



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO OKTOBERFEST

2015 UPDATE

EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT MUNICH'S WORLD FAMOUS BEER FESTIVAL

departful



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A QUICK INTRODUCTION

Oktoberfest is more than a great festival. For many, attending Munich's historic beerfest is an accomplishment on par with your graduation, wedding, or the birth of your first child. It's an event that will leave you with stories that your friends and family will grow to hate as you recount them year after year; of course, you'll need to make it through the festival with your memories in tact first.

Unfortunately, not everyone has an equally incredible experience at Oktoberfest. For some, it's too expensive, for others, too busy, and for others still, it's simply impossible to get into any of the best beer tents. We get it. We've been there, and we can tell you first hand that with just a bit of good planning, you've got nothing to worry about.

Throughout the years, our team has gained some critical knowledge

about Oktoberfest and its beautiful host city. We've put together this guidebook to share these tips with fellow festival-goers in the hopes that you'll avoid the mistakes many first timers make and arrive at the festival prepared for anything. Before we get into the details, let's start with a quick history lesson.

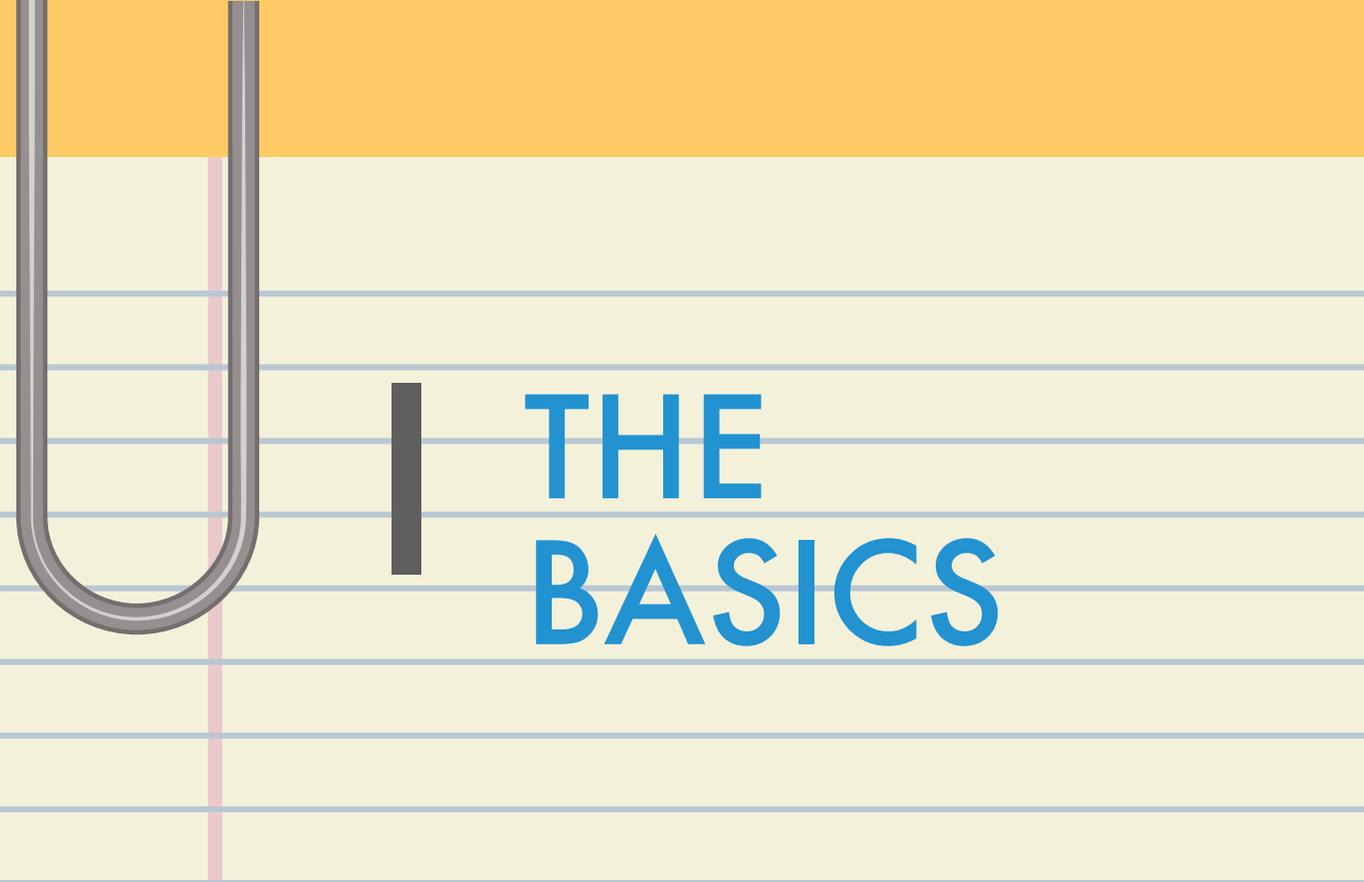
This infamous festival dates back to 1810, when Bavarians were invited to partake in the lavish marriage celebration of Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. In its inaugural year, the festival was held outside the Munich city gates and festivities included horse races that were held in honour of the royal family.

In subsequent years, the festival grew in both size and scope. First, an agricultural fair was incorporated into the event. By 1818, a carousel and other rides were set up for guests to enjoy.

It was around this time that beer stands were first erected, providing sudsy refreshments for visitors. At the turn of the century, these refreshment stands were replaced - thanks to the support of local patrons and breweries - with the tents you'll soon come to enjoy.

While today most people associate Oktoberfest with beer, it's also the world's largest fun fair, complete with carnival rides, food stalls, parades and live music. For all of these reasons, Oktoberfest has become one of our favourite festivals. It has drawn our team to Germany year after year, and we have little doubt that you'll enjoy it as much as we have.

And with that, we'd like to welcome you to our Oktoberfest guide. We hope you enjoy the read, as well as the well-planned, culturally-enriching, and often messy fun, that will surely follow.



THE BASICS

WELCOME TO SEPTEMBERFEST... ?

It may come as a surprise to many first time Oktoberfest revelers that the majority of Oktoberfest doesn't actually occur in October. Instead, the festival runs from the 3rd Saturday in September to the first Sunday of October.

Every so often, the dates are extended to accommodate the placement of the October 3rd holiday, German Unity Day, and Oktoberfest goes get a few extra days of beer-ish fun. Oh, and that whole September thing? The idea originated in 1872 to take advantage of milder temperatures, an idea we endorse entirely as Canadians.

OKTOBERFEST DATES

- 2015** Saturday, September 19th - Sunday, October 4th
- 2016** Saturday, September 17th - Monday, October 3rd
- 2017** Saturday, September 16th - Monday, October 1st

OPENING AND CLOSING HOURS

TENTS

Monday to Friday: 10am to 10:30pm
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: 9am to 10:30pm

STALLS

Monday to Friday 10am to 11:30pm/midnight
Saturday, Sundays and Holidays: 9am to 11:30/midnight



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KEY DATES FOR OKTOBERFEST 2014

SATURDAY SEPT 19

11AM: Grand Entry Parade

Tent patrons, waitresses, bands and brewers parade through Munich toward the Oktoberfest grounds on floats, horse-drawn carriages and beer wagons.

12PM: Official Keg Tapping Ceremony

Join the Mayor of Munich in the Schottenhamel tent as the first keg of beer is tapped and Oktoberfest is officially launched. If you want to join the party, it's necessary to get there 3 to 4 hours early.

SUNDAY SEPT 20

10AM: Oktoberfest Costume and Riflemen's Parade

8,000 performers parade through the centre of Munich in regional costumes alongside an array of floats, marching bands, beer wagons, and more.

MONDAY SEPT 21

12PM: Seniors Lunch

If you're up and about by lunchtime on Monday (and over 60) it may be worth checking out some of the festivals larger tents for a special seniors lunch.

TUESDAY SEPT 22

12PM-6PM: Family Day

Family Day is marked by discounts on rides and performances. While you may save a few euros on the midway, you can also expect longer wait times as a result.

THURSDAY SEPT 24

10AM: Oktoberfest Mass

Join Oktoberfest staff to celebrate traditional mass. This has historically taken place in the Hippodrom tent, which has since closed. Ask upon arrival for an updated location.

SUNDAY SEPT 27

11AM: Open Air Oktoberfest Music Festival

This Big Band music festival features over 400 musicians and takes place on the steps of the Lady Bavaria statue.

TUESDAY SEPT 29

12PM-6PM: Family Day Again

In case you slept through the first Family Day, all rides and performances on the Oktoberfest grounds are discounted once again for Family Day #2.

SUNDAY OCT 4

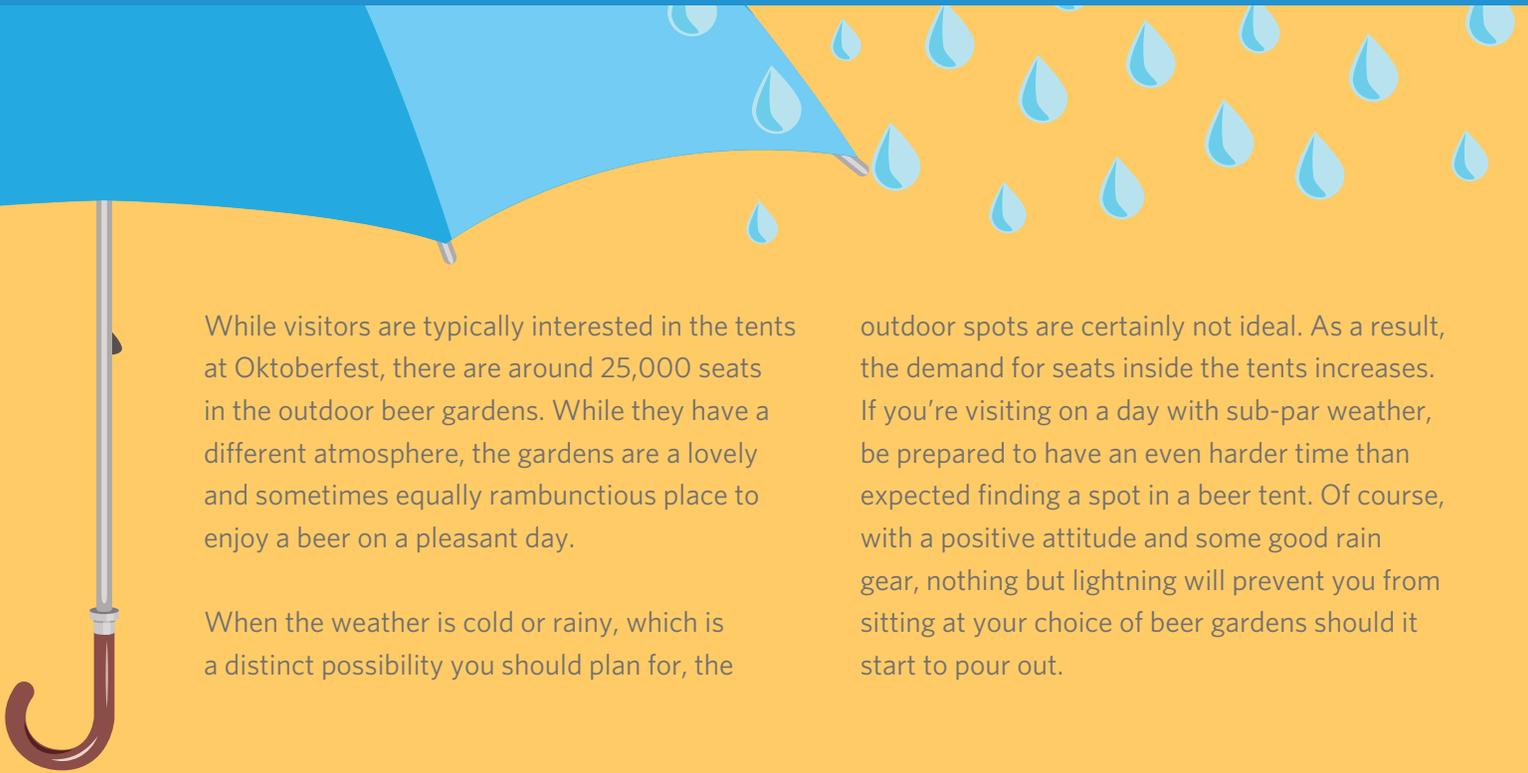
12PM: Traditional Gun Salute

This traditional gun salute or "Boellerschiessen" is held every year at the foot of the Lady Bavaria statue to mark the end of Oktoberfest. Don't worry though, the taps will still be open for a few more hours.

