

# The Exciting World of the German Islands

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The world of the Islands has a specialty unique to itself. When you visit an island it is as if you leave everything else behind and enter a secluded and private existence. Water engulfs this miniature world on every side, directing the visitor's attention inwards to the natural beauty and diverse landscapes, embedded with evidences of human subsistence and attractions which man has created to enhance his own special world. Our representative visited some of the German Islands and wrote the following report:

## The North Sea German Islands

The island of "Sylt" is the largest of the North Frisian Islands, which are situated off the North German coast, belonging to the province of Schlesweg-Holstein. This relatively remote group of islands also consists of Föhr, Amrum, Pellworm, Helgoland, Langeness and the exciting island of Groede, which is home to only thirteen inhabitants. But we are here concerned with the islands of Föhr and Amrum.

There appears an independency and healthy rivalry between islands, which became obvious when both Oliver Melchert the tourism official for Föhr and Christian Johansen the official for Amrum, introduced me to their islands as 'Paradise on Earth'. Indeed both my above-

mentioned hosts did not hesitating in having articles written about their respective islands, urging their publication to be headed before that of Sylt! By presenting articles in this edition on both Föhr and Amrum together, it is hoped that they will form a unity like that of a married couple, each highlighting and enhancing the others beauty and uniqueness. We would hear like to thank all those who we met and those who guided us around the islands making this a most memorable and special trip. Before we visit the islands of Föhr and Amrum, I would also here like to single out the islands Egyptian community for mention, Muhammad Ereba and his daughter Ines on the island of Föhr and Fahmy El-Bendary on the island of Amrum.

## The island of Föhr

Arriving by ferry at the bay of Wyk, which is situated on the east side of the island, we are instantly enchanted by the island's healthy and bracing climate.

The captivating port presents a joyous sight and is adorned with bright splashes of colour from the many yachts and fishing boats. As we disembarked our ferry, we made our way towards the centre of the town, we pass by industrious fisherman selling their freshly caught produce in the market place. Fishing is the island's main industry, and Föhr is home to numerous fisheries, farms and oyster beds. The picturesque town of Wyk however, is renown as a bathing resort. The seaside promenade is called Sandwall, and is lined on one side by numerous shops, ➤





## City Tourism

cafes and restaurants and on the other by a far stretching beach, where children happily play in the sand, whilst their parents relax on wicker beach chairs, typical of the region, or bathe in the soothing sea waters. From here we have a wonderful panoramic view overlooking the sparkling blue sea which is studded with numerous little islands, known as the Halligen islets, which resemble anchored ships in the distance.

Föhr is the most fertile of all the North Frisian islands, and to explore it more thoroughly we decided to hire bicycles to enable us to witness more intensely the natural beauty which can not be experienced from other modes of vehicle. It becomes evident to us why Föhr has been deemed the *green island*! On our tour across the fens and meadows we pass ancient windmills and cornfields. We see cows, horses and sheep contrasted with remnants of the past such as barrows and protective walls from the Bronze Age. We visit the quaint Frisian villages of Wrixum, Alkersum, Oldsum, Borgsum and Nieblum – some of which are rated among the most beautiful villages in Germany.

Finally we return to Wyk, where we rest on the beach and make plans for the next day – we have the option to explore the island further, play a leisurely round of golf or take a trip to the neighbouring island of Amrum, which can be reached by foot at low tide.

### The island of Amrum

After debating the matter we decided to experience the sensation of *walking on water* as we crossed the sea on foot to the island of Amrum. This phenomenon however is not as biblical as it sounds, and is in fact only possible at low tide when the waters recede exposing the underlying seabed. It is essential that when attempting this crossing you are accompanied by a competent guide who is familiar with the timing of the tides. Following a two hour trek we reach the coastline of Amrum and are greeted by hosts of seabirds, squalling their own peculiar songs of welcome. Odde, the northernmost part of the island is a nature reserve.

A large part of the island is comprised of a treeless sandy expanse and Amrum is acclaimed as a favorite bathing resort. We decide to head for the village of Norddorf and for the infinitely drawn out beach, where the other holidaymakers are already indulging in the pleasures of



Map of the German islands on the North Sea

خارطة الجزر الألمانية الواقعة على بحر الشمال

summer. Far ahead we can see the typical wooden huts, and we continue on our way, driven by curiosity until we reach the border of the dunes where we discover a small lighthouse. We cast our eyes across the large beach towards the island of Sylt, which lies to the north, and see ships and boats traversing the waters in between. A forest path then attracts our attention and leads us through the heath and the dunes, where we observe the remnants of barrows and settlements from the Stone and Bronze ages. Rabbits and pheasants cross our path as we make our way along the wooded track which leads us to the scenic and the island's principle village

of Nebel with its ancient church of St. Clemens.

In the churchyard we recognise the characteristic tombs of the old seafarers, which we had previously admired at the churches of Föhr. We continue our tour along the beautiful east coast of the island towards the picturesque hamlet of Steenodde, which is highlighted by its tiny but multicoloured fishing port. A few miles further and we arrive at the southernmost village of the island, Wittdün, a seaside resort since 1890. At the port our ferry the *Uthlande* is already awaiting us, and so we depart, accompanied by the seabirds and the intermittent rays of the lighthouse. ■