

Oktoberfest

GUIDE



All About Oktoberfest

Fall brings a slew of pumpkin spice and Oktoberfest celebrations. Parties, beers and even local grocery store celebrations carry the Oktoberfest label now. Read on to learn more about where it started and what it's all about.

MUNICH: THE ORIGINAL

It started as a horse race to celebrate the wedding of Bavarian King Ludwig I to Theresie of Saxe-Hildburghausen in 1810, according to Oktoberfest.de, the official website of the Munich celebration. That race became an annual event that evolved into today's Oktoberfest, a celebration of good German beer and fun rides. The festival, which lasts around 20 days, attracts more than six million people now and has spread around the world.

THE BEER

No matter where they're held, Oktoberfest is all about beer. In Munich, the beer served is usually a little stronger than usual and is usually served eine Maß (eyen mazz), or in a liter. The varieties served are Augustiner, Paulaner, Spaten-Franziskaner, Löwebräu, Hacker-Pschorr and Hofbräu. In 2017, more than seven million liters of beer were consumed in Munich. And if you go, don't take the mugs. More than 100,000 mugs were confiscated at festival and tent exits last year. Just buy them online, OK?

THE FOOD

With all that beer comes an appetite. Vendors in Munch



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serve pork, chicken or oxen. The pork and oxen are served with potato dumplings in a hearty sauce. A half a chicken with a spicy, crispy skin is a popular Bavarian snack.

THE TENTS

Munich's Oktoberfest is held in a series of 14 large and 20 small tents. Some of the most popular are the Marstall, owned by the Able

family and decorated in a horse theme; the Hofbräu Festzelt, popular with international visitors; the Schottenhamel, which seats 6,000 and hosts the first

tapped keg of the festival; the Ochsenbraterei, where oxen delicacies are served; and the Armbrustschützen-Festhalle, home of the crossbow competition.

German Potato Salad

If you've ever Googled recipes before a picnic, you know that there are more potato salads out there than you can shake a spoon at. One popular version is the German potato salad. But what makes it German? Read on to find out.

WARM SPUDS

The German potato salad we think of is usually a warm potato salad dressed with bacon fat and vinegar. An argument could be made that there is a potato salad that originated in Germany that's cold and mayo-dressed, but it's a minority and we're leaving that alone. Here, assume a hot potato.

AMERICAN DISH

German potato salad spread to America and throughout country with German settlers, though it remains most popular in heavily German areas like the Midwest. According to The Food Timeline, potato salads started appearing in American cookbooks in the 19th century.

LIGHT IS RIGHT

German potato salad, because of its lack of mayonnaise, is an excellent choice for outdoor picnics and barbecues. Furthermore, that same lack of mayo makes for a somewhat lighter dish. Somewhat because it does include bacon and bacon fat in the dressing. You can also use German bacon, or speck, or ham.

GERMAN POTATO SALAD

3 cups diced, peeled russet or Yukon gold potatoes
4 slices of bacon
1 small onion, diced
¼ cup white vinegar

2 tablespoons of water
3 tablespoons white sugar
Salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1. Boil the potatoes for about 10 minutes or until easily pierced with a knife or

fork. Fry the bacon until crisp, then remove the bacon, reserving the grease.
2. Fry the onion in the bacon grease until browned. Add the vinegar, water,

sugar and seasonings and bring to a boil. Add the potatoes and parsley, then crumble in the bacon. Heat through and serve.



Light the Fires

You can celebrate Oktoberfest and good German food and beer anywhere, not just in Munich. Stateside, October's cooler weather and a German menu of sausages and potato salad usually means someone's firing up a grill. Keep reading for tips for a great (safe!) party.

GRILL SAFETY

Here are some grilling safety tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

- Always grill outside. Never use a gas or charcoal grill inside your home.
- Keep the grill away from the outside wall of your home, as well as from hanging foliage, decks, railings, children and pets.
- Keep your grill clean to prevent flare-ups.
- If you use propane, always check for leaks before lighting your grill.
- If you're using a charcoal grill, always let the coals cool completely before disposing of them.

HARDWARE

Aside from your grill and its nice, clean racks, you should also have grill-safe tools like tongs and a spatula. If you or the grillmaster in your family doesn't have a set, visit the local hardware or grilling store and pick up a set. They make great gifts.

Grilling tools are specifically designed for outdoor use in high heat. Never use your indoor kitchen tongs or spatula on the grill (they can melt or cause burns) and never bring your grill tools in to fry eggs on the stove (they'll damage your cookware).

MENU

Plan a menu of tasty German and German-American foods. Throw some bratwurst on the grill — available at most grocers — but also look for other German specialty meats, which may be available around Oktoberfest. Ask your grocer for more details. If you're



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planning a heartier meal, try a pork tenderloin and choose a mustard-based marinade.

For sides, look to traditional German

favorites of cabbage and potatoes. Cabbage or its miniature cousin, Brussels sprouts, are both great on the grill. You can find jarred sauerkraut in

most grocery stores; serve it with the brats on a bun, or sauteed with apples. And there's always a warm, bacony German potato salad.

Bratwurst

Unless you have German relatives that still speak the old language, bratwurst might be the most German word you know.

Literally, it means a sausage of chopped meat. It's usually made of pork, though sometimes it can be found with veal or beef added.

HISTORY

The first recorded usage of bratwurst specifically dates to 1313 in Franconia, now part of Bavaria. Bratwurst differ slightly across Germany, but they are all commonly eaten as a street or fast food on a white roll with mustard, with sauerkraut or potato salad, or sometimes with a roll.

IN THE UNITED STATES

Bratwurst is usually shortened to brat here in the States, and is most usually associated with the upper Midwest. Brat Fest, billed as the world's largest bratwurst festival, is held in Madison, Wisconsin, over Memorial Day weekend. It's a fundraiser that benefits more than 100 charities in the Madison area.