11:30PM: Tents, Stalls, and Rides Close

If you're still with us and thirsty, make sure to get that last beer around 10:30 p.m. Everything shuts down and your recovery begins at 11:30 p.m. sharp.

THE WEATHER



While visitors are typically interested in the tents at Oktoberfest, there are around 25,000 seats in the outdoor beer gardens. While they have a different atmosphere, the gardens are a lovely and sometimes equally rambunctious place to enjoy a beer on a pleasant day.

When the weather is cold or rainy, which is a distinct possibility you should plan for, the

outdoor spots are certainly not ideal. As a result, the demand for seats inside the tents increases. If you're visiting on a day with sub-par weather, be prepared to have an even harder time than expected finding a spot in a beer tent. Of course, with a positive attitude and some good rain gear, nothing but lightning will prevent you from sitting at your choice of beer gardens should it start to pour out.

THE PRICE

THE FREEMIUM MODEL

Entering the Oktoberfest is completely free and the grounds are accessible from several entrances. This means that you can peruse the food and gift stands, scope out the fair games and rides, and engage in some of the most entertaining people-watching without spending a cent. Of course, this free ride ends once you decide to have a drink or six.

While walking into one of the festival's many beer tents is free of charge, you will be expected to buy something, even if it's not beer, the second you take a seat.

If you're interested in taking a spin on some of the rides, you will have to buy tickets from the booths marked "Kasse". Depending on the nature and popularity of the ride, prices range between €3-€8 per person.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO PAY IN THE TENTS

While beer prices are somewhat standardized across all tents, it's worth noting that food prices can vary substantially depending where you decide to eat.

BEER

Expect to pay between €9.80 to €10.10 for a one-litre beer (or Maß) in the large tents and slightly less in the smaller tents. The cheapest steins will be found at Augustiner and the most expensive at Löwenbräu and Schottenhammel.

FOOD

For a basic fare like roast half-chicken, bratwurst, and käsespätzle expect to pay between €8 and €12. Larger, more traditional meals including full platters traditional Oktoberfest foods can cost upwards of €25. A large pretzel makes a good beer-drinking snack and will usually run you about €4. Many of the tents also have a set-price lunch for around €10 on weekdays.

WEEKENDS VS WEEKDAYS

Weekends are wild at Oktoberfest. As the festival continues to gain international popularity, it seems that you need to go earlier every year to secure a spot in one of the tents, with people starting to queue up before 6 a.m.

Weekdays, by contrast, are much more civil and festival goers can snag a seat in most tents without worrying about being trampled by a lederhosen-clad mob. Plan to go mid-morning to early-afternoon when the atmosphere gets a little livelier to secure a seat as evenings can get very busy as well.

In addition to a *slightly* more subdued atmosphere, visiting on weekdays will provide a much more authentic German experience, where you'll see a higher local to foreigner ratio than on the weekends. Many Germans avoid the festival's peak times (with the exception of the younger generations as the beer drinking age is 16) as mass binge drinking, and all that goes with it, isn't typically thought well of in their culture.

WEEKEND?

Saturdays at Oktoberfest are the most intense. A majority of the tents have massive lines long before they open and are usually closed off for the day after they let the first groups of people inside. If you show up extra early and gamble on the right tent entrance, you can get lucky with a table but it's certainly not guaranteed.

Fridays and Sundays are still crazy, but you may have better luck finding a good seat. Again, you'll want to ensure that you arrive early. Expect October 3rd, German Unity Day, to be just as busy as a typical Saturday as most locals are off work.

If you're still deciding which weekend to visit the festival, here are a few pointers to help you decide. The first weekend is nuts. People line up and pack in to be among the first to celebrate Oktoberfest. During the second weekend, aptly dubbed 'The Italian Weekend', Germans become the minority as Munich is overrun with beer drinking and party seeking Italians. The final weekend represents the last hurrah as Oktoberfest winds down, but don't expect any less excitement.

Regardless of which weekend you pick, expect to be packed in, body to body, amongst an international pantheon of drunks.

OKTOBERFACTS

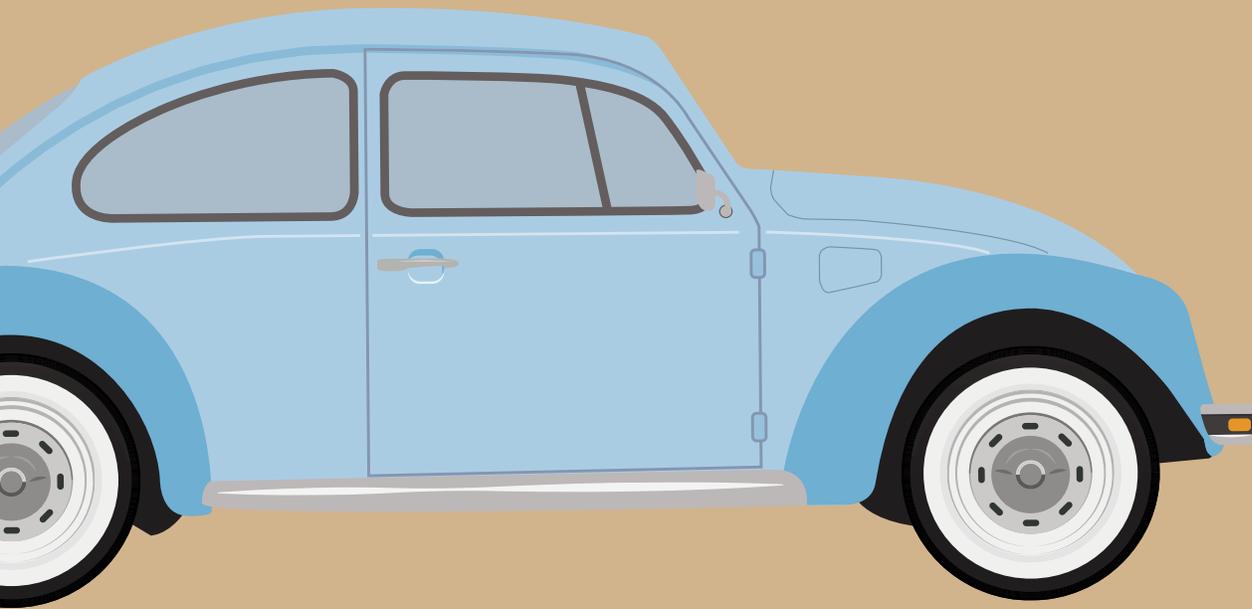
GENERAL

- Munich has played host to 181 Oktoberfests to date. It has been cancelled only 24 times due to war or the outbreak of disease

- Despite the tight security, approximately 200,000 beer steins are stolen from the tents each year
- Construction on the Oktoberfest grounds begins in July each year
- 638 cases of alcohol poisoning
- €400 million were spent during the festival's 16 days
- 759 people were arrested.
- 44 of these arrests involved one person attacking another person with their beer stein
- Our team was involved in 0% of those arrests that we'll admit to or can be proven in a court of law.

IN 2013

- 6.4 million visitors drank 6.7 million litres of beer
- 500,000 roast chickens and 114 oxen were consumed



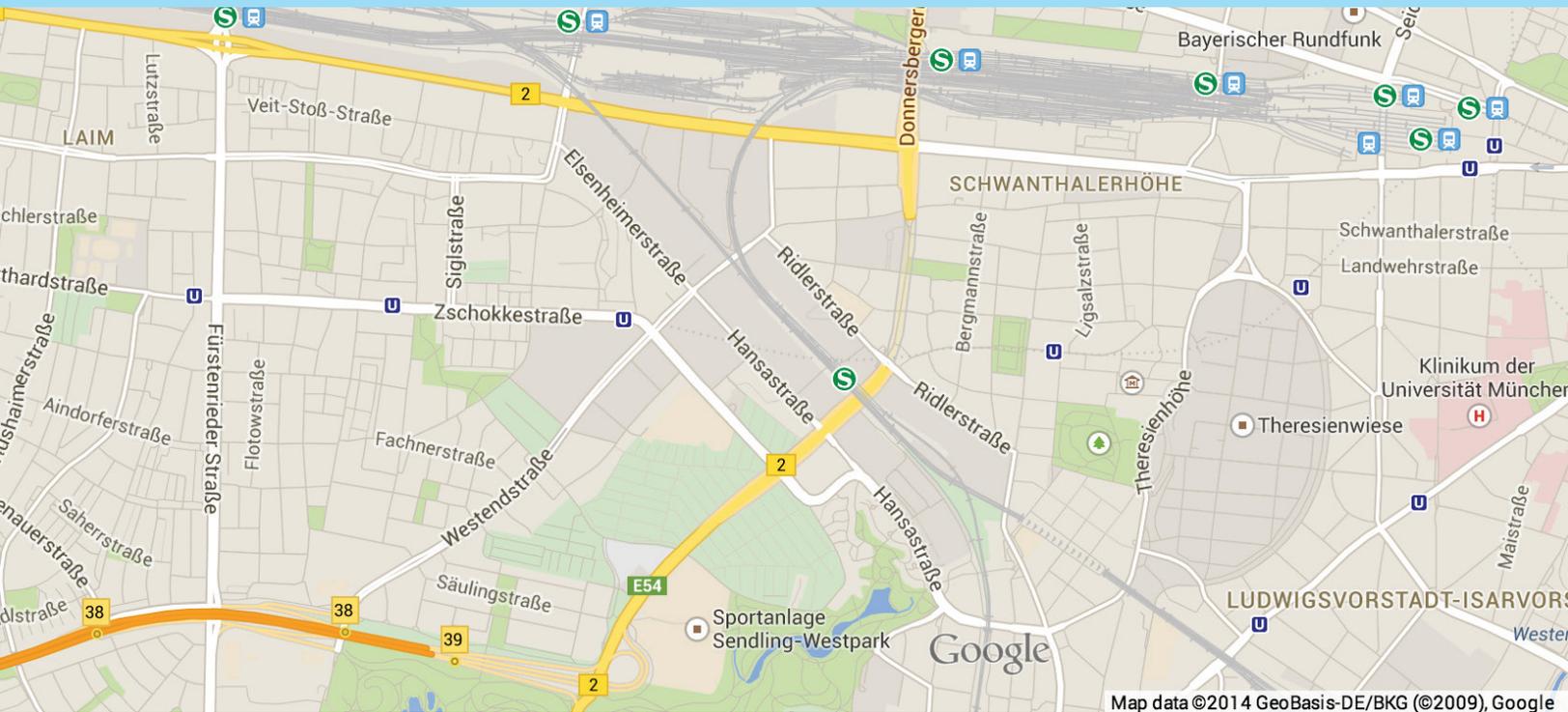
II THE JOURNEY

Oktoberfest is held each year on the 'Theresienwiese' grounds, colloquially called "Wies'n". This expansive 103-acre area is just west of Munich's *altstadt* (old town) and is easily accessible by transit.

