

# Life in a Small Town: Pleasant or Boring?

by F. Thieme

*A lot of people dream about life in a small town or hate it. Erkelenz is a town in Northrhine-Westfalia with 48000 people. So how is life in a small town really?*

Some people claim that you must drive very far to the next hospital, school and pharmacy. However, this is not true for Erkelenz: there is a hospital, albeit a very old one, over five supermarkets, a few pharmacies, four high schools and a few primary schools. Unfortunately, there are too few family doctors, two of the high schools are lacking technology and the next shopping mall is in the next city, Mönchengladbach.

If you are interested in sports, Erkelenz is the city for you, with plenty of sports clubs. Arguably the biggest club in Erkelenz is the SC 09 Erkelenz, a football club playing in the 7<sup>th</sup> German league. A few kilometres away, there is an even bigger football club, FC Wegberg Beeck, who play in the 5<sup>th</sup> league, and regularly play in the 4<sup>th</sup> league where a lot of 1<sup>st</sup> league reserve teams play. However, you can play other sports than football: there is an athletics club, a basketball club, a handball club and more. There is also a dancing school where members regularly take part in dancing world cups. You can also visit a swimming / leisure centre with an outdoor pool.



One of Erkelenz's downsides is that it is very limited when it comes to social activities. There is a decent sized cinema (that shows good films), a bowling and snooker hall and a few nice cafes and restaurants but that is all the town has to offer. Erkelenz also doesn't have many sights: there is a big catholic church, the St Lambertus (83 metres tall and one of the biggest in the area), the old town hall (built in 1546, a few walls from a castle and the Ziegelweiherpark (a park with a lake) but that is it.

Unfortunately, Erkelenz has worse problems than a lack of sights for tourists. There is a problem with vandalism in the inner city and people sell drugs in the park and other dark corners of Erkelenz. Another problem is that there isn't a lot of parking in the inner city, so people spend a lot of time looking for parking spots and then must park their car elsewhere.

Overall, Erkelenz has everything one needs but lacks certain luxuries, for example a shopping mall and sights. Nevertheless, it is an almost perfect mix for people who want to live in the country and not miss out on too many luxuries of the city.