

BAVARIAN TIMES

News & Magazine for Grafenwoehr | Vilseck | Hohenfels

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64th Annual German American Volksfest

//Page 6

7ATC: Change of command
on a historic day

//Page 13

German Etiquette: Your
survival guide

//Page 35



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PAGE 4	ORTC CONSTRUCTION WILL REINFORCE READINESS, LETHALITY FOR TROOPS ROTATING THROUGH USAG BAVARIA	PAGE 34	BUCKET LIST FOR BAVARIA IN JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER
PAGE 10	NEWS BRIEFS: OUR GARRISON IN PICTURES	PAGE 41	FAREWELL TO ALPINE SUMMER: THE COLORFUL SPECTACLE OF THE ALMABTRIEB (CATTLE DRIVE)
PAGE 15	US ARMY PRESENTS "GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD"	PAGE 42	THE ROMANTIC ROAD: A GERMAN FAIRYTALE TRAIL FOR TRAVELERS
PAGE 21	MOTORCYCLE: EXPLORE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TOWNS ALONG THE GERMAN TIMBER-FRAME ROAD	PAGE 46	DISCOVER THE FASCINATION OF THE FLOSSENBUERG CASTLE RUINS
PAGE 29	EXPERIENCE BAVARIA'S FESTIVALS: OKTOBERFEST AND GÄUBODENVOLKSFEST	PAGE 50	ORIGINAL "OCHSENFETZEN": THE TASTE OF BAVARIA THAT THRILLS

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The early phases of construction, including site layout and building out a network of roads for the Operational Readiness Training Complex in Grafenwoehr, Germany is visible on April 28. This massive project will consist of a brigade headquarters, seven battalion headquarters, seven company headquarters, seven officer's quarters, 14 barracks buildings, three dining facilities, seven vehicle maintenance facilities, and organizational parking - enough facilities to support a full brigade of Soldiers and equipment.

ORTC construction will reinforce readiness, lethality for troops rotating through USAG Bavaria

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – A forest of utility poles sprouts from freshly levelled ground. Soon, new buildings will take shape on the wide expanse with a bustle of construction activity.

Early signs of construction for the Operational Readiness Training Complex are becoming more visible each day at Grafenwoehr, Germany. As of April, utility lines have been laid and roads have been paved, outlining the first of many phases in a multi-year construction schedule. The ORTC will ultimately support a full brigade of Soldiers and equipment, meeting operational mission requirements and serving as a deterrent to adversaries while enhancing quality of life.

Later this year, this infrastructure backbone will be complete and facility construction for the first two of seven battalions will begin. The facilities for these first two battalions will include

two battalion headquarters, two company headquarters, two vehicle maintenance facilities with organizational parking, two officer's quarters, four barracks, and a dining facility along with all supporting facilities. This work is expected to be completed by February 2029.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, is managing delivery of the ORTC project in collaboration with U.S. Army Europe and Africa, U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, and German construction partners.

"The ORTC will create a compact centralized campus to support the transient training populations that rotate through USAG Bavaria for training, ranges, and maneuver," said Europe District ORTC Program Manager Erasmo Rivera. "This project enables U.S. forces to meet operational mission requirements while enhancing the quality of life for our Soldiers and fortifying readiness and resiliency by providing the new, modern facilities."

He added that the site also facilitates easy access to the training fields already at Grafenwoehr.

The ORTC facilities are intended to replace the dated facilities in use now at Camp Aachen, Camp Normandy, Camp Algier and Camp Kasserine.

"This will be a marked improvement over the old 50s-era buildings that the rotational units are currently staying in," U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District Grafenwoehr Resident Engineer Jonathan Byrd said. "The current facilities are

Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Hannah Mitchell

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District Operational Readiness Training Complex Program Manager Erasmo Rivera briefs Installation Management Command Deputy Commanding General Maj. Gen. James M. Smith and U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Garrison Commander Col. Stephen C. Flanagan on March 5 about the progress of ORTC construction. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is managing construction in collaboration with U.S. Army Europe and Africa, U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, and German construction partners.

old, undersized, and have issues. This facility will modernize where the warfighters live and work as they become a force projection platform for European operations.”

When it is completely done, the ORTC will include a brigade headquarters, seven battalion headquarters, seven company headquarters, seven officer’s quarters, 14 barracks buildings, three dining facilities, seven vehicle maintenance facilities, and organizational parking. These facilities will eventually accommodate up to 5,000 soldiers belonging to forces rotating through USAG Bavaria.

A tremendous amount of collaborative planning has gone into the development of the ORTC to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of the site as well as quality of life for deployed troops using the facilities.

“As the ORTC Program Manager, I recognize that success is driven by teamwork and strong partnerships with our stakeholders and I am honored to work alongside our Host Nation partners, stakeholders and the Europe District team,” Rivera said. “This collaborative effort reflects the strength of our commitment to excellence and mission success. Together we are building facilities that enhance quality of life for our soldiers, fortifies readiness and resiliency for USAG Bavaria.”

