

Oktoberfest



How Oktoberfest Began

Oktoberfest began in the 19th century as a celebration of a wedding, which doubled as a hoped-for feeling of unity for Tyrol, the territory only then recently conquered by Bavaria.

Beer, of course, can have that effect. Well, unless you increase taxes on it.

NUPTIALS FOR ROYALTY

Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany began as a celebration of the marriage of future King Ludwig I and Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen on Oct. 12, 1810. A crowd estimated to be 40,000 citizens joined the public festival conducted on fields outside Sendlinger Tor, culminating with a horse race on Oct 17, according to the Daily Telegraph.

The horse race was run the next year at the same fields, by then named Theresienwiese (Theresa's fields, in honor of the princess), writes the Daily Telegraph. The event also added an agricultural show to promote Bavarian produce, and came to include shacks selling beer in half-liter, tin-lidded steins. By 1818 a carousel and two swings had been set up, while small Bavarian beer brewers added more beer stands.

Ludwig assumed the throne in 1825. Therese, as queen, bore nine children, while the marriage was beset by Ludwig's multiple infidelities.

In the 1870s, Oktoberfest came to include folk music and dance.

BAVARIAN BEER FESTIVAL

Today, Munich's Oktoberfest is pro-



Bavaria statue above Theresienwiese

MARTIN FALBISONER

moted as the world's largest beer festival. Oktoberfest 2019 attracted 6.3 million visitors and brought in an estimated \$1.5 billion for the local economy, according to data supplied by event officials.

Sadly, event won't happen for a second consecutive year because of the pandemic. That decision was made by Bavarian state Premier Markus Söder and Dieter Reiter, the mayor of Munich.

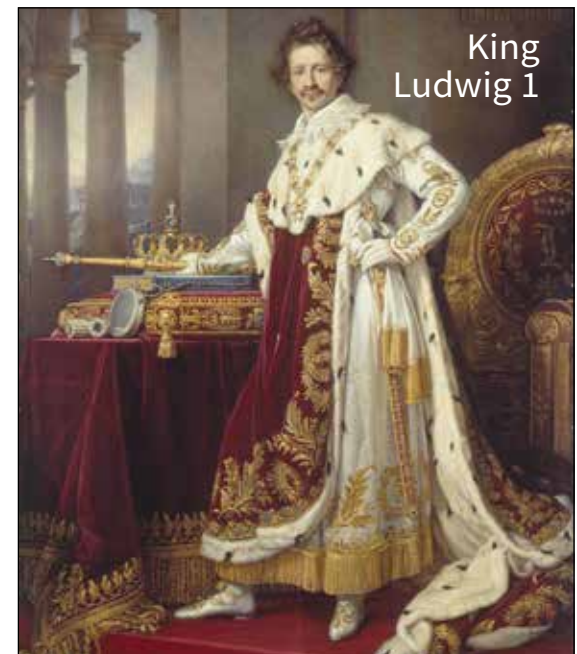
"In the classic beer tents at the big festivals, social distancing, masks and other measures are practically impossible to implement," Söder told AFP. "The situation is too precarious. Imagine there was a new wave and it

then became a superspreader event. The brand would be damaged forever, and we don't want that."

DON'T MESS WITH BEER

Ironically, it was beer that led to King Ludwig's downfall. When he raised taxes on it, all hell broke loose in Bavaria. In the beer riots of 1844, crowds of workers rioted and the Bavarian army demonstrated little interest in restoring order.

Only after Ludwig decreed a 10% reduction in the price of beer was order restored. The damage was done. Four years later, Ludwig abdicated in favor of his son, 23 years after he took the throne.



King Ludwig I

JOSEPH KARL STIELER/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The Traditions of Oktoberfest

Most of the traditions of Oktoberfest originated, aptly, in Munich.

You'll generally see these traditions and dress celebrated each year at American Oktoberfests.

LEDERHOSEN AND DIRNDL

You don't have to be German to don traditional Bavarian attire at Oktoberfest. Ladies wear a dirndl dress, which consists of a bodice, a blouse and a full skirt often adorned with an apron, according to Rotary Carroll County, which holds an annual Oktoberfest event.

Men wear lederhosen, suspenders, a shirt and a traditional German hiking hat that resembles a fedora.

Lederhosen are leather shorts that end just below the knee. Fabric lederhosen also are acceptable though not 100% authentic.

