

SEASONAL TRADITIONS  
OUR PERSONAL FAVORITES

A GUIDE TO GERMANY  
SIGHTSEEING BY BIKE

NOVEMBER 2016

# PointsNorth

## Atlanta



## NOTABLE NORTHSIDERS

*Locals in the* **SPOTLIGHT**



## SmartFlyer

TO GET SOME INSIDE SCOOP for our Northside Jetsetters, we caught up with Jean Pickard, adventure expert and lead agent for SmartFlyer, a luxury travel agency. Their Buckhead location specializes in finding/booking trending and up-and-coming destinations, adventure travel tips and hot spots, packing advice, financial tips for a bucket list trip and much more. Here is what she shared with us about the evolution of adventure travel:

"Adventure travel has come a long way since Lars Eric Lindblad took the first group of citizen tourists to Antarctica in 1966. In the early days, 'adventure travel' meant enduring hardships and discomfort, but the reward was to see places that very few, if any, tourists had ever seen. It's a lot easier now and yet the thrill of doing something you've never done or going somewhere you've never been, is still very enticing."

"For some, [this type of travel] means snorkeling the reef or kayaking in Key West; for others, it's camping on an ice floe to see polar bears and beluga whales. But for most of us, it's somewhere in between — it's zip lining in Costa Rica or rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon or hiking the Waimea Canyon on the island of Kauai. Or further afield, it's an African safari, mountain biking in Croatia or skiing in Zermatt. The truth is, no matter what your definition of adventure travel may be, it's the chance to get outside your comfort zone and to end your day with a satisfaction that you have done or seen something new. And that renews the spirit."

Curious how to find the right place or the right people to send you? Pickard suggests finding a good travel agent that is committed to your safety and to the communities in which they operate. After all, it's all about the experience and you want it to be awesome!

[smartflyer.com](http://smartflyer.com)



hop on a boat or jump into the cold waters of Lake Edersee.

Small towns dot the landscape around the park. The Brothers Grimm visited this area and the timbered houses and the deep woods they encountered inspired many of their fairy tales. Nearby, Wildtier Park introduces visitors to breeds of animals that used to roam the woods, and others that still do, but the star attraction is the Birds of Prey show held daily on a cliff overlooking the lake and hills beyond. Not like any bird show you've seen before, wild hawks and vultures join the park's inhabitants, circling overhead as chicken pieces are thrown in the air. They swoop and dive and soar en masse, just over the crowd's heads. The clowns of the show, however, are the buzzards that enjoy being flung off the cliff by the handler, only to return like a child saying, "Do it again." The entire show is in German, but the antics of the birds need no interpretation.

On the western German border lies Eifel National Park. This beautiful gem was off limits to Germans for 60 years after WWII while it was used by the Belgians for military training grounds. Bullet holes can still be seen in the rock walls used for rifle practice. Large craters, now masked by leaves and vegetation, are left from Allied bombs dropped during the conflict, but in 2004, the land was returned to Germany and the park was created as a gift to the German people.

With more than 60 miles of biking paths, 150 miles of hiking trails and two cross country ski trails, nature abounds to entertain and captivate visitors. The Wilderness Trail is a 53-mile adventure

that attracts many to the area. Over four days, hikers circle the park, stopping in small towns each night for food, lodging and an official Trail stamp. At the end of the journey, each hiker gets a certificate of completion and the satisfaction of a hike well done.

High on a hill within the park lies Vogelsang, a former Nazi education camp, where 1,000 future party officers were sent to be indoctrinated with the ideology of the times. Now a museum, the center aims to be a destination for people from all countries to come discuss peace. From the museum's vantage point, the park below and the setting sun offer a peaceful end to a busy day of outdoor activity.

The night brings its own set of outdoor activities. Labeled as one of only 39 Certified Dark Sky Parks in the world, The Eifel beckons you to look up. In this protected nocturnal environment with an unusually large number of starry nights, you can see the Milky Way through high-powered telescopes at the observatory, or on a ranger-led night hike.

Indeed, the sky's the limit on outdoor adventures in Germany. The excitement of new sites, different languages, fine wines, hefty beer and localized foods makes the adventure even more fun. So pick a region, a bike, a path (give yourself a little pinch) and go. 🍷

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