The Wies'n grounds can be reached by U Bahn (metro) from the *Hauptbahnhof* (central station) on the U4 or U5 lines to either the Theresienwiese or Schwanthalerhöhe stops. Visit page 14 for a detailed look at available stops.

You can also walk the 1.5 km from the central station or grab a taxi if you are not up for a tightly packed metro ride. Just follow the swarms of lederhosen.

GETTING AROUND MUNICH



If you're traveling to Munich from another city in Germany, we recommend taking advantage of the country's extensive rail system. Munich Hauptbahnhof is the main train station in the city and the Oktoberfest grounds a short walk from there. The website for Deutsche Bahn, the German railway company, is a great place to plan your itinerary and book tickets: www.bahn.de

If you're not interested in taking the train, or you've already arranged to drive to Munich, make sure to plan ahead as both traffic and parking can be precarious during the festival - especially in the centre of Munich.

To avoid traffic jams as you approach Munich, plan to take smaller regional roads (marked as "B" roads) instead of major highways like the A8 and A9,

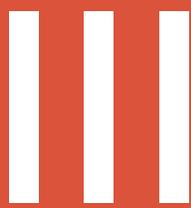
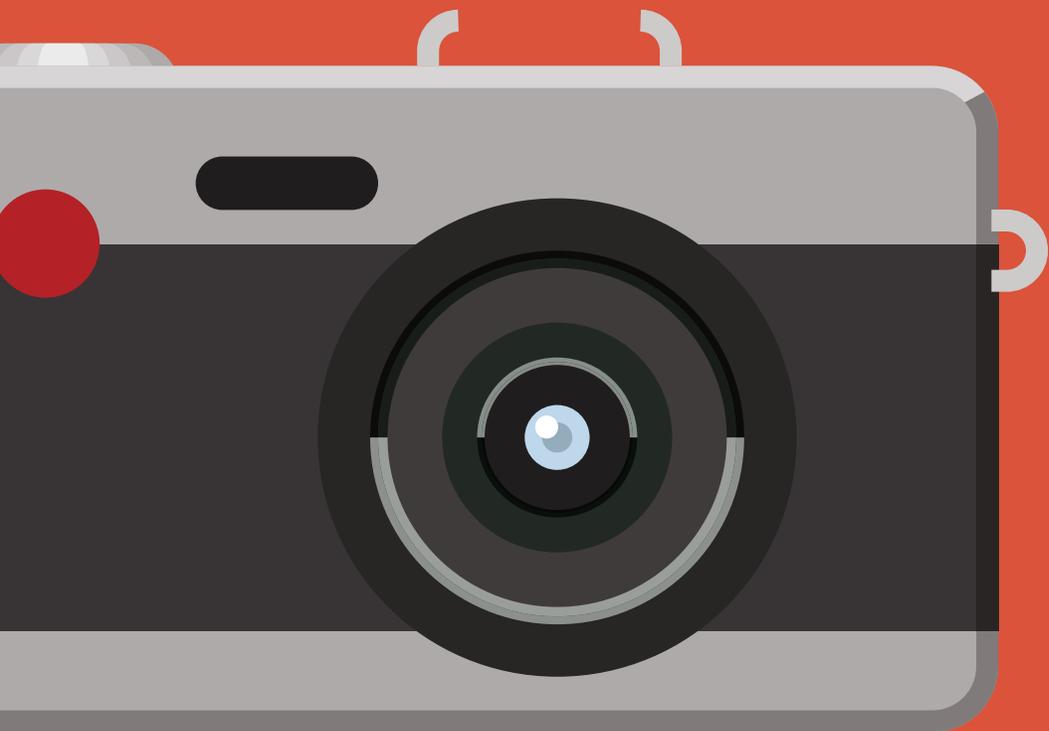
which act as main arteries connecting Munich with the rest of Europe. As you approach Munich, these roads are typically busy regardless of the time of year, but will be even more so during Oktoberfest. Throw in the construction scheduled for the A8 this fall and you may as well just change into your dirndl or lederhosen in the car, turn on some oom-pah music and settle in for a long wait.

Once you've made it close to Munich, there are really only a few legitimate options to park your car. Driving to the festival and parking is not one of them. If you are staying in a hotel that offers parking, you'll be just fine. For those enjoying a few nights in a hostel or Airbnb, we recommend using one of the many Park and Ride lots located on the outskirts of the city.

For those entering the city on the A9 via Nuremberg (or along an adjacent B-road), consider using the Park and Ride situated at the "Garching-Sued" exit. From there, take the metro (U6 line) to Poccistraße. From there, you will only have to walk for 10 minutes to get to the Oktoberfest grounds.

POPULAR PARK AND RIDE LOCATIONS

- Fröttmaning (U6)
- Kieferngarten (U6)
- Studentenstadt (U6)
- Klinikum Großhadern (U6)
- Neuperlach-Sued (U5)
- Michaelibad (U5)
- Innsbrucker Ring (U5, U2)
- Fuerstenried West (U3)



THE GROUNDS

The Theresienwiese (Wies'n) grounds, where Oktoberfest is held each year, is a huge open space in central Munich. Despite its already impressive size, the grounds feel even more enormous when they're jam-packed with hundreds of thousands of people wearing pretty much the same outfit.

There are fourteen main beer tents (known as *festzelt* or *bierzelt* in German) and several smaller ones on the Oktoberfest grounds. The term tent is misleading - these are behemoth structures that can fit upwards of 9,000 eager beer drinkers.

Each tent serves one standard beer and has its own unique atmosphere.

Additionally, there are beer gardens associated with many of the larger tents, providing an opportunity to enjoy your Oktoberfest experience *al fresco* (or *im Freien* in German).

In addition to the tents, the grounds are filled out with hundreds of stalls selling snacks and souvenirs, dozens of rides from a tame Ferris Wheel to thrilling roller coasters, and booths where daring individuals imbibe schnapps.

TENTS AT A GLANCE

Large Tents	Brewery/Beer Served	Tent Seating	Garden Seating
Marstall	Spaten, Franziskaner-Bräu	3,200	1,000
Armbrustschützenzelt	Paulaner	5,830	1,600
Hofbräu-Festzelt	Hofbräu München	7,018	3,022
Hacker-Festzelt	Hacker-Pschorr	6,950	2,350
Schottenhamel	Spaten-Franziskaner-Bräu	6,000	3,000
Winzerer Fähndl	Paulaner	8,450	2,450
Schützen-Festhalle	Löwenbräu	5,440	0
Käfers Wies'n Schänke	Paulaner	1,364	1,900
Weinzelt	Wine, Paulaner Weißbier	1,300	600
Löwenbräu-Festhalle	Löwenbräu	5,700	2,800
Bräurosl	Hacker-Pschorr	6,200	2,200
Augustiner-Festhalle	Augustiner Bräu	6,000	2,500
Ochsenbraterei	Spaten	5,900	1,500
Fischer-Vroni	Augustiner	3,330	700

Small Tents	Brewery/Beer Served	Tent Seating	Garden Seating
Able's Kalbs-Kuchl	Spaten	300	0
Ammer Hühner & Entenbraterei	Augustiner	450	450
Bodo's Cafezelt	Exotic Cocktails	450	0
Café Kaiserschmarrn	Cocktail bar	400	0
Café Mohrenkopf	XXL Cocktails	420	0
Feisingers Ka's und Weinstubn	Wine and Wheat Beer	92	90
Glöckle Wirt	Spaten	140	0
Heimer Hendl- und Entenbraterei	Paulaner	400	0
Heinz Wurst- Und Hühnerbraterei	Paulaner	360	0
Hochreiters Haxnbraterei	Löwenbräu	250	0
Münchner Knödelei	Paulaner	300	90
Poschners Hühner- Und Entenbraterei	Hacker-Pschorr	350	0
Schiebl's Kaffeehaferl	Irish Coffee	100	0
Wies'n Guglhupf Café-Dreh-Bar	Mix Bar	60	0
Wildmoser Hühnerbraterei	Hacker-Pschorr	320	0
Wildstuben	Augustiner	271	0
Wirtshaus im Schichtl	Various Beers, Wines, Mixed Drinks	120	0
Zum Stiftl	Paulaner	360	0
Zur Bratwurst	Augustiner	160	0

1 MARSTALL

2014 was Marstall's first year at Oktoberfest. This tent was previously the Hippodrome, a ritzier tent within the festival that was often visited by local and international celebrities. Due to the former proprietor's legal issues, the tent was taken over by a new owner last April, and now dawns an historically appropriate equestrian theme. Marstall is one of the only large tents at Oktoberfest that will serve wine alongside beer.

2 ARMBRUSTSCHÜTZENZELT

This hunting-themed tent is where the annual Oktoberfest crossbow competition has taken place since 1895. With wild animal busts adorning the walls, you'll feel as though you've been transported to a bonafide hunting lodge as you sip your Paulaner alongside archers and hunting groups from across the country.

3 HOFBRÄU-FESTZELT

Widely recognized as the most rambunctious at Oktoberfest, the Hofbräu tent attracts an enormous amount of non-locals, many with an 'anything goes' mentality. Much like the infamous Hofbräuhaus in Munich's *altstadt*, the Hofbräu tent is a spot where you will find more Australians, Americans, Brits and Italians getting in on the local beer festivities than Germans themselves. An important perk of the Hofbräu tent is that you can order a beer without being seated - a requirement of all the other large tents.

4 HACKER-FESTZELT

As you enter into this Hacker Pschorr tent, you'll understand immediately why its slogan is "*Himmel der Bayern*" (or Heaven of Bavaria). One of the more aesthetically pleasing tents, Hacker-Festzelt's ceiling is a spectacularly painted blue sky complete with fluffy clouds, while scenes of Munich cascade the walls. Traditional oom-pah music is performed on the revolving stage until the early evening, when a rock 'n roll band is brought on to rile up this party loving crowd.

