic drainage and fine aerosol jets that cleanse pores.

Book: <https://www.fairmont.com/en/hotels/hamburg/fairmont-hotel-vier-jahreszeiten.html>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fairmonthotels/>

Address: Neuer Jungfernstieg 9 14, 20354, Hamburg

Tortue

Located in the chicest part of the city, Tortue's home is a historic courtyard with French connections, rubbing alongside design studios and concept stores in the centre of town. Step through a handsome, bricked archway to be welcomed by a relaxed, but stylish, lobby. High ceilings, large windows and velvet sofas set a contemporary tone, while

walls are studded with flash photographs of raucous parties at the hotel.

Upstairs, there are 128 rooms by Dutch designer, Kate Hume, with schemes favouring calming hues with an edge; this might be a flash of red floral wallpaper or low hanging, modern pendant lighting. Perks include a free soft drink mini bar, organic coffee and sumptuous toiletries by [Mark Buxton Paris](#), created especially for the hotel. But, Tortue is far from just bedrooms, within its portfolio are some of Hamburg's most sophisticated restaurants and bars.

On site, you'll find [bar noir](#), a cosy bolthole for late-night cocktails, an all-day brasserie which is a must for breakfast thanks to its caviar, oysters and champagne offering and JIN GUI, which has a diverse, East Asian menu. JIN GUI is a favourite with both guests of the hotel and Hamburgers, partly thanks to its florally-inspired scheme designed by Joyce Wang, also known for The Berkeley's iconic Hyde Park suites. Textured walls, huge plants and moody lighting come together for a sultry feel - particularly in the two-person booths, upholstered in thick, floral fabric. As for the food, expect decadent sushi rolls jazzed up with swipes of chili mayonnaise and lashings of truffle, alongside 'new style' sashimi which sees wafer-thin slices of khampa beef flame-grilled and doused in browned butter.

Address: [Stadthausbrücke 10, 20355 Hamburg](#)

Website: <https://tortue.de/en>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/tortue_hamburg

The Fontaney

While [The Fontaney](#) may not be as old as the [Fairmont](#), it has its own, special connection to Hamburg. Opened in 2018, it was conceived by Klaus-Michael Kühne, once Germany's richest man, who was proudly born and bred in Hamburg. Kühne's love for the city, and particularly its beautiful lake, inspired him to build a hotel in homage.

Sitting on the edge of the water, among willow trees and rowing boats, [The Fontaney](#) is designed to reflect the Alster's organic, free-flowing form. With no straight walls, the building's curved lines mimic the gentle waves of the lake, creating a sense of calm and peace throughout the space.

Completely glass fronted, the view almost melts into the experience and the top floor bar's 180 degree vistas show off the cityscape seamlessly. For Kühne, the architecture is somewhat a love letter to Hamburg's Alster and a unique representation of his home. Inside, the design continues along a serene theme with blue-toned bedrooms featuring

marble bathrooms and abstract artworks, while the restaurant looks straight onto the banks with an inside-out feel. Here, guests can enjoy a stand-out breakfast in the mornings, complete with freshly-pressed juices and hot and cold options, or book in for dinner to try their signature Crepe Suzette served tableside. One thing you can't miss is the rooftop infinity pool. It's the perfect place to read a book and relax.

Book: <https://www.thefontenay.com/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/thefontenay_hamburg/

Address: Fontenay 10, 20354, Hamburg

WHERE TO EAT

Edmondo

The [Big Mamma](#) group originated in Paris and for the last decade has been working its way across Europe, building a reputation for stand-out Italian dining and a wow-worthy design. Since Hamburg got its own, [Edmondo](#), it's been booked out constantly. Housed in a former bank, its sweeping ceilings are the ideal backdrop for larger-than-life design: lacquered green walls; a giant disco ball; light-up tables; panther-covered carpet - it's Hamburg's most photogenic restaurant, that's for sure.

But it's not a case of style over substance; the (often Italian) team are wonderfully welcoming and the quirky menu - the cocktail list, for example, is named 'giggle water' - has plenty of options and some clear stand-out dishes. You have to try the Amore Di Tartufo for two, which comes with a bit of a show. A huge pecorino wheel is carried out, swirling inside with mafaldine pasta, creamy truffle mascarpone sauce and fresh black truffle on top - so indulgent it's almost overwhelming but absolutely worth it.