BEER AND STEINS

If you are interested in an authentic Oktoberfest that relies on tastes of Germany, you'll see lots of beer. At the actual Oktoberfest in Munich, you'd find only beers from the six major breweries in Munich. In the U.S., we welcome a wide variety of beers the party.

You might find it served, however, in 1-liter steins (33.8 ounces), each with a lid. That's very much adopted from German culture. It is believed



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that a lid was added during the time of the Black Plague to keep the beer uncontaminated. Priorities!

Say "prost" – cheers! – and clink when taking a sip.

THE CHICKEN DANCE

The Chicken Dance, the interactive song set to a catchy tune, was composed in

Switzerland by Werner Thomas in the 1950s. But today it is a staple at U.S. Oktoberfest festivals.

"In the 1980s a German band was playing Oktoberfest in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and they went on TV to perform the Werner Thomas song," Jack Gonzales, president of the Deutsches Haus, an organiza-

tion in New Orleans designed to celebrate German culture, told ABC affiliate WNGO. "The original song that Werner created was actually 'The Duck Song.' When they did it in the 80s they couldn't find a duck suit for the TV performance, but they found a chicken suit, and that's how 'The Chicken Dance' was born and now a

tradition." Now you know the rest of the story.

MUSIC AND YODELING

Oktoberfest wouldn't be the same without the sounds of Oompah, Polka and yodeling. Both Polka and Oompah are variations of cheerful, energetic tunes based either on accordion or brass instruments.

Beer: Magic Potion of Oktoberfest

As custom dictates, only beer from Munich breweries may be served at the original Oktoberfest, known to the locals as the Wiesn.

The breweries' newest blends increase the anticipation of the event each year. Here are the six breweries allowed to fill the beer mugs of the Wiesn, according to the official Oktoberfest website.

AUGUSTINER

The monks of the Augustinian Order founded a brewery in 1328 that still exists today, and is the oldest brewery within the Munich city limits. After privatization, Augustiner settled in Neuhauser Straße in 1817, where the Augustiner restaurant, popular with locals and tourists, is still located today.

HACKER-PSCHORR

The brewery was first mentioned in a document in 1417 and was located in Sendlinger Straße, where today the restaurant "Altes Hackerhaus" is located. In the 18th century, under the couple Joseph Pschorr and Maria Theresia Hacker, it developed into Munich's leading brewery. Hacker and Pschorr were later continued by their sons as separate breweries, and have only been a common brand again since 1972.

HOFBRÄU

There is a Hofbräuhaus in Munich. In 1589, Hofbräu was founded under Wilhelm V as a ducal brewery, and the company has been run as a state-owned enterprise since 1939.

LÖWENBRÄU

The brewery probably began in the late 14th century, but the name Löwenbräu first

appeared in the Munich beer brewing index in 1746. In the 19th century, the medium-sized company under the Brey family developed into the largest brewery in Munich and, due to its strong growth, moved to Nymphenburger Straße, where it is still located today.

PAULANER

The monks of the Paulaner

Order served their first beer of their own in 1634, making Paulaner the youngest of the Munich breweries. At first, Paulaner beer was only served publicly during festivals; otherwise it was reserved for the monks. But soon the bock beer, based on a recipe by Brother Barnabas, enjoyed great popularity among all Munich beer drinkers.

SPATEN

The Spaten brewery was founded in 1397 and was located in Neuhauser Gasse for its first few centuries. The brewery moved to Marsstraße in the 19th century, where the administration is still located today. Spaten deserves the honor of being the first brewery to bring the "Münchner Hell" (Munich Pale) to market in 1894.



The Food of Oktoberfest

The highlight of Oktoberfest is always the beer. (It is said that you can drink a different German beer every day for 15 years. Prost!) Food, however, is also a big draw at Oktoberfest.

Food and Wine highlights some of the leading German fare to make you feel as if you're in Munich.



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ROAST CHICKEN

Chickens are spit-roasted until the skin is golden brown and crispy.

If you don't have a rotisserie, you can make this classic lemon-thyme roast chicken in the oven. Lemon-and-thyme butter rubbed over the chicken before roasting ensures superbly crispy skin.

SCHWEINEBRATEN (ROAST PORK)

A classic Bavarian dish, schweinebraten can be made with a variety of pork cuts, like shoulder or even loin. It's traditionally roasted with dark beer and onions.



