

A man in a red and white checkered shirt is playing a red and silver accordion while holding a tall glass of beer. In the foreground, a woman in a green and white checkered dress is smiling and holding a similar glass of beer. The background shows a rustic wooden interior with hanging lanterns.

Oktoberfest

GUIDE



WILHELM VON KOBELL/PUBLIC DOMAIN

Oktoberfest Time Line

Break out the buttery pretzels and the icy brews, it's time for Oktoberfest. But how did this celebration of all things German come about? The people at Kegerator (who know a thing or two about beer) put together a history.

Keep reading for some milestones in the life of the Oktoberfest.

OCT. 17, 1810

The first Oktoberfest didn't have anything to do with beer at all. Instead, it was a wedding reception for Prince Ludwig of Bavaria to Princess Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen. Everyone enjoyed the party so much, the happy couple suggested making it an annual event.

1819

The city of Munich takes over



DIGITAL CAT FROM MÜNCHEN, BAVARIA/CREATIVE COMMONS



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Oktoberfest after it grew large enough to include contests and carnival booths.

Soon after, it turned into a 16-day festival from late September through the first weekend of October.

1850

The statue of Bavaria was unveiled and has watched over Oktoberfest ever since.

1880

Electricity was introduced to the Oktoberfest, which included 400 booths and tents.

1881

Bratwurst makes its first appearance.

1892

Beer is served in glass mugs.

1914-1918

Oktoberfest canceled due to World War I.

1919-1920

Oktoberfest replaced by a smaller autumn festival after World War I.

1939-1945

Oktoberfest canceled because of World War II. It was again followed by a smaller autumn festival at the war's end.

1950

Two new traditions start: The 12-gun salute and the official tapping of the first keg at noon, when the mayor of Munich will scream "O'zapft is!", tap the keg and serve the first mug to the

minister president of Bavaria.

1960

The last year of the horse races, and the first year lederhosen and dirndl were picked as the official garments.

1980

Terrorists plant a pipe bomb at the main entrance of the festival. More than 200 people were injured and 13 killed.

2005

Quiet Oktoberfest hours are introduced to curb the hard partying and make a family-friendly time for visiting.

2008

A smoking ban at Oktoberfest causes unrest. Several politicians are voted out of office.

2010

For the Oktoberfest's 200th anniversary, horse races returned and a special beer was brewed.

2011

A record 7.5 million liters of beer is served.

What Are Lederhosen, Anyway?

Those funny looking green shorts became the official costume of the Oktoberfest in 1960. But, they're way more than just a weird costume. Here's more about lederhosen, the official costume of the Oktoberfest.

HARD WORK, SHORT PANTS

The knee-length deerskin shorts were originally worn during hard physical work, where they were more durable than fabric pants. Popularity of the traditional work clothes dropped off sharply in the 19th century, considered uncouth peasants' clothes.

In the 1880s, clubs formed in Munich and other cities that sought to preserve traditional rural clothing. It was then that the garment, previously worn throughout central Europe, became closely associated with Bavaria.

FESTIVAL GEAR

Now lederhosen are considered a symbol of virility and masculinity. Men wear them working outdoors or doing other outside activities, but also to folk festivals and beer gardens, much like the Scottish kilt. All lederhosen have two side

pockets, a hip pocket, a knife pocket and a drop front. For Oktoberfest, the wearer may also done haverlschuhe, or stockings, and a classic white shirt.

DIRNDL

This is the feminine version of lederhosen, the dirndl is also based on Alpine peasant wear. The skirt is a light circular cut, gathered at the waist, and falling below the knee. It is worn with a bodice and a blouse with short, puffed sleeves, and usually an apron. For the winter, dirndl includes heavy skirts and thick fabrics, designed for warmth. Colors and accessories vary from region to region and even town to town.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

What's a festival without a stylish chapeau? Tirolerhute, or Bavarian hats, are popular during Oktoberfest. The jaunty little hat is crowned with a tuft of chamois hair, once highly prized. The more or bigger tufts you had, the richer you were. Now, of course, imitation chamois hair makes this a poor gauge of wealth.

You can see all this pomp and finery on display on parade during the Oktoberfest on the first festival Sunday. Participants in a glittering array of historical costumes march about four miles from the Maximillaneum to the Oktoberfest grounds. The parade includes costumes, of course, but also rifle clubs, bands, flags, and decorated carriages, horses and carts. The clubs in the parade come from all over Europe.





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Oktoberfest Glossary

If you're not fluent in German, never fear. We're here to help. Here are some words and phrases you might hear around an Oktoberfest celebration.

Wiesn: Another name for the granddaddy of them all, the Munich Oktoberfest. It comes from the colloquial name for the fairgrounds, Theresa's meadows, or Theresienwiese.

O'zapft is!: Translation: It is tapped! Traditional words that open the fest as the first keg of beer is tapped.

Ein Prosit der Gemütlichkeit: A traditional drinking song at the Munich festival, which roughly translates to "a toast to cheer and good times."

Bierzelt: A beer tent. The Munich Oktoberfest (and many others) are a string of booths, tents and pavilions serving great beer, good food and music.