Cocktails are experimental and fun; try the Pistachio-tini which comes ice cold in a martini glass, thick with chocolatey-pistachio liquor, and if you can handle dessert, the tiramisu is a total classic. Before you go, don't forget to try the photo booth upstairs!

Book: <https://bigsquadra.com/restaurants/edmondo-hamburg>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bigsquadra>

Address: Hohe Bleichen 17, 20354 Hamburg

NENI

Hamburg is home to two [25hours hotels](#), but the [Altes Hafenamt](#) branch is almost arguably more popular for its in-house restaurant than rooms. NENI is the brand's signature dining experience and here in Hamburg, it's also one of the city's favourite Eastern Mediterranean spots. The concept is rooted in family-style sharing plates with recipes inspired by Israeli, Persian, Arabic and Moroccan cooking - it's comforting, warming, soul food with big flavours that you can pick over for hours for long, lingering lunches or dinners.

The environment suits this vibe perfectly with an open kitchen and lots of rich, colourful textiles on floors and walls and a mix of tables. Book in advance to be sure you'll get a spot and try the set menu which delivers bang for your buck and the best of the menu. Starting with fluffy pitta and a selection of small plates and dips, you can try the salmon sashimi with ponzu, burnt butter and yoghurt, alongside salt baked beetroot and salty, olive-studded hummus.

Next up, it's time to dig into melt-in-your-mouth fried aubergine topped with tomato salsa, sesame dip and a soft-boiled egg, as well as juicy chicken shawarma and grilled salmon fillet with lentil salad. Finally, desserts like rich tiramisu with candied orange and homemade Muscovado ice cream make this the gift that keeps on giving. By the end, you'll hardly be able to handle your after-dinner coffee!

Book:

<https://25hours-hotels.com/hamburg/altes-hafenamt/restaurants-and-bars/neni-hamburg/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/neni.hamburg/?hl=en>

Address: Osakaallee 12, 20457, Hamburg

Grill Royal Hamburg

In Germany, the [Grill Royal](#) is somewhat of a household name starting with the original Berlin site, opened in 2007. A swish steak restaurant conceived by an art collector, its walls were covered in priceless pieces, while creatives dined on the best cuts in the city.

15 years later and Hamburg landed its own site and since 2023 it's been the place to be seen on a Friday night. The [Grill Royal](#) Hamburg has got a gorgeous spot right on the water in a period building with towering windows and plenty of space for sprawling artworks and over-sized lighting installations. Seating flows upwards in levels, a little like a theatre, so everyone gets a good view and the best spots are those with cushy corner

booths looking onto other tables, for great people watching. The menu adheres to a traditional grill format with a selection of seafood and fish, such as wild salmon sourced from Norway or sea bass from France, and beef from all over the world - rib eye from Ireland, wagyu from Japan and fillet from Greater Omaha, as well as local options, too.

Don't be scared to speak with your server about how you'd like your dish cooked exactly - they're very precise here - and if you're looking for recommendations, the chateaubriand for two is heavenly. As for drinks, the bar menu is fantastic so try a cocktail such as a Ruby Tuesday with sour rhubarb liquor, lime, vanilla and Champagne, before moving onto the extensive wine list - the house Champagne and red are particularly good.

Book: <https://www.grillroyal-hamburg.com/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/grillroyal_hamburg/?hl=de

Address: Ballindamm 17, 20095, Hamburg

Blattgold

For a tasty vegetarian option, head to the hipster Schanze district for an evening of experimental cocktails and plant-based small plates at Blattgold. Founded by siblings Ronja, Zora and Olli in 2023, this is a local gem that pivots between cafe with homemade cakes, restaurant with a la carte service and bar, known for its innovative cocktail menu.

The team are meticulous about their supply chain, only working with local farms and growers to ensure their menu is created with an honest, sustainable point of view. While the offering is seasonal, you might expect to try dishes like beetroot tatar, pumpnickel rye bread, horseradish and organic egg, alongside traditional dumplings with caramelised onion, mushroom and sprouts. The vibe is intimate, set within a historic building where decorative tiles cover the walls with a distinct feeling of personality. Cosy lighting and occasional DJ sets make it an ideal spot for dinner with friends.