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a try this year?

STECKERLFISCH (GRILLED FISH ON A STICK)

Simple and fairly self-explanatory, steckerlfisch is marinated, skewered and

grilled fish typically made with local Bavarian fish, like bream, though it can also be made with trout or mackerel, says Food and Wine.

WÜRSTL (SAUSAGES)

Würstl refers to a variety of



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("white" brats) or pork, plus copious amounts of fat — so much so that a large container of water is mandatory near the cooker to fight fat flash fires.

BREZEN (PRETZELS)

Large and soft, Bavarian pretzels are the perfect accompaniment to beer.

KNÖDEL (POTATO OR FLOUR DUMPLINGS)

These are large, dense, ultra-comforting dumplings, common in Central Europe.

KÄSESPÄTZLE (CHEESE NOODLES)

This is a savory, cheesy spätzle (a traditional egg noodle). Make with small-curd cottage cheese, topped with tangy quark, for a doubly cheesy dish.

REIBERDATSCHI (POTATO PANCAKES)

These potato pancakes are served both savory with a salad or sweet with apple sauce.

SAUERKRAUT

Pickled cabbage goes with almost anything served at Oktoberfest.



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OBATZDA (SPICED CHEESE-BUTTER SPREAD)

This might be your new favorite spread. It's aged soft cheese, like Camembert, mixed with butter, a small amount of beer, and spices including paprika, salt, pepper and garlic.

SCHWEINSHAXE (ROASTED HAM HOCK)

A beloved beer hall classic, roasted ham hock or shank (pig knuckles) are crispy on the outside with tender meat. They're surprisingly easy to make at home. Why not give it

classic Bavarian sausages. Try them at home sauteed in a skillet with bacon and apple sauerkraut. Serve with plenty of mustard. The bratwurst dates to the 1300s and was eaten for breakfast. The sausages can contain veal



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Fun Facts About Oktoberfest

The Oktoberfest in Munich began as a public festival but has evolved over the years and gained new traditions and notoriety over its 200-plus years of history.

An examination of some of its more unique truths, including the fact that Paris Hilton has been permanently banned from Oktoberfest after she showed one year dressed in a golden and shiny Bavarian Drindl to promote a brand of canned wine. Locals,

offended by how she was dressed, convinced organizers to ban her. Here are some fun facts from around the web.

1. It's called Oktoberfest but almost all of the festival takes place in September. When the event started in 1810, it took place during one week of October. Through the years, it was extended, and the starting date was changed to September to take advantage of warmer weather and attract more visitors, according to Travel Stories. In 2019, 6.3 million people showed up.

2. Oktoberfest has been canceled 26 times, usually because of war and cholera epidemics. Mark 2021 as the latest cancellation, this time thanks to

the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. In 2019, Adidas released a limited edition of vomit-proof sneakers inspired by the Oktoberfest and beer. Stitched on the side: "Prost."

4. Nobody raises their mug until the mayor says so. Since 1950, the festival has only started after the official gun salute and the mayor shouting "O' zapft is!" — which means "It's tapped!" — and offering the first mug to the president of the state of Bavaria.

5. The cost of a liter of beer in 2019 started at \$12. They sell a lot of it. In 2018, 1.9 million gallons of beer were consumed.

6. The beer brewed for Oktoberfest is especially strong. One mug of beer

is equivalent to eight shots of Schnapps, according to Travel Dreams. Somewhere between 600 and 800 suffer alcohol poisoning each year. At least 5,800 needed medical attention at the Red Cross tent onsite in 2018.

7. Of the 14 beer tents, the most famous is Schottenhamel. That's where the mayor taps the first keg. The biggest is Hofbräu-Festhalle, which seats almost 11,000 people.

8. Albert Einstein worked the 1896 event. He was an electrician and helped to set up one of the beer tents.

10. Church and Oktoberfest, you betcha. Event officials conduct Mass every first Thursday of the Oktoberfest in the Hippodrome tent.



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10 U.S. Oktoberfests to Visit

The best anyone can tell, the first Oktoberfest celebrated in America was about 100 years after the original in Munich in 1810.

It wasn't until the 1960s, according to most reporting, that it gained a fuller foothold in American culture and was widely celebrated. USA Today once identified the 10 best Oktoberfest celebrations in America.