Brezel or brezn: A pretzel, usually sprinkled with coarse salt.

Maßkrug: A glass mug of beer equal to a liter. Usually shortened to a maß.

Schweinshaxe: A stewed pork

knuckle, usually served with sauerkraut or knödel, which are potato dumplings.

Weißwurst: A Bavarian sausage made from minced veal, pork bacon, spices and herbs. It's usually served before noon, in a bowl of hot water, along with sweet mustard, a pretzel and wheat beer.

Hendl: Roast chicken, another traditional Oktoberfest dish.

Schnitzel: Tender, boneless meat fried in flour and breadcrumbs.

Spätzle: Egg noodles or dumplings.

Wurst: Generally, sausage.

Die Bierleichen: Beer corpses. The name for those snoring off a maß too many.

Prost: Cheers!

Gemütlichkeit: A general feeling of goodwill toward your fellow man. Not feeling it yet? Have another maß.

Radler: A half-beer, half-soft drink, also served in a liter mug. For those in it for the long haul.

Altbier: A dark beer with malted barley from the Düsseldorf area.

Bockbier, doppelbock: Strong beers that originate from Einbeck and are around 7% alcohol.

Weizenbier, weissbier: A wheat beer popular in Bavaria. A Hefeweizen is more yeasty, while Kristallweizen is clearer and fizzier. Around 5.4% alcohol with a fruity, spicy taste.

Märzen: A full-bodied, strongly malty beer associated with Oktoberfest.

Leipziger gose: A tart beer flavored with salt and coriander. It's usually served with cherry or almond liqueur.

Malzbier: Literally, malt beer. Sweet, aromatic, and brewed mainly in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.



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Beer 'n' Brats

Few things go together as well as beer and bratwurst.

If you can't make it to Munich, here's how to get your own taste of Oktoberfest right in your own backyard.

SO WHAT IS IT?

A bratwurst isn't just any sausage. It's a German sausage that dates to the early 1300s. It literally means a finely

chopped meat sausage, and is usually made from veal, beef or pork. They are most commonly eaten as a snack on a white bread roll with mustard. In bars, it can be served with sauerkraut or potato salad and a rye bread or a pretzel. It's often sold as a street food.

In the U.S., the name is commonly shortened to brats. Wisconsin claims to be home to the beer brat, where bratwurst are simmered in beer with butter and onions before grilling. Madison, Wisconsin, hosts the Brat Fest over the Memorial Day weekend, where you can eat your fill of bratwurst.

MAKING YOUR OWN

So let's fire up the grill and make your own beer and brats. First, make a trip to your local grocer and ask the butcher for some quality bratwurst. You should be able to find a few varieties, or, if you're really lucky, your butcher makes his own.

The next most important ingredient is the beer. Don't skimp here; even though you won't be drinking it, it's still important to get a decent beer. Pale lagers work best. If you're a novice beer drinker, ask the experts at your local liquor store to point you in the right direction.

BEER BRATS

Recipe from Kingsford Charcoal.

6 bratwurst
2-3 cans of beer
Sauerkraut
Sautéed onions and peppers

Start a two-zone fire on your grill, with your coals piled to one side. Place a pan over the coals, pour in the beer, and add the brats. Cook for 10-15 minutes, or until the sausages turn white. Move the pan to the cool side and put the brats over the fire using tongs, not a fork. You don't want to puncture the skin. Rotate the sausages for an even sear. Let them rest before serving.

What Is Sauerkraut?

Sauerkraut is cabbage that has been fermented in a long, natural process. It has a long shelf life and a distinct sour flavor. The cabbage is pickled using lactic acid fermentation, similar to the process used to make traditional kimchi.

Before freezing and refrigeration, sauerkraut provided an important source of nutrients over the winter.

The word kraut, derived from sauerkraut, is a derogatory term for Germans.

HOW IT'S MADE

Cabbage is layered with salt in an airtight container and left to ferment. The pickling process for sauerkraut relies not on heat, but on carefully controlled temperatures and lactobacilli, which culture on raw cabbage leaves and break down the sugars. Yeasts are also present, and can result in soft, foul sauerkraut if the temperature becomes too hot. Properly cured sauerkraut is acidic enough to kill off botulism bacteria.

HOW TO EAT IT

Sauerkraut or a dish like it is made in many cultures, but it's Oktoberfest, so let's talk



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Germany. Cooked sauerkraut in that country is often flavored with juniper berries, caraway seeds, apples, or white wine. It's served warm with pork or sausages and steamed potatoes or dumplings.

Sauerkraut is a great source of vitamins C and K, and is a great source of fiber. If eaten uncooked and unpasteurized,

the sauerkraut contains live lactobacilli and other microbes and enzymes that may help digestion.

PORK AND SAUERKRAUT

Recipe is from Land O' Lakes.

- 1 32-ounce package sauerkraut, undrained
- 1 medium apple, cored and sliced thin
- 1/4 cup chopped onion

- 2 Tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 2 Tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 2-3 pounds pork loin roast
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 Tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine sauerkraut, apple, onion, brown sugar and syrup in a bowl. Set aside.