In the long term, Europe District will be delivering three ORTC campuses to Grafenwoehr, each with the capacity to support a brigade, ensuring U.S. forces deploying across the region and the globe remain lethal and ready to deter adversaries.

| by **Hannah Mitchell**

Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Andreas Kreuzer

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COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE VOLKSFEST: DRAKE MILLIGAN AND CHAPEL HART

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Drake Milligan conquered the country music scene with his debut album, *Dallas/Fort Worth*, which debuted at number 5 on the Billboard Emerging Artists chart and achieved multiple number 1s on iTunes. The Texan combines classic country with rock 'n' roll energy, inspired by George Strait and Elvis Presley. His album spent 11 weeks in the UK country music charts. He enjoyed international success with songs like "Honky Tonkin' About" (Canada) and "I Got a Problem" (Australia). Over 200 million streams, performances at the Grand Ole Opry, and tours with Cody Johnson confirm his rise. On August 2, 2025, Milligan will bring his energetic live show to the Grafenwoehr German-American Volksfest – a highlight for all country music fans!



The trio Chapel Hart – Danica and Devynn Hart, along with Trea Swindle – is a musical revelation. Their unique blend of Mississippi roots and Louisiana flair has captivated fans worldwide. From their beginnings in a children's choir to sold-out shows, they have evolved into a dynamic live band that delivers soulful ballads and energetic rock 'n' roll in equal measure. Following their success on "America's Got Talent" and praise from greats like Dolly Parton, they took the country music scene by storm. They are masters at connecting people through their music, and a live performance by Chapel Hart on August 3 at the German-American Volksfest in Grafenwoehr will be unforgettable.

| by Editor

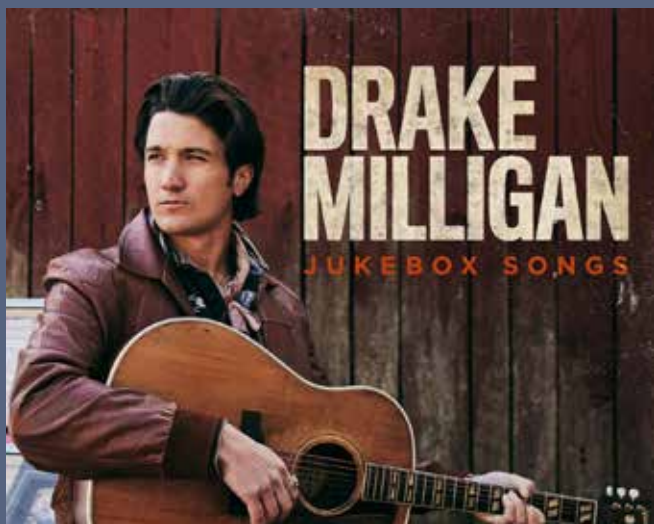


Photo Credit: Alexis Carter, BBR Music Group

Doing good has
never been so easy
– **celebrate, enjoy,
help.**



Whether in the cozy wine tent or by environmentally friendly shuttle bus (off-post) – every contribution supports aid projects and the active solidarity of DAGA e.V.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The German-American Volksfest from August 1-3, 2025 at Camp Algiers is not just about culture, music, and socializing – it's also about solidarity in action. This year, DAGA e.V. is once again combining the "Bavarian-American Way of Life" with a clear social mission.

As part of the 2025 German-American Volksfest, DAGA e.V. is once again inviting visitors to its atmospheric wine tent on the festival grounds at Camp Algiers. From August 1-3, visitors can expect not only a selection of exquisite wines, but also genuine hospitality – because here, enjoyment is combined with social commitment. All proceeds from sales go to charitable and social projects in the region and support people where help is needed. For many decades, DAGA e.V. has combined social gatherings with practical solidarity. In cooperation with the city of Grafenwoehr, the association is once again organizing the off-post parking and shuttle service for all guests from Grafenwoehr. Supported by the volunteer fire departments of the city and its subdivisions, DAGA e.V. ensures a safe and environmentally friendly journey to the festival grounds – also with added social value: These proceeds also go directly to DAGA's charitable projects and support the dedicated volunteer fire departments in Grafenwoehr. A round-trip ticket is available for €4, children up to 14 years of age travel free. Pets are not permitted on the buses.

Editor's Note: On-post shuttle buses are operated by the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria and are free of charge. The stops are at the Main Exchange at Tower Barracks (Grafenwoehr) and at the PXtra (Exchange) at Rose Barracks (Vilseck). These buses are only available to DOD ID card holders.

| by Editor

64TH ANNUAL GERMAN AMERICAN VOLKSFEST: THREE DAYS OF FRIENDSHIP, CULTURE AND FUN

"Bavarian-American way of life" – FROM AUGUST 1-3, 2025 IN CAMP ALGIERS

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria is once again inviting everybody to the traditional German-American Volksfest on the grounds of Camp Algiers. This annual event brings together soldiers, families, civilians, retirees, and Germans from the region for a celebration of shared cultures.