5 SCHOTTENHAMEL

The Schottenhamel tent carries a lot of significance at Oktoberfest. As the oldest tent at the festival, the Schottenhamel is where Oktoberfest officially begins as Munich's mayor taps the first keg at noon on the opening Saturday. In recent years, Schottenhamel has attracted a younger and more local demographic looking for a good time. One thing to note is that the seating at Schottenhamel differs from all of the other main tents - instead of the classic picnic bench style with two rows of seats facing each other, here the seats run along all sides of the table making a square seating arrangement. No biggie for most people, but it irks some.

6 WINZERER FÄHNDL

Winzerer Fährndl is Paulaner's main tent holding a whopping 8,500 people inside. You'll be able to spot the tent as soon as you enter the grounds as an enormous stein of Paulaner spins atop a tall column, enticing you to come inside and enjoy it's cheery patrons and decorations. Winzerer is also your best bet to see a player from Bayern Munich as Paulaner is one of the club's official sponsors.

7 SCHÜTZEN-FESTHALLE

Head towards the Lady of Bavaria statue and you'll find the Schützen tent, a mainstay at Oktoberfest since 1926. While it's one of the smaller tents on the strip and a bit tamer, it oozes tradition and character. Make sure to try the tent's culinary specialty - roasted suckling pig (*Spanferkel*) which is accompanied with a beer sauce (what goes better with beer than beer?!). There's also an enclosed beer garden that is a perfect spot to spend the day.

8 KÄFERS WIES'N SCHÄNKE

Käfers is on the small side of the big tents at Oktoberfest with room for only 1,000 inside and about double that in the outdoor garden. Yet this chalet themed tent proves that good things come in small packages. Käfers prides itself on being the most exclusive tent on the Oktoberfest block and caters to local celebrities, making it truly the place to see and be

seen. If that isn't incentive enough for you, Käfers is open well past all other tents, pouring Paulanars until 12:30am.

9 WEINZELT This is the tent that's all about wine if you just can't stomach another beer. While you're missing out in on the main draw of Oktoberfest, the Weinzelt is a classically decorated tent incorporating many traditional Bavarian elements. Wine lovers can choose from more than 15 varieties of wine, with most available by the glass or bottle. Paulaner *weißbier* (wheat beer) is also available if you've been dragged to this tent against your will.

10 LÖWENBRÄU-FESTHALLE Whether it's the gigantic lion perched atop a 120+ metre stand or the inebriated lion above the entrance, the Löwenbräu tent is tough to miss. Run by the same family for over 60 years, the Löwenbräu tent is an institution at Oktoberfest. As you gulp down your beer (which has been served at Oktoberfest since its inaugural year), be sure to look up - there are around 16,000 lights covering the ceiling, evoking a feeling of being at a raucous party under the stars. Due to the beer's international popularity, expect a good mix of local and tourists at the Löwenbräu tent.

11 BRÄUROS This tent has served up steins of Hacker Pschorr since the turn of the 20th century and has been run by the Heide family since 1936. Legend has it that the name Bräurosl was the nickname of the original owner's daughter, Rosi Pschorr, who was quite the yodeler, if you catch our drift, and enjoyed a good beer. Not forgotten today, a highlight of the Bräurosl tent is the twice daily yodeling performances, which entertain eager beer enthusiasts. Given its traditional elements, Bräurosl is more popular with local Bavarians.

12 AUGUSTINER-FESTHALLE Another locally oriented tent, Augustiner-Festhalle is known to be a family friendly spot that also welcomes well behaved tourists. Considered by many Munchners to be the city's best brew, Augustiner is the only beer at Oktoberfest to still be tapped in wooden kegs. For staff, this means having to constantly lug and heave heavy barrels of beer faster than thirsty patrons can drink them up. Thankfully, and in spite of the extra work out, the Augustiner tent is known for having the friendliest staff.

13 OCHSENBRATEREI This Spaten serving tent is known for the roast oxen that revolves around a spit inside the tent (and a mechanical version above the entrance to Ochsenbraterei). It'll come as no surprise that most of the food options at this tent revolve around oxen, which has been a major draw for patrons since 1881. The Ochsenbraterei tent has a pretty mixed crowd but is one that thoroughly enjoys a good time, propelled by the traditional music during the day and the rock anthems throughout the evening.

14 FISCHER-VRONI Fischer-Vroni focuses on fish, a refreshing alternative to the meat-dominated menus of Oktoberfest. Its specialty is *Steckerlfisch*, skewered fish, which is slowly smoked just outside the tent's main doors. While this Augustiner-serving tent is on the small side (only around 3,000 people can partake), it's a perennial favourite of the festival. The décor emphasizes the fish theme with several nautical elements, most prominent of which is the giant boat protruding from one of the walls, forming a stage from which the brass band plays.

MAP

TENTS

1. Marstall
2. Armbrustschützenzelt
3. Hofbräu-Festzelt
4. Hacker-Festzelt
5. Schottenhamel
6. Winzerer Fähndl
7. Schützen-Festhalle
8. Käfers Wies'n Schänke
9. Weinzelt
10. Löwenbräu-Festhalle
11. Bräurosl
12. Augustiner-Festhalle
13. Ochsenbraterei
14. Fischer-Vroni

ATTRACTIONS

15. Lady Bavaria Statue
16. Fairgrounds
17. "Olympia Looping"
Rollercoaster
18. "Riesenrad" Ferris Wheel

METRO STATIONS (U-BAHN)

19. Theresienwiese
20. Schwanthalerhöhe
21. Goetheplatz
22. Poccistraße

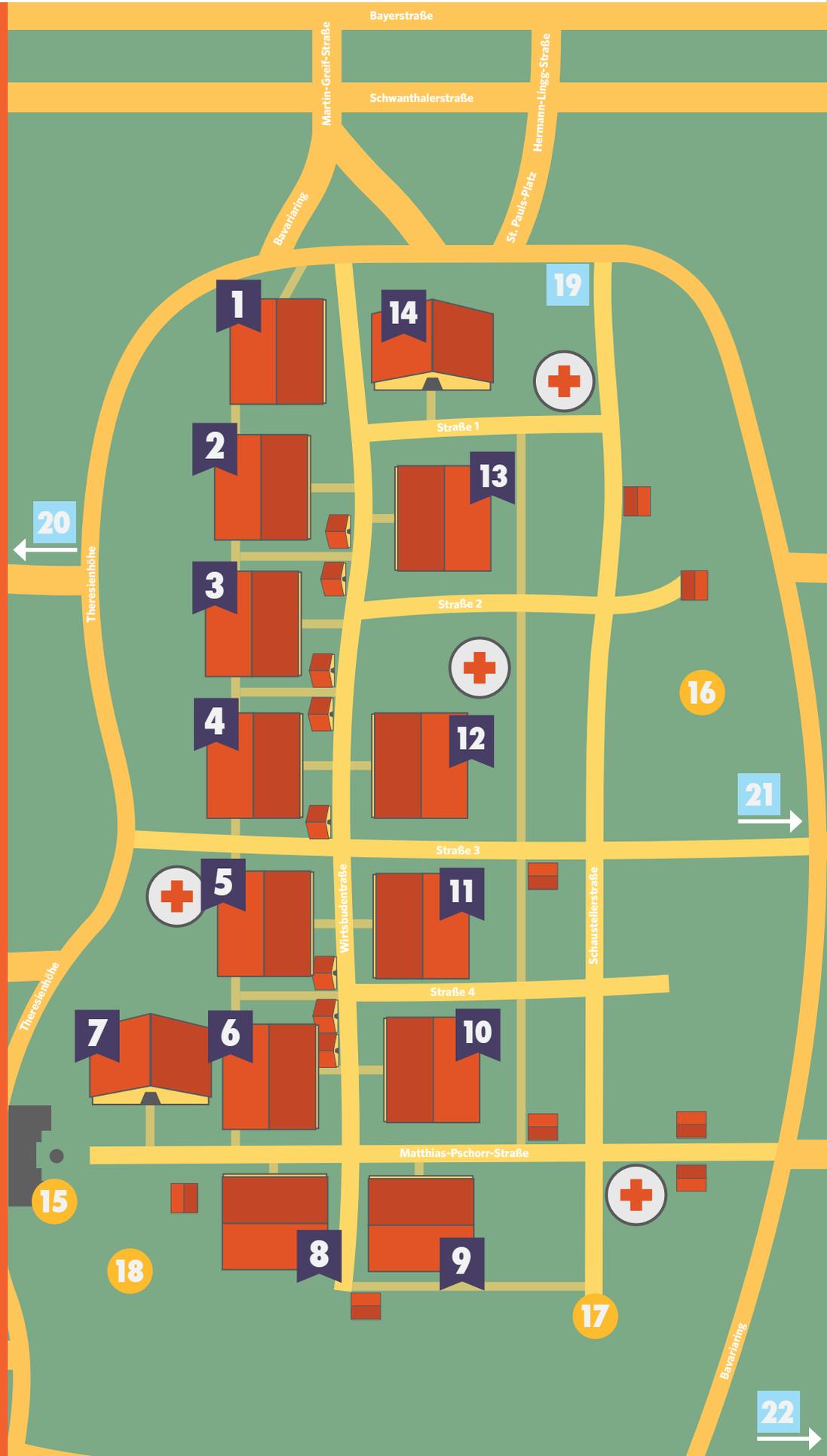




Photo courtesy of Flickr, SteFoul. (CC BY 2.0)

HOW TO GET INTO A TENT

RESERVATIONS

Reservations aren't required, but not having one will make it more difficult depending on when you go and how big your group is.

Reservations are available for tables but need to be made well in advance and directly to the specific tent you wish to visit. The method of reservation varies widely amongst tents - some can be done via email, others through fax or snail-mail, and the most extreme require reservations to be made in person. Many tents don't allow first timers to reserve tables over the busy periods (i.e. weekends

and evening) to ensure that loyal customers are able to secure spots.

Reservations can only be made at the table level (10 people) and you pay in advance but it's more of a down payment, equivalent to the price of two steins and a half chicken meal per person. You receive vouchers for what you've already paid for which is applied to your food and drinks once you're there.



Photo courtesy of Flickr, Daniel Stockman (CC BY-SA 2.0)

HOW TO GET INTO A TENT

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE

If you're a smaller group or aren't able to snag a reservation, you can always look for open spots on a first-come, first-serve basis. Even during peak times, tents are required to keep a sizable portion of the tables available for drop-ins. These open tables are typically clustered around the centre of the tent, in close proximity to the band.

If you spot an empty table, look closely to see if it's reserved - it will often be a small piece of paper taped to one end of the table specifying the reservation details. An 'R' or 'Reserviert' signifies that it is reserved, however it may not be booked until several hours later which means you can occupy the table but will have to move once the reserving party arrives.