LEAVENWORTH OKTOBERFEST

Leavenworth, Washington, a Bavarian-style village in the Cascade Mountains in central Washington State, pulls out all the stops for Oktoberfest.

OKTOBERFEST ZINZINNATI

Cincinnati's "Oktoberfest Zinzinnati" is America's largest Oktoberfest, at around 575,000 attendees, and celebrates Southwest Ohio's rich German heritage. Events

include a dachshund race known as the "Running of the Wieners."

FRANKENMUTH OKTOBERFEST

Frankenmuth is nicknamed "Michigan's Little Bavaria," and marked its 30th annual Oktoberfest celebration in 2020.

According to its website, it was the first Oktoberfest to operate with the blessing of the original Oktoberfest in Munich, and it features imported Hofbrauhaus beer.

LINDE OKTOBERFEST

The Linde Oktoberfest in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been voted "best festival" by the Urban Tulsa Weekly. On tap for 2021: food, beverages, carnival rides, live music straight from Germany, polka dancing sessions more.

The event is also known for its Parade of Brewers and Strong Stein Competition, a challenge to see who can hold 34 ounces of beer the longest.

HELEN OKTOBERFEST

Alpine Helen's Oktoberfest celebra-

tions have been going on for 50 years, according to ExploreGeorgia.org. Held in the city's Riverside Festhalle, it includes weeks of traditional dancing, food and drinks beer from September to November.

FREDRICKSBURG OKTOBERFEST

Fredericksburg is known as the Polka Capital of Texas and will mark its 40th year of hosting Oktoberfest in 2021. It includes music, dancing, food and drink, artisans, a children's area and family fun.

FOUR PEAKS OKTOBERFEST

In 2021, Tempe Sister Cities marks the 49th anniversary of its Oktoberfest celebration in Tempe. The event raises money to send Tempe high school students to cities all around the world and bring more than 30 high school students and teachers from international cities to Tempe for five weeks each year. Events include music, German and local beers, brats and carnival food, carnival rides and dachshund races.

NEW ULM OKTOBERFEST

Named after the Bavarian city of Ulm, New Ulm, Minn., hosts and authentic Oktoberfest over the first two weekends in October. The event kicks off with the Germanic-American Day Parade and includes festivities all over town.

THE FAMILY LODGE AND VON TRAPP FAMILY BREWING OKTOBERFEST

When the von Trapp family left Austria, they settled in Stowe, Vermont. Descendants still run a farmstead, lodge and brewery. The Trapp Lodge bills itself as "A little bit of Austria ... a lot of Vermont." Its 12th annual Oktoberfest will be held in 2021.

ALPINE VILLAGE OKTOBERFEST

Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, this "little slice of Bavaria" in Los Angeles puts on one of Southern California's largest Oktoberfest celebrations, with a "bier hall" and all, according to USA Today.



MICHAEL ZENO DIEMER/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Effects of War and Disease

Oktoberfest in Munich is a sacred event in the region of Bavaria. And today it means a lot of money, bringing in \$1.4 billion to the local economy.

War and cholera received much of the blame for cancellations. Except for the past two years, 2020-21, when COVID-19 was the culprit. The official

Oktoberfest website outlines the other Oktoberfest cancellations.

NAPOLEON 1813

In 1813, when Napoleon and his army were embroiled in battles with Bavaria, Oktoberfest had to be canceled — only four years after it first began.

1854 CHOLERA PANDEMIC

In 1854, Munich was stricken by a cholera epidemic, leaving 3,000 victims in its wake, including the wife of

Ludwig I, the queen mother Therese, to whom the first Oktoberfest was dedicated.

In summer 1854, there were around 15,000 cases of cholera, leading to 7,730 deaths. This caused Oktoberfest to be canceled.

1866, 1873 AND WWI

War and disease continued to wreak havoc. In 1866, Bavaria fought on Austria's side in the Austro-Prussian war, in 1873 cholera returned to Munich, and from 1914 to 1918 World

War I raged. Oktoberfest was canceled in all of those years.

MONEY TROUBLES IN 1923

Inflation linked to World War I became hyper-inflation, and families on fixed incomes faced huge financial problems, leading to Oktoberfest being canceled.

WORLD WAR II

During World War II, Oktoberfest was canceled, and from 1946 to 1948, it was celebrated as a small "fall festival."