The festival kicks off on Friday, August 1, at 11 a.m. with the traditional tapping of the keg in the German fest tent. Regular festival operations will continue until midnight on that day. On Saturday, August 2, the fest is open from 11 a.m. to midnight, and on Sunday, August 3, the fest hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

A VARIETY OF ATTRACTIONS FOR YOUNG AND OLD

This year, the German-American Folk Festival once again offers a colorful array of rides and activities for the whole family. From classic bumper cars, children's carousels, popular family rides like a roller coaster to more adventurous, high-flying and fast-paced rides – there's something for every age group.

Of course, classic fairground booths such as shooting galleries, darts, a lucky dip, and many other games and entertainment options are also available. →

Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Capt. Sara Berner

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INTERNATIONAL FOOD AT MORE THAN 100 BOOTHS

The more than 100 booths offer a diverse selection of Bavarian delicacies, American classics, and international specialties to enjoy. Various field tents, as well as a large Bavarian and an American tent, are spread across the entire festival grounds, providing an authentic American and Bavarian flair, culinary diversity, and social gatherings with their distinctive look.

A sampling of the food on offer: onion rose, crepes, ice cream, sweets, pastries, potato chips, Mutzbraten (roasted pork), Ochsenfetzen (sliced beef), Chinese pancakes, mini donuts, coffee, cake, langos, pretzels, special fries, giant skewers, fish specialties, Dotsch (a kind of German dish), Baumstriezel (a kind of German bun), corn on the cob, churros, candy fruit, slush ice, baked vegetables, choux pastry specialties, pizza, mushroom pancakes, doner kebabs, Thai-style burritos, punch, and much more.

US AND GERMAN ARMY WEAPONS DISPLAY

The US Army and German Armed Forces weapons display, which will be set up on the grounds of Motorpark 20, is open to all festival visitors. The exhibition offers a fascinating insight into modern military technology – from army vehicles and tanks to artillery pieces and helicopters, many of which can not only be admired up close but also boarded.

A vendor with U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria sells 2024 Volksfest beer steins during the 63rd annual German-American Volksfest at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.



ON-POST AND OFF-POST SHUTTLE BUSES

On-post shuttle buses are provided by the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria and are free of charge. The stops are at the Tower Barracks (Grafenwoehr) near the Main Exchange and at the Rose Barracks (Vilseck) near the PXtra Exchange. These buses are only available to DoD ID card holders.

As in previous years, increased vehicle and passenger checks will be conducted this year again on, around, and in front of the festival grounds, as well as at the bus stops. Visitors aged 16 and over must carry a valid ID or passport.

Off-post shuttle buses depart from the town of Grafenwoehr to the festival grounds and back. The buses depart from four stops: the Gründerzentrum (Startup Center) in the industrial area across from Gate 6, Dießfurter Strasse, the former German post office on Alte Amberger Strasse, and new this year, behind the volunteer fire department's equipment shed (parking lot at the former DJK sports field in Grafenwoehr). For only four euros per person, they offer an environmentally friendly alternative to the car. Children up to 14 years of age travel free.

The shuttle buses from the town of Grafenwoehr run Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. (latest return) and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to midnight. The last access to the camp is at 10 p.m.

CAR ACCESS ONLY VIA GUARD 6 – CENTRAL PARKING LOT NEAR THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

Access by car is only possible via Gate 6. Visitors will be directed to a centrally located parking lot near the festival grounds.

In the midst of "Little America" in Upper Palatinate, a special atmosphere is created – characterized by authentic American and Upper Palatinate folk festival flair and the more than 70-year-old German-American friendship that gives this folk festival its unique character.

| by Matthias Plankl and Helmut Amschler

TIP:

Bring enough **cash** for purchases as card payments are not accepted anywhere on the festival grounds. Both dollars and euros are accepted throughout the festival.



DOD ID CARD HOLDERS

DOD ID card holders, scan the QR code for direct access to the most up-to-date information. For further details and regular updates, please visit the MWR Bavaria website and the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Facebook page.





Photo Credit: Matthias Plankl



Franz Zeilmann, a community relations officer with U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, taps the ceremonial keg with U.S. Army Col. Kevin A. Poole, commander of USAG Bavaria, during the grand opening of the 63rd annual German-American Volksfest at Grafenwoehr Training Area. Bavarian Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder, pictured behind Poole, was the guest of honor at the grand opening of the fest in 2024.



LOCAL NATIONALS (IN GERMAN)

Scan the QR code for direct access for further details and regular updates.