Book: <https://www.blattgold.hamburg/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/blatt_gold/?hl=de

Address: Schulterblatt 83, 20357 Hamburg

Mimosas Brunch Club

For brunch, Hamburgers have a stand-out favourite and the clue is in the name:

bottomless mimosas at Mimosas Brunch Club. It's just what you want from a mid-morning spot, with on-trend, contemporary interiors, all of the best brunch classics and a cool, young crowd. There are two locations; Neustadt in the town centre, and Eppendorf in a leafy, residential district. Both are lovely so it's just about where you're spending your day. Jumping straight into the important bits: which cocktails are bottomless? Well, here it's all about the mimosas so simply choose from your juice of choice including classic orange, as well as mango, grapefruit, cranberry and passionfruit, to be topped up with sparkling cremant. Onto the food and there are plenty of healthy options such as the Vital Salad with sliced avocado, pickled onions and scrambled eggs, or the soy-licious bruschetta with cashew-lemon-basil pesto, roasted tomatoes and pine nuts on sourdough. For something a little more indulgent, try the brioche French toast smothered in Nutella. If you have a sweet tooth, that ought to do it! As well as mimosas there are pornstar martinis on offer, wildberry Lillet and passion fruit Aperol spritz, as well as alcohol-free options, to ensure there's something for everyone.

Book: <https://www.instagram.com/mimosas.brunch.club/?hl=en>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mimosas.brunch.club/?hl=en>

Address: Eppendorfer Weg 283, 20251 Hamburg

WHERE TO SHOP

Wasted Hour

Hamburg's coolest concept store, Wasted Hour has a prime spot just off the city centre's designer strip, in a historic courtyard of wine bars and creative studios. It's in the heart of the action, without dealing with crowds and shows off a design-led quarter that tourists won't know about. Inside, the warehouse-style building is all lofty ceilings and exposed brick - a minimalist backdrop that lets the curated collections shine.

~~Wasted Hour really highlights the difference a fantastic buying team makes, the kind of place where you discover new brands and fall in love with pieces you didn't know you needed. Founder Martin Hufnagel is usually on hand to share the stories behind his selects, travelling internationally for fashion weeks and often offering guests a glass of crémant while they browse.~~

You can expect to find anything from the softest knitwear to structural partywear, alongside a curated mix of magazines, fragrance, lighting and home buys. Check for upcoming events via Instagram or their newsletter beforehand as weekends regularly involve in-store designer meet and greets or DJ sets.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thewastedhour/>

Address: Neuer Wall 88, 20354 Hamburg

Faible & Failure

Make knitwear brand, Faible & Failure, your reason to visit Karolinenviertel; an off-beat creative quarter with cool cafes and boutiques. Marktstrasse is the main drag; walk down here and pop into flea markets and vintage stores on the way, stopping at Café Marktstr.25 for a coffee and grilled cheese sandwich with sauerkraut if the mood takes you.

Moving onto Glashüttenstrasse and it's a perfect street for independents, with concept store Human Nest and Rotkäppchen hat designs, too. Faible & Failure was founded by Isabelle Mann in 2019 inspired by a generational love of knitting and weaving. After studying fashion design in Berlin, she set up her own brands which focuses on slow craft and sustainable materials, selling mainly handmade designs across knitted cardigans, dresses, jumpers and bonnets, as well as raw silk two-piece sets.

In winter, Isabelle hosts a Thursday-night knit club which is free and open for all, so if you're in the city for a few days and fancy making some new friends, it's a cute way to get to know the local creative community.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/faibleandfailure/>

Address: Glashüttenstraße 5, 20357 Hamburg

Isemarkt

You can shop from not just one maker but many at this bouji farmers and craft market. Situated in leafy Eimsbüttel, the Isemarkt resides in one of the city's most affluent areas and it shows - beautiful, cream-toned buildings line the streets and the nearby canal system is brimming with pretty cafes, ideal for strolling all afternoon. Every Tuesday and Friday from 8am until 2pm the market stretches over a kilometer underneath an old railway bridge (so it's always dry!) with food stalls, toy makers, florists, coffee stands, knitwear, homewares and vintage. Grab a coffee and bratwurst if you're hungry, with pastries from Italian or French bakers for afters, and spend an hour walking the market.

Website:

<https://www.hamburg-travel.com/see-explore/events/events-calendar/isemarkt-1/>

Address: Isestraße, 20149, Hamburg