Communal seating is common in most tents and beer gardens, so depending on the size of your group, you will likely have some strangers (or new friends by the second

maß) squeezed in beside you. When looking for open seats, ask if spaces are available at sparsely populated tables.

A tent may be open, meaning that you'll be able to walk in, but that doesn't mean there will be any available seats. For an hour or two after a tent fills up, you'll see hundreds of people filing through, looking for any spot to sit. Why don't they just stand, you ask? In all tents except Hofbräu you must be seated to order a beer. No seat = no service.

Reservations are not permitted in the beer gardens so it's always easier to find available seats versus the tents.

HOW TO GET INTO A TENT

LAST DITCH EFFORTS TO SNAG RESERVATIONS

If you want to visit Oktoberfest during a busy time (i.e. weekend or evening) and don't want to go through the hassle of lining up for hours without any guarantee of a seat, you can alternatively book a tour. There are dozens of individuals and agencies offering tours of Oktoberfest, which typically include at least one tent experience. The price will be heftier as these tours often provide other services such as meals, accommodations, and/or transportation but it can certainly be worth it to experience Oktoberfest with a knowledgeable guide.

Here are some recommended tours:

- **Harriman's:** A small, private tour that includes hotel accommodation and other activities in Munich
- **Top Deck:** Geared toward younger Oktoberfest goers, Top Deck offers camping accommodation and optional coach bus from London
- **Munich Oktoberfest Tickets and Tour:** A good option if you just want to pay to get a seat in a tent

If you're staying at a decent hotel (3+ star) check with the concierge to see if they have any reservations available. Often hotels will book tables in advance for guests during their stay. You might as well enjoy the perks when you're shelling out up to 3x the normal rate.

Another possibility is to go early on a weekday, grab a table and tip your server very well. After you've established a good rapport, explain that you're interested in a table that evening or the following day. Often, some groups (especially companies) are no shows for their reservations and the servers will be able to seat preferred customers instead.

A last result would be to buy someone else's reservations, usually for sale in online marketplaces like eBay. Be forewarned though, the prices are often highly inflated, many are scams, and even if it's legit, you may still be turned away at the tent as reservations are non-transferable.

ONCE YOU'RE IN A TENT, STAY THERE

If you manage to secure a seat in a tent, especially on a weekend, don't try to hop to another after a few hours. It's likely to be full and you probably won't luck out twice in one day. While each tent has varying characteristics, the experience is more or less the same. The grass is usually not greener in these situations so stick with what the beer gods have seen fit to bless you with.

Often people don't realize they're accidentally exiting the tent when in search of a washroom or smoking area and cannot get back inside. Check with security to

ensure you'll be able to re-enter.

If you're able to score a seat or table in a beer tent but it's reserved later in the day, stick around in the tent once the party arrives, especially if it's a very busy period. Other tents may be completely closed (meaning that you can't even enter to search for seats) so it's best to stakeout potential openings in the tent you're already in. By this point, many people will have been there for hours and more likely to show you some love in the seat department.



IV

THE DRINKS

Litre steins (“*Maß*”, pronounced mass) of Oktoberfest beer are the standard across all the tents and gardens at the festival.

One of the fundamental tenants of Oktoberfest is that only beers from Munich are served. Luckily, the city is quite blessed in the beer department and these heavy weights are showcased at the festival: Augustiner, Löwenbräu, Paulaner, Hofbräu, Hacker-Pschorr, and Spaten-Franziskaner. Each tent showcases one of these brewers so pick carefully if you have a particular preference as you won’t have much of a choice once you’re settled into your respective tent.

All beer in Germany must abide by the infamous “*Reinheitsgebot*”, or Purity Laws, regulation from the late 1400s that prohibits any ingredients other than water, barley, hops and yeast.

During the event, most breweries serve their Oktoberfest beers, which have higher alcohol content than what many visitors are used to with many above 6% abv. Hacker-Pschorr is the lightest beer that you’ll find in the Oktoberfest tents at 5.8% and Hofbräu is the strongest at 6.3%.

OKTOBERFEST BEER CHECKLIST



WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE BEER?

First of all, we're a little disappointed. Luckily for you, while beer is the undeniable focus of Oktoberfest, there are some other drink options available of both the alcoholic and non-alcoholic varieties.

One of the most common substitutes for beer during the festival is radler, a half beer, half lemonade mix that most of the big tents offer, which is quite tasty and refreshing. Switching between beer and radlers is a legitimate (and recommended) way to prolong your Oktoberfest experience, although it may open you up to piss-taking and challenges to your manhood from your non-German mates.

Wine can be found at Oktoberfest in the Weinzelt and Marstall tents. To help you traverse these tents, here are a few helpful terms:

Red wine = *Rotwein*

White wine = *Weißwein*

Sparkling wine = *Sekt*

Hard alcohol and mixed drinks aren't too common in the main tents but some of the smaller tents specialize in cocktails. If this is more up your alley, be sure to check out Bodo's Cafezelt, Café Kaiserschmarrn, and

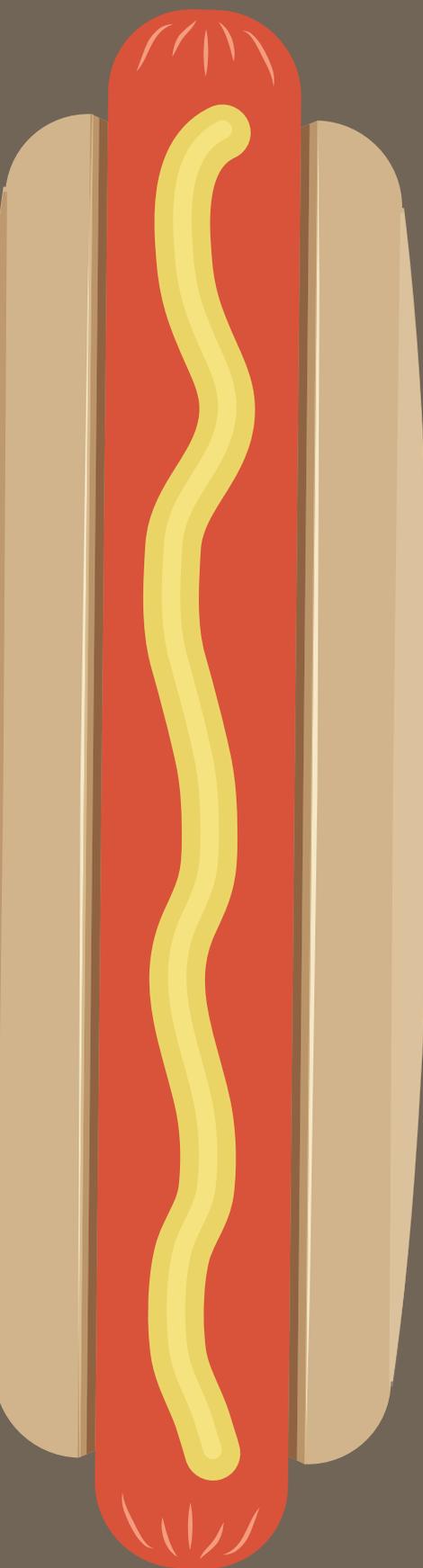
Café Mohrenkopf.

Stands selling shots of schnapps in a plethora of flavours are littered around the Wies'n grounds. I highly recommend avoiding these sweet but strong shots at all cost if you're planning on making it through the day at Oktoberfest. Schnapps can flip the switch from tipsy to drunk faster than you can say Prost!

Soft drinks, juices and water can also be found throughout the festival, but will run you almost as much as a beer. There are a few standard options that you'll find on most tent menus: *Apfelschorle* is a carbonated apple juice, *Spezi* is a mix of coke and orange pop (German's love to mix their drinks if you haven't already noticed), *Wasser* is water and comes in *spritzig* (carbonated) and *natur* (non-carbonated).

Alcohol free (*Alkoholfrei*) beer is also available in a 1 litre stein in most tents and will cost you exactly the same as the real stuff, plus a little bit of your dignity.





V THE FOOD

I can think of no better food to pair with all day beer drinking than the hearty fare offered at Oktoberfest. German's have high standards when it comes to the food they consume so expect high quality local ingredients to be present on your plate no matter what you order. Each tent has its own menu but the classics of German cuisine are present on all of them.

Some tents have their own specialties that attract visitors year after year. Oxen delicacies are the preferred cuisine in the Ochsenbraterei tent, where you can even watch oxen (which the cooks have named!) rotating on a spit as you sip your Spaten. Fischer-Vroni provides an oft-needed respite from the heavy meat dishes found all over the festival with their fish focused menu. The most popular food here is Steckerlfisch, roasted skewered fish including as mackerel, salmon, and sea bass. Armbrustschützenzelt is a

pork lovers dream where delicious suckling pig is served to the masses. It's difficult to go wrong with the food in the tents as it's high quality and consistently delicious.

Searching for vegetarian options may seem like a hopeless cause, but there are some solid options across the various tents. Käsespätzle is sort of Germany's take on mac & cheese, Obazda is a soft cheese with herbs, and a mixed vegetable plate is common on Oktoberfest menus. While the need to provide vegan friendly cuisine has also been on the radar of organizers and tent proprietors in recent years, currently options are very limited.

Many of the tents have a set price lunch on weekdays for around €10, which is a great deal versus the a-la-carte options.

There are also hundreds of vendors on the Wies'n grounds selling all sorts of snacks to soak up that beer such as *Lebkuchen*, which are large heart-shaped gingerbread cookies, roasted nuts in a magnitude of flavours, *Apfelstrudel* (apple strudel), and the classic Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte (black forest cake).



I

IT'S A BIT OF A SAUSAGEFEST

German's love their wursts: *Bratwürste* is the most recognizable for newbies, *Weißwürste* is a white sausage usually eaten in the mornings and a favourite in Bavaria, and *Currywurst* is pork sausage smothered in spicy curry sauce.



II

THE PEOPLE'S PRETZELS

Laugenbrezel is your basic pretzel on steroids - a large, chewy, and, if you're lucky, still warm monstrosity that could feed a large family. It's a must-have at Oktoberfest as it's not only delicious, it's a carb heavy snack that will help soak up all that beer.



III

KÄSESPÄTZLE... ITS A MOUTHFUL

Käsespätzle is a dish of dumpling-like noodles smothered with cheese and often topped with green onions and crispy fried onions. While it's universally hearty and delicious, *Käsespätzle* noodles and flavours can vary from tent to tent.



IV

I CAN ONLY HENDL A HALF

Hendl is a roast chicken meal, usually served by the half and is a perennial staple at Oktoberfest. This standard fare is brought up a notch with perfectly crisp skin and the right balance of spices and seasoning - a must have at Oktoberfest!



V

SCHWEINEHAXE

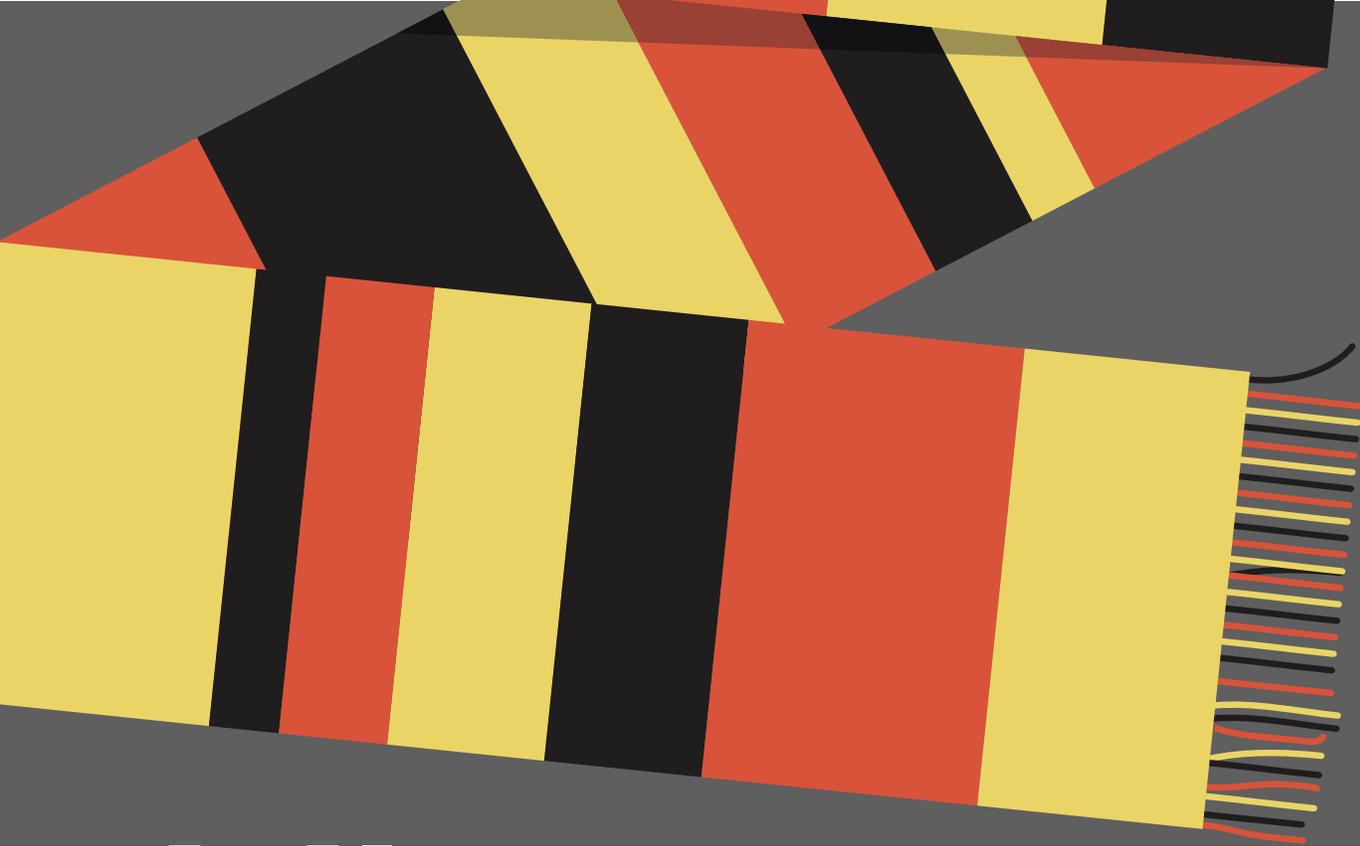
When you order this infamous Bavarian dish, you'll feel that you've been transported back to the Middle Ages. The pork knuckle is boiled, then baked, and served with the large bone protruding, begging you to forgo cutlery altogether. Typically the dish is accompanied with sauerkraut and a potato dumpling.



VI

KARTOFFELSALAT

Kartoffelsalat is a German style potato salad, made with red potatoes and vinegar and served warm. While not made with mayonnaise, it does have a creamy texture. It's a frequent addition to many meals served in the beer tents like *bratwürst* and is usually topped off with green onion.



VI

WHAT TO BRING

Years ago, the majority of non-Bavarian visitors wouldn't give their non-conforming outfits a second thought. Nowadays, you will see the typical Bavarian dress (referred to as 'Tracht' by locals) widely on display at Oktoberfest, not only to heed tradition, but also due to its recent resurgence in popularity throughout Germany, especially amongst younger generations.

Just because you're a visitor at Oktoberfest does not mean that you should forgo the standard attire. Besides, you'll get more into the festivities if you look and feel like you belong.

Unfortunately, while many first time visitors to Bavaria are increasingly opting to dress in the traditional garb, many end up wearing noticeably cheap, knockoff iterations of these classic outfits.

Before we go into the details of traditional Bavarian dress and where to buy it, it's worth noting that should you choose to not heed our advice and dress the part, make sure you don't wear anything that might be ruined if tons of beer is spilled on it. It's going to happen.



Photo courtesy of Flickr, shlomp-a-plompa (CC BY-ND 2.0)

LEDERHOSEN FOR THE GUYS

There may be nothing more synonymous with Oktoberfest than lederhosen, other than beer of course. Lederhosen are Bavarian apparel historically used for laborious activities such as hunting and farming as they were basically indestructible and easy to clean. Similar versions of Lederhosen are found throughout regions of Austria and Northern Italy.

For men, lederhosen are the standard attire and come in a magnitude of styles and materials. The good stuff (read: durable and expensive) is typically made of leather but you can find more economical versions in other materials, although they won't provide the same authentic Bavarian look.

Lederhosen are mostly seen in brown or black and often embellished with ornate embroidery. They range in length between a few inches above or below the knee, and are typically equipped with suspenders that connect in the middle forming an H pattern at mid-chest.

If you buy lederhosen off the rack in Germany, it will typically come as a set with other essentials to complete the look such as white wool socks, which are usually worn slouched down the calf, black or brown basic shoes or hiking boots, and a long sleeve dress shirt, usually white or a coloured checkered pattern.

A good pair of lederhosen will cost a minimum of €200, but cheaper, lower quality versions can be found starting at €100 for the entire outfit.

If you don't want to shell out for the real deal, at least try to evoke the look by incorporating the infamous checkered shirt.

Female versions of lederhosen have been popping up more and more at Oktoberfest and other Bavarian beer festivals. The look is often a cheeky take on the classic male lederhosen look with a shorter cut and a feminine checkered top.



Photo courtesy of Flickr; Roman Boed (CC BY 2.0)

DIRNDLS FOR THE LADIES

For the girls, the outfit is a dirndl - a figure flattering and feminine dress. This type of dress originated around the 18th century but fell out of fashion years later as it was thought of as peasant or working class attire.

The dirndl comprises the dress and apron and can be found in a plethora of colours and patterns so it's uncommon that you'll run into someone else wearing exactly the same one.

Traditionally, dirndls fell past the knee to the mid-calf or even to the ankle, but more modern iterations have brought the hemline up considerably. While you'll certainly encounter mini dress versions of the dirndl landing around mid thigh, most women, particularly locals, will opt for ones that go to the knee.

How you tie the apron on your dirndl says a lot about you as well: a dirndl tied on the left implies that you're

single while one tied on the right means that you're married. Tying your dirndl in the center has varying meanings depending on whom you talk to. Some believe it signals that you're ambiguous in labeling yourself as single or married while others claim it means you're a virgin.

Most women wear their dirndls with sheer tights, flat shoes, and Bavarian themed accessories like a heart necklace. Don't forget the trachtenblus'n - the puffy white crop-top that comes in multiple styles and is worn underneath the dirndl, often sold separately.

Similar to lederhosen, dirndls range in design and quality from basic to luxury, with many Bavarian women investing in custom made, one-of-a-kind versions. Accordingly, there is a wide price range for dirndls depending on the material and design but expect to pay between €75 to €150 for a mid range option.



Photo courtesy of Flickr; Stefan Neuweger (CC BY 2.0)

WHERE TO BUY YOUR OUTFIT

Do not buy your outfit from the Halloween store in your town before traveling to Germany. I cannot stress this enough. The cheap material and inappropriate design will make you feel extraordinarily out of place and instantly label you as a tourist. This is an outfit which has a strong tradition and deep roots in Bavaria. Wearing a costume lederhosen or dirndl to Oktoberfest is akin to wearing a slutty nurse costume to a hospital.

Authentic lederhosen and dirndls can be found all over Munich and other German cities leading up to and during the festival. Check out any local department stores or specialty store for your outfit prior to your Oktoberfest experience.

A few of your best big-chain bets include: C&A, Karstadt, Kaufhof, and Hertie.

Local stores in Munich selling lederhosen and dirndls: Wies'n Tracht & Mehr: www.Wies'n-tracht-mehr.de/

Angermeiers: www.trachten-angermaier.de/
Loden-Fry: www.lodenfrey.com/

There are a few outlets selling second hand dirndls and lederhosen. The best selection resides at Kleidermarkt. There are several online shops selling lederhosen and dirndl apparel but make sure that you chose a reputable one as many are manufactured in Asia using sub-par materials. A few of the best are:

www.MyDirndl.com
www.trachten-dirndl-shop.de

If all else fails, eBay.de is also worth a visit. You will see many options including used versions from Germany as well as mass-produced versions from Asia. Make sure you're on the German version of the site to maximize your chances of finding a good quality pair.

CASH AND LOTS OF IT

Only a few tents accept credit cards, but even if they do, it's still not recommended to attempt it. Your hardworking server is way too busy to coordinate an electronic payment for each drink that you order (there are no tabs here) and you can pretty much guarantee that you will be ignored for the rest of your time in the tent. Hit up a bank machine outside of the Oktoberfest grounds or you'll find yourself spending prime drinking time in an ATM line praying it doesn't run out of money before you reach the front.

ADDRESS OF WHERE YOU'RE STAYING

Even if you remember where you're staying, pronouncing the street name after a day in the tent is an entirely different kind of struggle altogether. If you become isolated from your group and/or lose your bearings, having an address of where you're going can be a lifesaver - you can ask a friendly looking local or hand it to a cab driver with no further explanation.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

You'll get plenty of use out of having a small pharmacy packed in your luggage. Ibuprofen or acetaminophen will cut your litre-sized hangover quickly, Pepto-Bismol or Tums will calm your morning after tummy, and vitamin C will make your body forget that you've only slept 3 hours a night since you arrived in Munich. September is the start of flu season in Munich and many Oktoberfest partiers are especially susceptible given the early mornings and late nights, particularly those staying in communal settings such as a hostel or campsite.

SOMETHING WATERPROOF

Munich's weather in late September/early October is hit or miss. Many days are chilly in the mornings and evenings and have at least a brief period of rain. While the mass quantities of beer will warm you up, waiting outside a tent for upwards of three hours in the rain is massively unpleasant. A cheap rain jacket or umbrella that you're okay parting with if you accidentally leave it behind is a necessity. Don't chance it.