EVENT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2025

Opening Ceremonies & Ribbon Cutting Volksfest Entrance 11:00 AM

Bavarian Beer Tent:

11:00 AM - 7:00 PM Bayrische Blaskapelle "Brass Band"
7:00 PM - 11:00 PM Band "Stoasberger Lumpen"

U.S. Beer Tent

12:00 PM - 3:00 PM DJ
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM James Benson
6:00 PM - 10:00pm Ray Everetts Band

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2025

Bavarian Beer Tent:

11:00 AM - 7:00 PM Stadtkapelle Kemnath (city band)
2:00 PM - 7:00 PM Face painting for children
7:00 PM - 11:00PM Band "Members"

US Beer Tent

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM DJ
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM GASP Band Weiden
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Soldier's Chorus
9:00 PM - 10:30 PM Drake Milligan

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025

Bavarian Beer Tent:

11:30 AM - 4:00 PM Band "High Risk", country
4:30 PM - 9:00 PM Band "Skyline Riders", country

US Beer Tent

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM DJ
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Soldier's Chorus
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM James Benson
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Chapel Hart (country trio)
8:30 PM - 10:00 PM DJ

Photo Credit: At My Hat - stock.adobe.com



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AT A GLANCE: KEY UPDATES FROM U.S. ARMY GARRISON BAVARIA

News briefs: Our Garrison in Pictures

U.S. Soldiers assigned to 12th Combat Aviation Brigade fly a CH-47 Chinook helicopter with an attached Bambi bucket during aerial firefighting training at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, May 30, 2025. This training certifies flight crews to employ Bambi and SEMAT water buckets to fight wildland fires.

The 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy (7th Army NCOA) hosts their Basic Leader Course graduation ceremony in the Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, June 11, 2025. The 7th Army NCOA mission is to train and develop future leaders who are adaptive, disciplined and ready to lead effectively at the squad and team levels.



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Collin Mackall



Photo Credit: U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Israel Fernandez

U.S. Soldiers with the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard in support of the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine.



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Randis Monroe



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elizabeth Krause

Dwayne D. Key II, deputy to the commander for U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, formally presents Franz Zeilmann with a token of appreciation in recognition of his outstanding service and dedication on Rose Barracks, Vilseck, Germany, March 21, 2025. Franz

Zeilmann has been an esteemed member of the USAG Bavaria Public Affairs team for many years, expertly conducting tours, offering comprehensive host-nation services, and providing exceptional knowledge of local customs, culture, and history.



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elijah Magaña

U.S. Army Col. Donald R. Neal, Jr., the regimental commander of 2nd Cavalry Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse J. Clark, the regimental command sergeant major of 2CR, conduct the laying of wreaths during a Memorial Day ceremony at Rose Barracks, U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, Vilseck, Germany, May 22, 2025. The regiment held a ceremonial observance of Memorial Day to formally recognize the ultimate sacrifice of the Nation's, and particularly the regiment's, fallen troopers.

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Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elijah Magaña

U.S. Soldiers assigned to various units assist in raising the USAG Bavaria Partnership Tree with local community firefighters at Tower Barracks, Grafenwöhr, Germany, May 15, 2025. Painted in blue and white, USAG Bavaria's Partnership Tree is modeled after the traditional Bavarian Maypole, which is typically lifted between April 30 and May 1 every year.





Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Kammen Taylor

U.S. Army Col. Michael Kimball, the 7th Army Training Command Chief of Staff, along with the youngest junior enlisted soldier, cuts the birthday cake for the 250th Army Birthday as part of a cake cutting ceremony at the Dining Facility, Grafenwoehr, Germany, June 13, 2025. Soldiers came out to the Dining Facility to celebrate and to pay homage to Soldiers past and present. Throughout 2025, Soldiers across the globe will celebrate the 250th birthday of the Army.

U.S. Soldiers assigned to 2nd Cavalry Regiment and their families begin the family color run on Rose Barracks, U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, Vilseck, Germany, May 22, 2025. The run kicked off under a colorful smoke display as part of Dragon Week, an annual tradition celebrating 2CR's heritage, camaraderie, and mission readiness.



On July 4th, the American Independence Day was celebrated on the grounds of Tower Barracks in Grafenwöhr. Together with the local community, the U.S. Army hosted a festive event featuring music, culinary specialties, and fireworks.



Photo Credit: Gerald Morgenstern (2)



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Bryan Gatchell, USAG Bavaria Public Affairs

USAG BAVARIA – HOHENFELS, Germany – Angela Lane, deputy garrison manager of U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria - Hohenfels, raises the mallet after tapping the ceremonial keg during the opening of the 51st annual German-American Volksfest. She accomplished the feat in one tap. In celebration of decades of partnership, the Hohenfels military community began their yearly German-American Volksfest with a fest tent reception April 30, 2025.



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Kevin Sterling Payne

Franz Zeilmann was honored by the Kontakt Club for his many years of dedicated service. For over 41 years, he served with the U.S. Army and played a key role in shaping German-American relations. As the public affairs officer for the U.S. Garrison, he was actively involved in numerous events, press releases, and training area tours, always working to promote mutual understanding. During a celebration, Colonel Stephen Flanagan praised his longtime colleague, noting that Zeilmann had made significant contributions to the partnership between Germans and Americans. Zeilmann also played a central role in the Kontakt Club as a liaison and co-initiator.

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CCHANGE OF COMMAND ON
A HISTORIC DAY

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Brig. Gen. Terry R. Tillis is the new commanding general of 7th Army Training Command (7ATC). Tillis assumed command from Brig. Gen. Steven P. Carpenter. Four-star-general Christopher T. Donahue, who performed the handover, emphasized the importance of 7ATC and the training areas. The date of the ceremony was historic: 115 years ago, on June 30, 1910, the training area was officially opened with the first artillery shot.

Shady spots were in demand during the change of command on the parade field in front of the venerable water tower. Civilian guests and military personnel, commanders of the U.S. Armed Forces, the German Armed Forces, as well as representatives from the police, politics, and public life gathered. The highest-ranking political representative was Tobias Reiß, Vice President of the Bavarian State Parliament, and Dr. Johannes Urban from the Bavarian State Chancellery also traveled from Munich. Mayors Edgar Knobloch of Grafenwoehr and Hans-Martin Schertl of Vilseck were welcomed by name as local matadors. In front of the assembled formation, Gen. Christopher T. Donahue, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Europe and Africa, passed the unit colors from Carpenter to Tillis.

In his remarks, Donahue emphasized the importance of 7th ATC. "This command ensures that deterrence in Europe is real, so that no adversary ever thinks of doing something stupid," he said. He paid tribute to Carpenter, who arrived in Grafenwoehr in June 2023 and spearheaded the development of the command for the ongoing transition of the armed forces to the technically sophisticated combat doctrine for U.S. and NATO

soldiers. He was also responsible for the training of Ukrainian soldiers. Carpenter is moving from one top job to another and will lead the 56th Army Field Artillery Command in Wiesbaden.

Brig. Gen. Carpenter expressed his sincere gratitude for his two years in Grafenwoehr. He expressed his pride in his family, and expressed his special thanks to Mayor Edgar Knobloch. Carpenter praised the readiness and dedication of the soldiers in the field and all soldiers stationed in Bavaria, whose mission is to ensure peace. Like Donahue, Carpenter expressed his conviction that a large U.S. Army presence will continue in Bavaria. "The training we receive here can be applied worldwide," said Carpenter.

"My family and I are excited to become part of the team," Terry Tillis told the guests in German. Tillis was already deployed to Grafenwoehr as the commander of a tank unit during the coronavirus pandemic. Tillis, who is from Florida, most recently served as deputy commander, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kans. He has already moved into the Forsthaus, the residence of the highest-ranking officer in Grafenwoehr, with his wife Dana and his daughter Taylor.

In his inaugural address, Tillis praised his predecessor Steven Carpenter for paving the way. Tillis cited "maximum operational readiness, expanding warfighting capabilities, and advancing modernization" as some of the goals of his command. "The goal is to weaken Russian aggression while strengthening partners and allies to provide security," Tillis said.

The ceremony was accompanied by gun salutes as well as by the USAREUR-AF band and local musicians led by Hans Rettinger. In addition to the German and American national anthems, the Bavarian anthem was also played, and the Army Song concluded the change of command.

| by Gerald Morgenstern



SPRING FEVER IN BAVARIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS

U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller (in the back) with Brig. Gen. Steven Carpenter and his wife Kaitlin.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The U.S. Army hosted a grand spring reception. The warm spring sunshine, the highlighting of the unique relationship between the Bavarian host country and the Americans, as well as the message of a bright shared future with a continuing presence of U.S. facilities in Bavaria, delighted the 180 guests.

In the garden of the Forsthaus beneath the Water Tower, Brig. Gen. Steven Carpenter, Commanding General of the 7th U.S. Army Training Command (7ATC), Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Flanagan, along with their Command Sergeants Major Paul Fedorisin and Hermes Acevedo, and their wives, greeted the guests with a handshake. Also present was U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller from Munich.

Military personnel from the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, politicians, government officials, police, forestry, and representatives of U.S. partner communities were present. They included Ministerial Councilor Dr. Johannes Urban of the Bavarian State Chancellery, the Commander of the Bavarian State Command, Brig. Gen. Thomas Hambach, Deputy County Commissioner Albert Nickl representing the county commissioners, and Grafenwoehr Deputy Mayor Anita Heßler, representing the mayors of all garrison towns.

In his remarks, Brig. Gen. Carpenter expressed his gratitude for the great friendship, saying Bavaria is something special. The general reflected on the end of the war 80 years ago, when the two nations faced each other as adversaries. Something great has grown in these decades. The relationship between the Americans and the people of the region is not comparable to any other country; these connections will continue to grow and serve as role models for transatlantic relations.

Carpenter emphasized the quality and importance of the U.S. bases and training facilities in Bavaria, especially those in Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels. "They are among the best not only in

Europe but in the world. No one with decision-making power and authority is talking about the relocation of US troops in Europe, and certainly not from Bavaria," said Carpenter, making a clear commitment to the location.