BEER-BATHED BRATS

2 lbs. bratwurst
 2 onions, cut into thin slices
 1 cup butter
 6 12-oz. bottles of a good quality beer
 Ground black pepper, to taste
 Thick hot dog or sandwich rolls, for serving
 Stone-ground mustard and sauerkraut, for dressing

1. Poke holes in the bratwurst with a fork. Put them in a large pot with the onion, butter, beer, and pepper. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.

2. Heat the grill and oil a grate, then add the brats for 10 minutes or until crisp and brown. Warm the rolls on the grill and serve with fixings.





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Oktoberfest Beers: A Primer

For the uninitiated, the world of beer can be intimidating. But fear no more. With the help of this guide and a good liquor store, you can be sipping a tasty brew and impressing your guests, all at the same time.

LAGERS

This is probably the type of beer you're most familiar with. It's conditioned at low temperatures, bottom-fermented and uses a specific type of yeast. It can be any color from pale to very dark. Oktoberfest beers produced by American breweries are going to be a

darker lager, typically, with an alcohol content of between five and six percent.

These beers are also called Marzens, because they are actually brewed in March and cold aged until fall. They tend to have a slight red hue and be sweeter than other lagers.

If you're throwing a party, ask

experts at your local grocer or liquor store to help you choose several varieties for your guests. Building your own six-packs may be a helpful option here.

BEER STORAGE

Keep your lagers icy cold, between 35 and 40 degrees. Also, don't turn them sideways.

Keep the bottles upright and away from light. Pay attention to the dates on the beer; unlike wine, most beers don't age well (an exception is specialty or very high alcohol content beers).

SERVING

Use cold, glass mugs. If

you're pouring a lighter lager, use a pilsner glass or other footed glass. Open a beer and pour at a 45-degree angle into your chosen glass without swirling. Always handle your beer glasses by the base, not the rim, and make sure they're clean, dry and not chipped before serving.

Black Forest Cake



Black Forest cake isn't named for the mountains directly, but for a cherry liquor that comes from that region.

In Germany, it must be used to be called a Black Forest cake, but it can be hard to find state-side. Here, the flavor usually comes from the use of the fruit itself in the recipe.

It's also been said that the cake, which is usually topped with bright red cherries, is

named for a hat popular in the Black Forest region. The hat is topped with large, bright red pom-poms.

BLACK FOREST CAKE

(by Allrecipes)

2 1/8 cups flour
 2 cups white sugar
 3/4 unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
 3/4 tsp baking soda
 3/4 tsp salt
 3 eggs
 1 cup milk
 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 1 Tbsp vanilla extract

Frosting:

40 oz. canned, pitted sour cherries
 1 cup white sugar
 1/4 cup cornstarch
 1 tsp. vanilla
 3 cups heavy whipping cream
 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans and cover bottoms with waxed paper.

2. In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking powder and soda, and salt. Add the eggs, milk, oil, and tablespoon of vanilla and beat until well blended. Pour into pans.

3. Bake for 35 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool layers on wire

rack for 10 minutes before removing from the pan.

4. Drain the cherries, keeping 1/2 cup juice. Combine the juice, cherries, 1 cup sugar and cornstarch in a saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until thick. Stir in vanilla and cool.

5. Combine the whipping cream and confectioners' sugar in a bowl and whip until stiff peaks form.

6. Cut each cake layer horizontally in half. Tear one half into crumbs and set side. Brush crumbs from remaining halves. Place one half on a cake plate. Spread with frosting and cherry topping, then add another layer and repeat. Frost the side of the cake and pat crumbs onto the sides. Frost the top of the cake and top with remaining cherry topping.

Celebrating Oktoberfest

If you don't feel like boarding a plane to Munich or hosting a party in your backyard, there are plenty of ways to celebrate Oktoberfest in the United States. Here's a list of some of the celebrations around the country.

If you don't see your city or a city near you on the list, check local community calendars or your town's tourism board for any celebrations happening near you.

- **Old World Oktoberfest, Huntington, Calif.:** Offers German food, beer and bands.

- **Four Peaks Oktoberfest, Tempe Town Lake, Ariz.:** Food, beer, music and carnival rides and games.

- **Denver Oktoberfest, Denver, Colo.:** Named the Best Oktoberfest in the United States by USA Today.

- **Cape Coral Oktoberfest, Cape Coral, Fla.:** Chicken hats seem to be involved ...

- **Oktoberfest, Helen, Ga.:** Helen is an Apline-themed town in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

- **Jasper Strassenfest, Jasper, Ind.:** Happens in August, but celebrates the town's German roots.

- **Oktoberfest, Hays, Kan.:** Coincides with the Fort Hays State University homecoming for 2018.

- **Old Boise Oktoberfest, Boise, Idaho:** German beer and food, revived in 2017.

- **Oktoberfest, New Orleans, La.:** Hosted by Deutsches Haus.

- **Frankenmuth Oktoberfest, Frankenmuth, Mich.:** The first Oktoberfest sanctioned by the mayor and parliament of Munich, Germany.



- **Oktoberfest Zinzinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio:** Billed as "America's Oktoberfest."

- **Mount Angel Oktoberfest, Mount Angel, Ore.:** German

celebration of the harvest.

- **Nashville Oktoberfest, Nashville, Tenn.:** Beer gardens, food, music, and arts and crafts.

- **Oktoberfest, Fredericksburg, Texas:** Oompah music, German food and drink, and family fun.

- **Wurstfest, New Braunfels,**

Texas: German and Texan beer, food, carnival rides and games.

- **Oktoberfest, Snowbird, Utah:** Every weekend from mid-August to mid-October.