Sprinkle the roast with salt and pep-

per. Melt the butter in a 5-quart oven-proof saucepan or Dutch oven until sizzling, then add the roast. Cook over medium heat, turning several times, for 7-9 minutes, or until browned.

Add the sauerkraut mixture. Cover and bake for 1 1/2 -2 hours, or until the roast reaches an internal temperature of 160 degrees.

Using a slotted spoon, remove the sauerkraut to a serving dish. Place the roast over it and serve.

Free Beer!

OK, not that kind of free beer. If you're avoiding alcohol or gluten, you may be surprised to learn you can still enjoy a good beer. Pick up this knowledge and then head to your local liquor store or grocery store to try a few pints for yourself.

NONALCOHOLIC BEER

N/A beer or near beer contains much less alcohol, and fewer calories, than its leached cousin. It typically has 0.5% alcohol by volume or less, whereas the real stuff has anywhere between 3% and 13%. That little drop of alcohol left behind is what gives the drink its beer taste. Ask your local quality grocer or liquor store experts for their picks. Or try these brews, named best in class by *Cooking Light* magazine.

Athletic Brewing Co. Run Wild IPA: Citrusy and pleasantly hoppy, but not as sharp as a regular IPA. Athletic Brewing only produces non-alcoholic beer, so try any of their brews.

Clausthaler Dry-Hopped Nonalcoholic Beer with Cascade Hops: Clausthaler is another exclusively nonalcoholic brewer, and this one has a malty, caramel profile.

Kalibur Premium Beer: This

brew drops the hops in favor of a wheaty, biscuit taste.

GLUTEN-FREE BEER

Traditional beers are usually made with barley, wheat or both, and those grains contain gluten, which could wreak havoc on someone with celiac disease or a gluten sensitivity. But never fear, brewers are catching on to the gluten-free trend and are churning out beers made with nongluten grains, like sorghum. If you're very sensitive or you're looking for a change, you can also try hard ciders. Again, lean on the experts at your local liquor store. They can point you to some great choices that won't make you sick.

Need a place to start? Try these brews, picked by *Shape* magazine.

Dogfish Head Tweason'ale: Released four times a year, this sorghum brew is flavored with strawberries and buckwheat honey.

Stone Brewing Co.'s Delicious IPA: Stone Brewing's first gluten-free beer is an intense, citrusy IPA. Be warned: It's not entirely gluten free; it tests at 10 parts per million, still under the FDA bar of 20 ppm, but not entirely devoid.

Omission Lager: Omission exclusively does gluten-free beer, and they're darn good at it, taking the gold and silver medals for gluten-free beer at the Great International Beer and Cider Competition. This lager has only 140 calories and is difficult to tell from a glutened bottle.



Pretzel Twists

The origin story of the big, soft Bavarian pretzel is almost as twisty as the bread's shape itself.

Legends fly about monks and the pretzel twist symbolizing arms crossed in prayer, or the Holy Trinity, or other Christian-centric themes. But it's equally likely that the pretzel, and its shape, predate Christianity. And while experts may not agree on how we got pretzels, we can all agree that they are tasty, perfect with beer and can be made at home.

TYPES OF PRETZELS

There are almost as many types of pretzels as there are origin stories. Most commonly, the bread loops are washed in lye or baking soda, baked and salted. But they can also be covered in cheese, nuts, seeds, chocolate, sugar or glazes. They can be cut and served with butter (butterbrezel) or with meats or cheeses. They are served with various forms of wurst, or sausage, with weisswurst being the most popular in Bavaria.

In the U.S., the pretzel's popularity began in the Pennsylvania countryside, where communities of Germans and Swiss settled. Freeport, Illinois, also claims the name Pretzel City, USA. A German immigrant named John Billerbeck started a soft pretzel factory to complement the beers turned out by



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Freeport breweries. Even after the breweries closed during Prohibition, the pretzels twisted on, and still do. The town watches football at Pretzel Field and the high school mascot is the Pretzels.

BAVARIAN PRETZELS

Recipe is from Allrecipes.com.
3 cups flour, divided, plus more for sprinkling
1 Tablespoon active dry yeast

1 teaspoon white sugar
2 Tablespoons butter, softened
1 1/3 cups warm water
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 Tablespoons baking soda
3 cups water
2 Tablespoons butter, melted
1 Tablespoon coarse sea salt, or to taste

In a large bowl, stir together 1 cup of flour, yeast, sugar, softened butter and 1 1/3 cup warm water. Let stand until bubbles begin to

form, about 15 minutes.

Stir in the salt and gradually add the remaining flour until the dough can be picked up and kneaded on the counter. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes, sprinkling flour to keep it from becoming sticky.

Divide the dough into six pieces and let them rest for five minutes. Roll out one at a time into a rope about 15 inches long. Loop and twist it into a pretzel shape. Move

to a baking sheet.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Bring the remaining 3 cups of water to a boil and add the baking soda. Remove from heat. Dip the pretzels into the water bath for about 45 seconds, flipping over about halfway through. Place on a greased baking sheet. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with coarse salt.

Bake until golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes.