

The Bergen-Belsen Memorial

The Bergen-Belsen Memorial is located around 60 kilometres north-east of Hanover. During World War II, the site was the location of a POW camp operated by the Wehrmacht, the German armed forces. The 20,000 POWs who died there, most of them from the Soviet Union, were buried in a cemetery around one kilometre from the camp.

In 1943, the SS took over parts of the grounds and established a concentration camp. At least 52,000 men, women and children died in this camp, most of them during the last few months of the war. When British troops liberated Bergen-Belsen on 15 April 1945, they found thousands of unburied bodies and completely emaciated prisoners, many of whom were at death's door.

The victims of the concentration camp were buried in mass graves in the grounds of the former camp. Today, graves, monuments and memorial stones commemorate their suffering and death. A few foundations are the only structural traces of the camp that still remain.

After the liberation, a displaced persons camp was set up at the nearby former Wehrmacht barracks. Until 1950, up to 12,000 people lived at this, the largest Jewish DP camp in Germany.

In 1945, the British Military Government ordered a memorial site to be created, and in 1952 a central monument was unveiled in the grounds. Since 1966, exhibitions about the concentration camp's history have been shown at Bergen-Belsen, complemented by exhibitions on the history of the POW camp since 1990.

The Documentation Centre

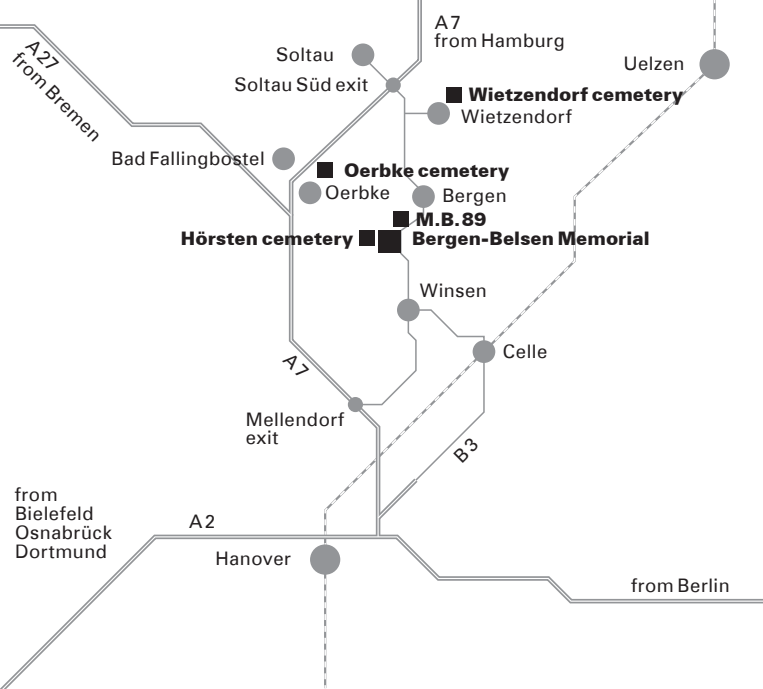
In order to appropriately represent the site's national and international significance, the Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation, with financial support from the German Federal Government and the State of Lower Saxony, built a new Documentation Centre which opened in October 2007.

The new permanent exhibition at the Centre is made up of several individual exhibition sections:

- The Wehrmacht POW Camps 1939 – 1945
- The Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp 1943 – 1945
- The Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp 1945 – 1950
- The Prosecution of the Perpetrators after 1945

These exhibitions rely on the effects of historical evidence. Texts, photographs, documents, exhibits and excerpts from many biographical interviews with survivors inform visitors about the history of Bergen-Belsen.





Getting There

By car
Take the A7 motorway and use the Soltau-Süd exit if coming from the north, and the Mellendorf exit if coming from the south. The Memorial is sign-posted from both exits. It is located around 25 kilometres from the Soltau-Süd exit and around 40 kilometres from the Mellendorf exit.

By public transport
A bus service to the Memorial operates on week-days and Saturdays from Celle station. For more information, visit the Memorial's website (www.bergen-belsen.de) or check the website of the Celle Transport Association (www.cebus-celle.de, in German).

All parts of the Memorial open to the public are completely accessible. Wheelchairs are available from the information desk. Filming and photography are permitted with some restrictions. Dogs are not allowed in the Memorial's grounds.

Bergen-Belsen Memorial
Anne-Frank-Platz
29303 Lohheide, Germany
Phone 0049 5051 4759-0
Fax 0049 5051 4759-118
bergen-belsen@stiftung-ng.de
www.bergen-belsen.de

The exhibition is open daily.
April to September:
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
October to March:
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The Documentation Centre is closed during the Lower Saxony winter holidays.
Admission is free.

The Educational Department

Guided tours

The Memorial offers guided tours for schools or other groups of at least ten persons by prior arrangement. The tours are available in various languages and usually take around three hours.

Possible topics for guided tours:

- Introduction to the history of the Bergen-Belsen camp
- Tour of the permanent exhibition
- Tour of the grounds of the former concentration and POW camps
- Visit to the Soviet POW cemetery

Study days

The Memorial's Educational Department organises study days for groups which allow participants to explore particular topics from the camp's history in more depth. Please book well in advance so there is time to arrange topics and organisational details.

To make arrangements for guided tours and study days, please call + 49 5051 4759-112 (weekdays from 9 a.m. to 12 a.m.) or e-mail besucheranmeldung@stiftung-ng.de.

Research and Documentation Offices

The Memorial's reference library contains more than 7,000 publications on topics such as persecution during the Nazi era and the system of the concentration camps, with a particular focus on the history of Bergen-Belsen.

At the computer terminals in the library's reading room, visitors can search the list of prisoners who were imprisoned in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and access the additional information provided at the computer terminals in the exhibition as well as the videos.

Source material from the Memorial's archive is available in cases of special academic or personal interest.

To enquire about the archives, please phone +49 5051 4759-0 or e-mail information.bergen-belsen@stiftung-ng.de.

Also visit the Memorial's website at www.bergen-belsen.de for more information on the Memorial's activities and recent news.

Photographs copyright by
Klemens Ortmeier (2) and
Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten/
Bergen-Belsen Memorial (2)
Design by
Weidner Händle, Stuttgart
December 2020

