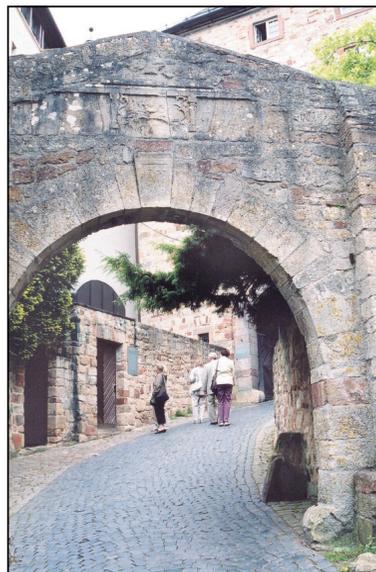


Photo right: Visitors to Burg Waldeck take in the view over the Edersee. Photo below: An organ-grinder provides musical accompaniment for visitors on the pathway to and from Burg Waldeck.



Photo left: The extensive remains of Burg Waldeck include a number of towers. With remains that date back to the 13th century and a majority of structures that date from the 16th and 17th centuries, the complex is very well preserved. Because of its impregnable strategic position, Burg Waldeck was never severely damaged over the intervening centuries. Below: Children enjoy one of many playgrounds found along the meandering shore of the Edersee.



Visitors pause inside the main archway leading into Burg Waldeck to view the entrance to the castle's underground well.

# Waldeck on the Edersee

Discover nearby haven for water sports, green spaces

Story and photos by David Ruderman  
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

A lakeside getaway buffered by summery green hillsides is no more than a short drive for many in the 104th Area Support Group. Just 50 miles north of Giessen is the Waldecker region, and at its center lies the Edersee, a cool choice for a getaway that combines pastoral settings with a myriad of water sports for family members of all ages.

In addition to swimming and fishing, enjoy sailing, wind-surfing, canoeing, water skiing and scuba diving opportunities. Day-trippers and backpackers as well as those wishing to spend more time in the region will find a wealth of activities to while away the summer days. Children in particular will find plenty of avenues to channel their energy.

The Edersee is a man-made lake

constructed from 1908 to 1914. The aims of damming the Eder River Valley were to create a water source to augment the region's inland canal system, control flooding and generate electricity. Several small villages lying in the river valley, among them Asel, Bringhausen and Berich, were sacrificed to the project and their 700 residents relocated.

To this day remnants of the towns, church spires and other architectural elements, are visible when the lake water reaches its seasonal lowest level in the autumn.

The lake is surrounded by miles of curving two-lane road that are a particular favorite with motorcyclists, sometimes traveling in small groups, sometimes in hordes, who cruise its curves at the mandatory 50 kilometers speed limit. Visitors need not ride a two-wheeler, however, to follow its winding path to reach the

towns and facilities that lie along its length.

The dam at the eastern end of the Edersee is open to tourists and worth a visit. About 50 meters tall and 400 meters across it is built of 300,000 cubic meters of quarried stone. The resulting body of water covers an area of about 12 square kilometers, containing over 200 million square meters of water.

As if the expanse of clear water and its delights were not enough for visitors and vacationers, the entire region is laced with hiking trails through pine and mixed forest. A nature preserve takes up a good part of the south side of the lake.

## Terrific view

Perched high above the north-eastern shore of the Edersee is the Waldecker Burg, a hilltop fortress that for centuries was home to the Dukes of Waldeck, the ruling family

that gave the region its name. Travelers should make an effort to work a visit into their plans — the view of the lake and surrounding countryside shouldn't be missed. Take the Seilbahn, a 10-minute cable car ride up the heights from Waldecker West, a short stroll up the hill from the lakeside. In addition to the thrill of seeming to fly through space, reaching the heights this way obviates the need to negotiate the winding roads up and parking fees at the Burg.

Entry to the castle grounds and the southern parapet overlooking the lake is free. A castle tower has been converted to a restaurant for those who would like to have lunch or dinner with a view. A museum in the castle documents its history. Tours are given for a modest fee, and portable handsets that provide an English narrative are available.

Legend has it that a shepherd grazing his flocks in the area gave the idea of building a redoubt on the steep outcropping of stone to the ancestors of the Waldecker aristocracy. Visitors will readily understand why pains were taken to build a castle on the site — its defensive advantages are obvious to anyone approaching the Burg from below.

The royal family moved to more fashionable quarters in the Baroque period, building a new Schloss at Bad Arolsen, about 10 miles to the north and also worth a visit, in 1710. From 1734 until 1868 the Burg served as a reformatory and workhouse for men and women incarcerated under the criminal justice system of the times. Children in particular will be interested in the variety of accoutrements used to restrain, ridicule and torture inhabitants.

In addition to the watery charms of the Edersee itself, the Waldeck region is chock full of scenic attractions. To the east is Fritzlar with an early cathedral, narrow streets and pleasant atmosphere that make it a good bet for an afternoon stroll and ice cream break. Farther east is Kassel, the main city of north Hesse.



A tour guide gestures while describing tools of punishment used in the castle when it served as a prison and workhouse in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Directly north of the western end of the Edersee lies Korbach, a regional center with a remarkably well preserved stock of Fachwerkhäuser — half-timbered houses — for visitors to admire. Another short distance to the

west is Willingen, a ski resort in the winter months and a hiker's paradise in summer. Just outside town, heading west, is the Elltsberg ski lift that carries hikers up to the Hoch Heide, the largest expanse of upland moors in central Europe. Pack

your lunch and hike to your heart's content.

For more information on the region, activities and overnight accommodation possibilities surf the Internet to [www.edersee.de](http://www.edersee.de) or [www.edersee.com](http://www.edersee.com).