TISSUES & ANTIBACTERIAL

This is just smart packing 101 and those who forget these essentials will be amazed by your impressive foresight. On a typical day at Oktoberfest, you'll likely encounter multiple sticky surfaces, bathrooms that have run out of soap, mass quantities of beer spillage, and vomit in close proximity. Wouldn't you rather just be prepared to quickly overcome these unfortunate situations?

A GO-WITH-THE-FLOW ATTITUDE

People come to Munich from all over the world with huge expectations for their Oktoberfest experiences. As we've alluded to already, securing a seat on a busy day is really tough and many don't end up making it into the coveted tents, even if they arrive hours before they open.

Even if nothing seems to be going your way, make the most of whatever happens. Be social and make some new friends, go all out at the Oktoberfest 'after-parties', hang out in the gardens waiting for people to taper out after too many beers, be pleasant to the staff as they might be able to help you in, or just resolve to do it right the next day.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE OPENING DAY

Oktoberfest always begins on a Saturday, which is undeniably the busiest day of the festival. Many wanting to score a spot in a tent or beer garden begin queuing before 6 a.m. and those able to find a seat will have a long wait for their first beer as none is served until the mayor of Munich ceremoniously taps the first keg while exclaiming '*O'zapft is!*' (it's tapped!). After that point, the beer flows like water.

To combat the boredom of waiting up to 4 hours for the festivities to officially take off, bring some things to keep you busy such as a book, cards, magazines, or some highly entertaining friends. If you don't have enough patience, plan to visit Oktoberfest on any other day, when the beer is drinkable as of 9 a.m.



Photo courtesy of Flickr; Daniel Stockman (CC BY-SA 2.0)

WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

A PURSE

It'll sit on the beer soaked table (or worse yet, the gunky floor), and after two ma you'll forget you have it entirely. Just put what you need in your pockets if possible. Most dirndls have zipper and lined pockets.

VALUABLES

Spillage is unavoidable at Oktoberfest - just wait until everyone starts swaying to the oom-pah band. Protect your belongings by leaving them at your hotel/hostel/campground. And let's be serious, after a few litres are you really in a competent state of mind to monitor your valuables? I think not. Case in point: every year, the official Oktoberfest lost & found records are published and you don't want to be just a number in the (outrageous) statistics. If Oktoberfest proves anything, it's that the more one drinks, the less attention one pays to their crap. Hopefully your one takeaway from this is to

leave anything relatively important in a safer place than in close proximity to thousands of drunken strangers.

OPEN TOED SHOES

This is a beer festival and, inevitably, some people get pretty intoxicated. Best case, some drunken lout stomps on your foot while jumping along to a traditional Bavarian song. Worst case, the almost 3lbs stein is knocked on to the floor and breaks its fall on your foot (or shatters and you step on it while trying to chug back your beer). Also, the floors get extraordinarily grimy so don't wear your favourite pair of kicks.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Best to just leave these at home. They're prohibited in the tents and you probably don't need them anyway if you are interested in having more than one beer.

VI AFTERPARTY

In the off chance that you've made it through the day in good form and are still looking for a fun time after the tent masters give you and your friends the boot, here are a few good options to check out for after parties. Note that many clubs will be at capacity throughout Oktoberfest so getting in is a whole other story. Make sure to leave the tents a bit early and good luck.

WIES'NZELT AM STIGLMAIERPLATZ

The Oktoberfest party continues at Munich's Löwenbräukeller, a beer hall situated on the other side of the Hauptbahnhof from the Wies'n grounds. It's open nightly throughout the festival and is a popular spot for those not ready to call it a night after the Oktoberfest tents close so you can expect to see most people frolicking in their lederhosen and dirndls.

KULTFABRIK

A high concentration of bars, clubs, and fast food joints in a former factory complex near Ostbahnhof provides a one-stop shop for partying any time of the year, but is particularly crazy during Oktoberfest.

OPTIMOLWERK

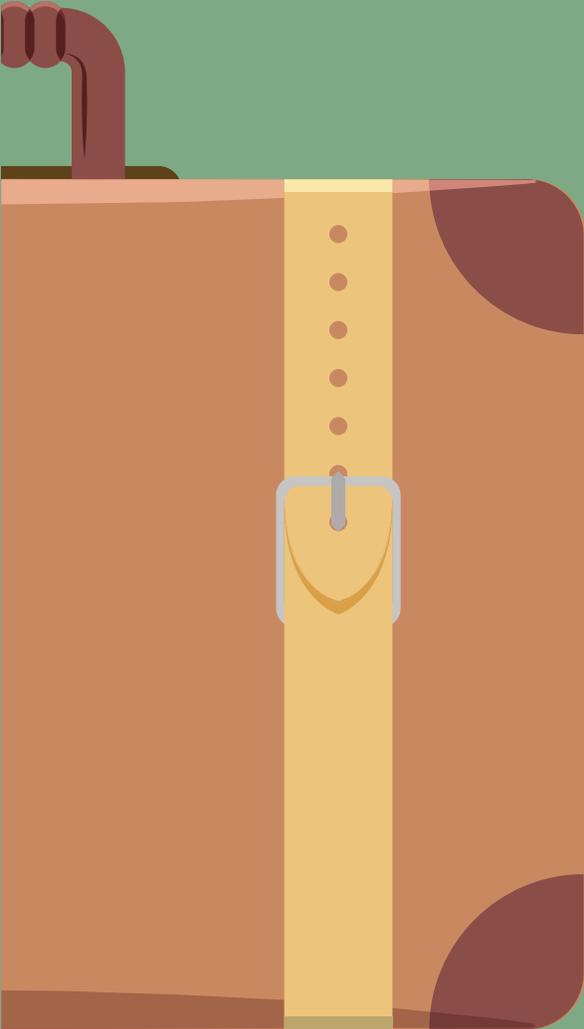
Just a quick jaunt from Kultfabrik, this former industrial area houses about a dozen nightclubs for Oktoberfesters to choose from.

PARK CAFÉ

Park Café hosts an 'Après Wies'n' party each night after Oktoberfest, which is popular given its location near the Wies'n grounds.



VII WHERE TO STAY



Oktoberfest is a lucrative time for all businesses in Munich as roughly 30% of all visitors come from outside of Bavaria, and hotels, hostels and other accommodations are no different. Classic economic doctrines apply here: as the demand for beds increases, price rises as well, quite substantially in this case.

In years past, the second week has been less busy at hotels than the first, which generally means (slightly) lower prices.

HOTELS

It's not uncommon for hotel prices to rise by threefold during Oktoberfest so it's highly recommended that you sort out any hotel stays at least six months in advance of the festival.

As the Oktoberfest grounds are centrally located, there are several hotel options within walking distance. Alternatively, hotels a little farther away from the main station and old town will likely be more economical. Munich has an extensive transit system so don't worry if your hotel isn't right by the grounds.

If you're not sure where to start looking, *Booking.com* and *Venere* are both great sites to find and compare hotels.

If you're dead set on staying in a hotel but the prices are too much of a shock for your wallet, consider booking an Oktoberfest tour. Many private tour operators include hotel accommodation in their rates and often negotiate much better deals than you'd find on your own.



WHERE TO STAY DURING OKTOBERFEST

HOSTELS

Check out *Hostel World* for available spaces but expect to find similarly inflated prices. A bed in a dorm at one of Munich's more reputable hostels can be upwards of €120 per night over the weekends and private rooms can escalate up to €250 per person.

CAMPING

Camping is without a doubt the least expensive way to do Oktoberfest. There are a few larger campgrounds in Munich and many travel companies run Oktoberfest camping trips, popular with the younger, international groups. With all these party loving travelers, the campgrounds can often be as wild as the tents at Oktoberfest.

Here are some reliable camping suggestions:

Thalkirchen: One of the most popular camping spots during Oktoberfest, Thalkirchen doesn't accept reservations so you'll have to wait until you arrive to see if they have availability. The camp is 4 km from the centre of Munich but there's a shuttle that takes guests to the nearest metro station. While you have to bring your own tent, Thalkirchen is the cheapest option at €5.50 per person and €4.50 per tent. There's also space for campers and caravans at an extra charge.

Wies'n Camp: This is the spot for those who want to camp but don't want to bring all of the equipment. At Wies'n Camp, which is set up exclusively for Oktoberfest each year, tents and caravans are available for rent starting at €62 and the Oktoberfest party never ends inside their very own beer tent.



WHERE TO STAY DURING OKTOBERFEST

The Tent: Located in Munich's west end, The Tent is a not-for-profit hostel allowing campers to bring their own tent, grab a bunk in their 'Bunk Den', or just a spot on the floor in the 'Floor-Tent' starting at €15 per night. Get to know fellow Oktoberfest-goers in their beer garden.

APARTMENT RENTALS

Renting an entire apartment or just a private room in someone's residence is a great alternative to staying in a hotel and hostel. There are hundreds of apartments for rent on Airbnb in and around Munich, providing a more local flavour to your visit.

Again, like the other accommodation options, prices for apartments soar during Oktoberfest, some being marked up by more than 400%. On the low end, a bare-bones private room starts at €55 per night while an entire apartment right outside the Oktoberfest grounds with room for 6 can be upwards of €550 a night. If you have a large group, it may make the most sense to go for an apartment.

STAYING OUTSIDE MUNICH

If cost is a factor and you don't mind taking the train into Munich to partake in Oktoberfest, than staying outside of the city is a viable option. Since the main station is close to the Wies'n grounds, it's a popular choice for many festival-goers, particularly Germans living in cities within 200 km from Munich.

Before committing to another city, check out www.bahn.de to determine how long the journey would be and what the daily schedule looks like - i.e. frequency, time of first and last trains, etc. If you stay within Bavaria, you can take advantage of the Bayern train ticket, which gives unrestricted travel to individuals or groups on regional trains for a discounted price.

Cities to consider are Augsburg to the west, Bad Tölz to the south, Ingolstadt or Regensburg to the north, and Salzburg to the east.



Everybody is a first-timer at Oktoberfest at some point but that doesn't mean that they need to feel like a rookie. Knowing the tips and tricks to traverse Oktoberfest can improve your experience tremendously from saving time, money, and sanity to ensuring that you have no regrets after your stint at the world's most famous beer festival. Here are some of our best tips, gained through personal experience, that help ensure you maximize your time at Oktoberfest.



Photo courtesy of Flickr, Tammy Lo (CC BY 2.0)

OKTOBERFEST TIPS

TIP YOUR SERVER

One of our most important Oktoberfest tips involves tipping. Okay, so it may take a bit of time to receive your beer but sometimes the kegs are backed up filling the drinks of the 5,000+ other drinkers in the tent and did you see how many beers they carried at once? Oktoberfest servers cover a wide area of drinkers so you need to make yourself noticed to stay in their good books (and high on their refill list). If you want them to return for your second drink, tip a couple of euros. Tipping etiquette in Germany is different than elsewhere so don't leave an amount after you've paid; tell your *kellner* (waiter) or *kellnerin* (waitress) how much you want to pay in total, including the tip.

PACE YOURSELF

It's easy to get carried away once you are finally handed that first Maß. In my experience, over eager attendees usually end up tapping out first, missing the tent's prime time evening festivities. Remember, it's a marathon not a sprint. The beer has a higher percentage of alcohol than what you're probably used to so extend your drinking

capacity by switching it up with Radlers, a half beer, half lemonade concoction served in a stein that's delicious and refreshing.

DON'T BE OVERZEALOUS

You've put in your time and eagerly awaited your Oktoberfest experience, which finally comes to fruition when you're awarded with your first stein. Naturally you're excited given everything you've done to get to this point. So are some of the other beer loving patrons who entertain the crowd by jumping up on the bench, putting one foot on the table, and chugging back their entire litre. That's more than two pints consumed in under ten seconds.

HAVE A MEETING PLACE

If you're with a group, designate a meeting spot within the festival grounds in case you get separated. I know it sounds a little too responsible for the occasion, but you'll regret not setting this up beforehand if you lose someone in your group - especially if that person has the only key to your accommodations.

GO ON THE RIDES BEFORE YOU START DRINKING

Oktoberfest-goers are so focused on getting into the tents that every other aspect of the festival is just an afterthought. So when they finally stumble out of the tent, many head for the rides that they brushed off earlier. While some of the rides are tame, many are wild enough to make you see double even without the beer you've just consumed. The rides are a lot of fun, especially dressed in a dirndl or lederhosen, but best enjoyed either prior to your beer follies or on a separate (sober) trip to the Wies'n. Remember that scene from *The Sandlot* when the kids go on the tilt-a-whirl after taking their first chewing tobacco? Don't be those guys.

GET FAMILIAR WITH THE SONGS OF OKTOBERFEST

In each tent, a band belts out the classic Oktoberfest tunes while many sing along and it's infinitely more fun when you know the words. Here are some of the ones to study on YouTube beforehand: *Ein Prosit, Fliegerlied*, and *Viva Colonia*. English songs that you may already be familiar with are also on heavy rotation: *Sweet Home Alabama*, *YMCA*, and *Take Me Home, Country Roads*.

DON'T STEAL A STEIN

Steins are the property of the brewery whose beer you're consuming. The enormous security guards are just waiting for you to try to swipe one. Bag checks have increased in the past few years so you'd better not even try as it's pretty hard to hide a heavy one litre glass stein anywhere else. If caught, the hefty fine you'll be subjected to (and the scariness of the tent security) will definitely kill your buzz. You can purchase a (clean!) stein at the festival.

DON'T PASS OUT IN THE PARK

While all that drinking may make you sleepy, going for a nap in the park is not a wise idea. I know it's not a shocker but you'd be surprised how much beer clouds people's judgment. Thieves and pickpockets prey on the *bierleichen* (beer corpses).

DON'T HOARD SEATS

If you have room at your table, do not try to spread out or claim that half of your group is in the bathroom so that you can have a bit more space to yourself - a constant flow of people will be asking if the seats are available and you will not be liked once people see that your fictitious friends have not materialized. Not only will this hoarding strategy deprive you of the opportunity to bond with other beer enthusiasts - Oktoberfest is nothing if not a jovial celebration amongst strangers - you can also expect some nasty looks from Germans just looking for a spot to enjoy a cold beer.

DIFFERENT TENT DOORS

Many do not know that there are multiple entrances into all of the larger tents. When arriving in the morning before the tents open, people usually queue at the main doors while smaller lines form near the side and back entrances. Essentially they are gambling that either the obscure entrances will admit people earlier or they'll open the same time but they will have to contend with far fewer people trying to push their way in. Ultimately, there appears to be no rhyme or reason with regard to which doors open first and I've seen people who have lucked out and those who have been shut out because of which entrance they've chosen.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND A SEAT, MAKE FRIENDS WITH THOSE WHO CAN

If you're not seated, you won't be served (except Hofbräu) so it can really put a damper on things when you're eager to start your Oktoberfest experience but can't find a spot to sit. One way to circumvent this rule is to make friends with a group that have seats and offer to buy their next round if they order one for you as well.



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OKTOBERFEST TIPS

DO[N'T] PUT YOUR FOOT THE TABLE

This is both a do and don't depending on your beer drinking capabilities and bravado. Standing on the bench and putting one foot on the table is the official signal that you're going to chug a full stein of beer. This practice is especially prevalent in the tents and gardens in the morning as everyone is extremely excited to get a taste of their first Oktoberfest beer. In quick succession, guys and girls with a ton of courage jump up to chug their litre while 5,000+ others watch, cheering when they succeed and heckling when they falter. If you do complete the chugging challenge successfully (and can keep it down), you're going to be feeling the effects pretty quickly and be well on your way to inebriation. All before the time it's legal to drink in many countries.

DON'T STAND ON THE TABLE

Unlike the tip above, this is a strong no-no at Oktoberfest. While standing on the benches is a totally acceptable (and recommended) activity, standing on the

table will get you a stern reprimand from your server or security, who will have their eye on you for the rest of the day looking for any reason to boot you.

CHEERS RIGHT

German's sure do like their beer and they like to celebrate it by cheers-ing with their family, friends, or new drinking acquaintances. To get in on the action, grab your stein by the handle, clink the bottom of your beer to the bottom of another's, and jovially exclaim 'Prost!' (*cheers*) or 'Zum Wohl' (*to your health*). Ensure you make eye contact with whomever you're cheers-ing as they will be quick to point out one of the many outlandish superstitions that will plague you if you don't.

Ensure you hold the handle of your stein instead of slipping your hand through the handle and cradling your glass as German's are pretty aggressive in their proasting and that thick glass can break fingers.

VII

MORE THAN OKTOBERFEST

While the vast majority of people traveling to Munich between mid-September and early October will be drawn to Oktoberfest, there are many other sites in the city worth some attention. Munich is itself a world-class city and makes for a fantastic trip, even without setting foot in Oktoberfest.

Munich is more traditional than other large German cities (think Berlin or Frankfurt) given its rich Bavarian history, but has a modern charm to it that is quite alluring. In recent decades, Munich has increasingly become a centre of prosperity, with an air of sophistication and culture but has managed to maintain its old world charm.

Here are a few prominent attractions to check out when you're not at Oktoberfest.



I ENGLISH GARDEN

This sprawling green park is an oasis in the centre of Munich. Locals and tourists alike celebrate sunny days by gathering on the grass to enjoy a beer and eat some *Leberkäse*. A highlight of the park is an artificial stream where intrepid surfers like to test their skill. Also don't miss the beer garden at the Chinese Tower serving steins of Hofbräu and great food to 7,000+ strong.



IV OLYMPIAPARK

Home of the 1972 Olympics, Munich's Olympiapark attracts both professional and casual athletes to its vast sports complex. There's a lake on the grounds (aptly called Olympic Lake) where you can rent a row or pedal boat on a nice day. The site also hosts many cultural events and concerts.



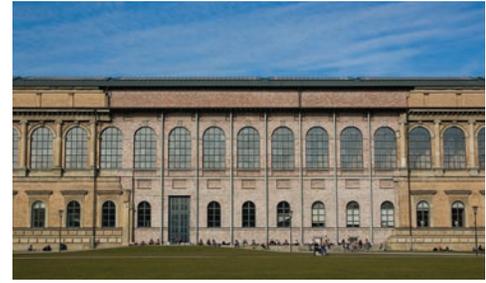
II MARIENPLATZ

The main square of Munich has been an important local gathering spot for nearly 900 years. Here you'll find the *Neues Rathaus* (New City Hall) featuring a Glockenspiel that delights visitors up to three times a day with re-enactments of Munich's history. Along the pedestrian-only area there are several shops and restaurants, including the infamous Hofbräuhaus. Due to a high volume of tourists, anticipate prices to be higher in this area versus other Munich boroughs.



V DEUTSCHES MUSEUM

The world's largest science and technology museum, Deutsches Museum is an enormous space featuring several exhibits that is guaranteed to entertain visitors of all ages.



III PINAKOTHEK

The three Pinakothek art museums house impressive collections of European art. *Alte* (old) Pinakothek displays pieces from the 13th to 18th century, *Neue* (new) Pinakothek focuses on 19th century art, and the most recently established Pinakothek der Moderne exclusively shows modern art from the 20th century. The three Pinakotheks are the headliners in the *Kunstareal* (art district) but there are several others worth checking out including Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Glyptothek, and Museum Brandhorst.



VI SCHLOSS NYMPHENBURG

This former summer palace allows visitors to step into the royal life of Germany's ruling dynasties.

GERMAN 101

Please	Bitte	[bih-tuh]
Thank you	Danke	[dawn-kuh]
Is this free (referring to a seat)	Ist hier frei	[ist-heer-fry]
Cheers	Prost	[pro-st]
A beer please!	Ein bier bitte!	[eye-n beer bih-tuh]
Yes / No	Ja / Nein	[yah] / [nine]
Excuse me	Entschuldigen Sie	[ent-shool-de-gen zee]
Hello / Good day	Guten tag	[goo-ten tahk]
Where is the toilet?	Wo ist die toilette?	[vo ist dee toy-let-uh]
Do you speak English?	Sprechen Sie Englisch?	[shpreck-en zee eng-lish]
Train Station	Bahnhof	[bon-hoff]
My name is	Ich heiÙe...	[ick hie-ssuh]
I'm from...	Ich komme aus...	[ick koh-meh ows]
Where are you from?	Woher kommen Sie?	[vo-heir koh-men zee]
It tastes good	Es schmeckt gut	[es shuh-mekt goot]
Delicious	Lecker	[leck-uh]
Goodbye	Auf wiedersehen	[owf vee-dair-zane]
Where is the Wies'n?	Wo ist die Wies'n?	[vo isst dee vize-en]
I'm drunk	Ich bin betrunken	[ick bin be-troonk-en]

DANKE
(THANK YOU)

NEED MORE INFO?

If we've left you with any questions at all, email us at info@departful.ca and we'll do our best to do the research and respond as quickly as we can. You can also learn more about Oktoberfest, and other great beer festivals at: www.departful.com/tag/beer

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Departful.com was launched by a group of friends in 2012, three pints in, on a patio in Toronto's east end. With over a hundred countries under our collective belt, and clearly little else to do, we decided

to pool our efforts and build a site that did more than confirm our existence to friends and family back home.

Since then, we've built a small team of writers, photographers, and film makers, dedicated to sharing their experiences from across the globe and to providing useful information and advice to travelers along the way - often with a pint in hand.

If you've enjoyed this book, please tell your friends and continue to visit us online at: www.departful.com



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ICONOGRAPHY

The beautiful iconography and graphics used in this ebook were designed by Chris Behr as part of the "Nice Things: A Collection of Lovely Vectors".

You can check out more of Chris' work at: <http://chrisbehr.com/>

PHOTOGRAPHY

As our eBook recommends, if you're going to Oktoberfest to drink, it may be best to avoid bringing valuables along for the ride. As a result of heeding this advice over the past few years, we're left with many great memories, and only a few worthwhile photographs. While some of our own photography appears throughout this eBook, we owe a debt of gratitude to a group of photographers who have shared their work openly through Creative Commons licensing.

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THE COMPLETE OKTOBERFEST GUIDE

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