U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller acknowledged that of all his diplomatic assignments, he currently experiences the most outstanding one in Bavaria. The consulate strives to promote relations between peoples. "It's a human relationship, and this human relationship lasts far longer than anything that happens in any political cycle," said Miller. In the wonderful atmosphere of the Forsthaus garden, there was a lively exchange between the German and American guests.

| by Gerald Morgenstern



In the Forsthaus garden beneath the Water Tower, the U.S. Army welcomed 180 German and American guests. Brig. Gen. Steven Carpenter (front with microphone) and U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller (right) highlighted, among other things, the good relations between the host state of Bavaria and the U.S. Army



US ARMY PRESENTS "GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD"



GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The US Army's "Good Neighbor Award" is a token of gratitude and appreciation. Ten distinguished individuals from communities at US garrison locations were honored for their "good neighborliness."

The Water Tower, the landmark of the training area and the town of Grafenwoehr, served as the backdrop for the awards ceremony; the honor was presented for the first time in 2021. The Commanding General of the 7th Army Training Command (7ATC), Brig. Gen. Steven Carpenter, spoke about the good relations between Bavaria and the US Army and also reflected on the end of the war 80 years ago. Relationships are built by people, "through their commitment and efforts at the locations in Bavaria, they have improved the quality of life for US soldiers, as well as civilians and their families. Thank you for that," said Carpenter.

Carpenter also considered the presence of U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller a special gesture. I Carpenter and his Command Sgt. Major Paul Fedorisin presented the certificates.

Grafenwoehr's Second Mayor **Anita Hessler** was nominated by the 41st Field Artillery Brigade, the city's partner unit. Representing the mayor, she invited guests to joint events such as Remembrance Day, the USAREUR-AF Band and Chorus Holiday Concert, the Advent Market, St. Sebastian's Day, and the New Year's Reception. Through her commitment, she is considered a bridge builder between the city and the soldiers and their families stationed in Grafenwoehr, thus improving the quality of life during their tour of duty.

Grafenwoehr's registrar, **Holger Cibis**, was nominated by the 7ATC. During his 30 years of service, he married many Americans, also with German partners. As a long-time chairman of the Hütten Fire Department, he organized and participated in many festivals and events, which also included numerous American guests.

The US Army in Grafenwoehr honored deserving individuals with the "Good Neighbor Award." The awards were presented by Brig. Gen. Steven Carpenter (left) and Command Sgt. Major Paul Fedorisin (right). U.S. Consul General Dr. James Miller (second from right) and representatives of the units that submitted the nominations congratulated them.



Forestry officer **Andreas Irle** was also nominated by the 7th Army Training Command. As a member of the Federal Forest Service, he is jointly responsible for the protection and preservation of the environment and nature on the military training area. During numerous environmental tours, he pointed out species and special features in the training area that need protection. He advises the Range Operations Department on nature conservation matters to ensure maximum military use of the area and helped to keep training interruptions as short as possible during many firefighting operations.

In addition to those honored from the immediate Grafenwoehr area, the following persons were also honored: Mayor **Roland Scheibenberger** of Illesheim; **Dominik Wenninger** of the Ansbach Integrated Dispatch Center; **Günther Schuster**, President of the German-American Society in Rothburg; **Thomas Kastner**, an officer with the Ansbach Traffic Police; and **Matthias Goldbach**, head of the Ansbach Red Cross Station, all nominated by the U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach.

Dr. Eric C. Hoffmann, President of the German-American Club in Bayreuth, was nominated by the 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment of the 41st Field Artillery Brigade. **Daniel Rasch**, city councilor in Pegnitz, was nominated by the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment.

| by **Gerald Morgenstern**

VILSECK RESIDENTS MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO THE WOLF HUNTER'S CHAPEL



The miraculous image in the Wolf Hunter's Chapel commemorates the miraculous rescue of a hunter.

Vilseck pastor Hrudaya Kumar Madanu prayed with the faithful during the service at the Wolf Hunter's Chapel.

Pastor Hrudaya Kumar Madanu prayed the Trinity service with the faithful and also asked for the protection and assistance of the Mother of God. The service ended with the Vilseck hymn.

Forestry Director Alexander Krone, also on behalf of his district forester, Frank Gerstenmeier, expressed his gratitude for maintaining the pilgrimage tradition. Employees of the Federal Forest Service also ensure the maintenance of the small church. After the pilgrimage, they entertained the pilgrims, who, despite the rainy weather, enjoyed gathering for conversation in the beautiful natural surroundings of the training area. The oldest participant in the pilgrimage was 90-year-old Otilie Gebhardt from Vilseck. She was born in 1935 in the Erzhaeusl, a former forestry and inn near the chapel in the training area. She was happy to share her memories and stories of her birthplace.

As every year, Andreas Kreuzer from the US Army Garrison Bavaria accompanied the group and ensured access to the restricted area.



Otilie Gebhardt was born in the Erzhaeusl in 1935. The 90-year-old was happy to share her memories with Pastor Madanu and Forestry Director Krone.

VILSECK/GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – It is the only pilgrimage in Bavaria that leads into a restricted area. On Trinity Sunday, believers from the Vilseck parish made a pilgrimage to the Wolf Hunter's Chapel in the Grafenwoehr Training Area. It commemorates the miraculous rescue of a hunter during a wolf hunt.

"In the 17th century, an incident happened on this site in which the old forester shot a wolf, which charged and attacked him; but in the moment of greatest danger, by invoking the Holy Trinity, the forester's son came to the scene and killed the wolf with a well-aimed shot, thereby saving his father's life."

This was the original inscription to the Wolf Marksmen legend; the scene of the Wolf Hunter's rescue is depicted in the painting in the small chapel. It lies at the foot of the Black Mountain in the Erzhaeusl area and is the last remaining small church on the entire training ground. Along the avenue of 100 linden trees, planted to mark the 100th anniversary of the Federal Forest Service, the people of Vilseck once again made a pilgrimage to the Wolfsschützen Chapel this year.

| by **Gerald Morgenstern**

HISTORY OF THE TRAINING AREA

"Grafenwoehr Training Area, Yesterday – Today – Edition 2024" is the title of the bilingual book by retired German Sgt. Major Gerald Morgenstern. The 288-page book, with more than 800 photos, not only presents the history of the training area since 1910 but also explores the development of the training area in recent times. The book also features comments from U.S. Army commanders, and documents the development of Hohenfels Training Area. One chapter also describes the Wolf Hunter's Chapel and the wolves on the military training area. "Grafenwoehr Training Area, Yesterday - Today - Edition 2024" is available in bookstores and at various sales locations on and off post. More information can be found and online orders can be placed on the Facebook page "Grafenwoehr Training Area Book."



Photo Credit: Gerald Morgenstern (4)



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HOW TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH MIDSECTION PAIN

(djd). It pinches, presses, or stings unpleasantly: Everyone probably experiences abdominal pain from time to time – whether after a large meal, during stressful times, due to a gastrointestinal infection, or for no apparent reason at all. These midsection pains often come unexpectedly and can seriously disrupt everyday life. Although many people suffer from stomach pain, there is a significant need for education about its causes and effective treatment options. According to the current survey "Abdominal Report 2025" of more than 1,000 sufferers, only 51 percent are aware that cramps are often the cause of abdominal pain, although women are generally better informed than men.

CRAMPS LAST FOR SECONDS TO HOURS

"The gastrointestinal tract is a hollow organ with various muscle layers. Food and fluids are transported through coordinated muscle movements. If, for example, there is an obstruction, the muscle tries to work against it, which can cause abdominal cramps," explains Prof. Ahmed Madisch, a gastroenterologist from Hanover. He describes the symptoms as mild to moderate, wave-like, and recurring cramp-like pain that can last for seconds to hours. However, the lack of knowledge about the origin of pain also affects the choice of treatment: According to the survey, 59 percent choose something other than antispasmodics, 43 percent treat it exclusively with home remedies such as a hot water bottle, and 11 percent prefer painkillers.

ANTISPASMODICS INSTEAD OF PAINKILLERS

Conventional painkillers, however, relieve pain but do not address the cause. They block pain signals, while muscle contractions in the intestine persist. In doing so, they often cause stomach-disrupting side effects. Antispasmodics (spasmodics) such as the active ingredient butylscopolamine, on the other hand, can relax the tense muscles in the gastrointestinal tract and thus relieve the cause of the symptoms where they arise. However, medical advice should generally be sought if certain symptoms occur, Prof. Madisch explains: "These include persistent symptoms, blood in the stool, nighttime cramps, weight loss, many days without bowel movements, a significant increase in symptoms, and fever. In other cases, especially temporary and mild symptoms, symptom-oriented therapy can be used." Supportive measures such as gentle abdominal massage or relaxation techniques are often helpful.

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VITAMINS, MINERALS, AND OTHERS – WHAT DO WE REALLY NEED?

People whose jobs are physically demanding should pay attention to their diet – and can also take supplements if necessary.

THE SENSE AND NONSENSE OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

(djd). Around 51 percent of people over 16 in Germany have taken at least one dietary supplement in the last twelve months. Vitamin pills, mineral capsules, or protein shakes have long been part of everyday life for many. This is shown by a representative Forsa survey commissioned by IKK classic health insurance. Supplements are particularly popular among women (57 percent) and younger people: In the 16- to 39-year-old age group, as many as 59 percent use pills and powders – mostly to strengthen their immune system or improve performance in everyday life and sports. Almost half of men (45 percent) also regularly take dietary supplements.

MEDICAL ADVICE IS RECOMMENDED

But are these supplements really necessary? "A balanced and varied diet usually provides sufficient nutrients," says Christl Konrad, a certified nutritionist at IKK classic. In fact, 84 percent of respondents report eating consciously and healthily. Nevertheless, many people want to play it safe. It's a good idea to clarify beforehand whether there's a real need – for example, through medical advice. This can also help avoid overdoses and side effects.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PEOPLE OFTEN BENEFIT

"Dietary supplements

are useful when the right nutrients are taken by the right person at the right time and in the right amount," emphasizes Konrad. For certain groups – such as pregnant women, the elderly, or vegans – targeted supplementation is sometimes beneficial. People with high levels of physical stress, such as those in manual labor, can also benefit depending on their level of exertion and nutritional situation – for example, from magnesium or vitamin D.

CHOOSE WISELY

Minerals such as magnesium, calcium, or zinc (38 percent) are the most commonly taken, followed by vitamins (35 percent). Protein supplements are particularly popular among those under 40 – a quarter of this age group consumes them regularly. It's important to choose products carefully. Information on this topic is also available at www.ikk-classic.de.

Too high a dosage or an unfavorable combination of individual nutrients can lead to symptoms in certain cases – especially if the user is already taking medication. In the survey, eleven percent of dietary supplement users reported experiencing unwanted side effects such as diarrhea, nausea, or headaches. Additionally, two percent noted interactions with other medications. The expert advises: "Consider alternatives. If you are nutrient deficient, it is often enough to change your habits."



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WHEN ALLERGIES BECOME A CONSTANT NUISANCE

(djd). Sneezing, sniffing, itching, and no respite in sight: For allergy sufferers, these typical symptoms are increasingly becoming a constant companion. As the current Allergy Atlas 2025 shows, around 42 percent of the more than 3,300 people surveyed suffer from symptoms year-round. However, the spring and summer months remain the classic peak season: From May to June, an average of 35 to 43 percent of respondents report suffering from symptoms. Hay fever affects 72 percent of these individuals – 70 percent of women and 74 percent of men.

POLLEN FLIES LONGER, IS MORE AGGRESSIVE

The changing pollen seasons contribute to symptoms such as allergic rhinitis or itchy eyes increasingly occurring in the winter months. Warmer temperatures due to climate change mean that some pollen species, such as hazel and alder, are already in the air as early as December. Other plants bloom twice a year. And the pollen becomes more aggressive. Added to this are the

people who, instead or in addition, suffer from pet hair (34 percent), house dust mite (43 percent), or food allergies (25 percent). These overreactions of the immune system occur regardless of the season.

IMPAIRED QUALITY OF LIFE

The survey results illustrate how severely allergies impact quality of life. Thirty-five percent of respondents report that their sleep is impaired by the symptoms, and just as many feel restricted in their leisure activities. This makes early treatment all the more important. Experts therefore recommend prompt intervention because allergies trigger an inflammatory reaction that can become chronic without treatment. Modern treatment options with bilastine can quickly relieve symptoms of the nose, eyes, and skin for up to 24 hours. This latest-generation H1 antihistamine does not cause drowsiness, unlike many conventional active ingredients. This is because it only marginally crosses the blood-brain barrier and is actively transported out of the central nervous system by a transport protein. It is also suitable for long-term therapy.

TIPS FOR ALLERGY SUFFERERS

In addition to treating symptoms, those affected should take protective measures. This includes washing their hair daily, changing clothes outside the bedroom, and ventilating regularly (for hay fever, this is best done early in the morning or after rain). In addition, nasal douches and eye washes remove allergens from the mucous membranes and reduce irritation. Last but not least, air purifiers and allergy-friendly bedding are often good tips.



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NEW TIMES, NEW HEADACHES

SURVEY: HOW CLIMATE AND DIGITAL MEDIA AFFECT OUR WELL-BEING

(djd). Migraines and headaches are not a new phenomenon – but they have new triggers. In addition to classic triggers such as lack of sleep or stress, the challenges of our time, such as intensive screen use and climate change, are playing an increasingly important role. In general, researchers worldwide are recording an increase in the number of sufferers and the associated stressors. Young adults are particularly at risk. This is also shown by the 2025 Headache & Migraine Report, for which more than 3,000 people with corresponding complaints were surveyed.

WHAT'S STRESSING THE MINDS OF YOUNG ADULTS

A key topic is the role of digital media. 64 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds report that their headaches or migraines are negatively affected by media consumption. There is also evidence that frequent use of smartphones and tablets puts more strain on the mind than computer work or television. In addition to technology, the environment is also increasingly influencing pain. Rising temperatures, changing weather, and particulate matter pollution are cited by those affected as triggers. Young people's sensitivity to climate change is particularly striking: 39 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds surveyed report that rising temperatures worsen

their symptoms. 27 percent of 40- to 49-year-olds say the same, and only 19 percent of the oldest survey participants (70 to 79 years old) say this.

THE CONSEQUENCES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The most common effects of the symptoms include concentration and sleep problems, as well as limitations in physical activity and mental resilience. This makes relief all the more necessary. Drug treatment options play an important role, especially when headaches become acute. Among over-the-counter painkillers, combination preparations containing caffeine are often a good option. They can relieve symptoms more quickly than the individual active ingredients alone.

ADJUST YOUR LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle modification remains a key component in headache prevention. According to the report, many sufferers rely on basic elements such as adequate sleep (53 percent), regular meals (49 percent), hydration (57 percent), and exercise in the fresh air (49 percent). These measures are also perceived as particularly helpful.

Photo Credit: DJD/Thomapyrh/Getty Images/Andrey Popov



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Dreamlike SCENERY

"Blautopf" spring, Blaubeuren

Photo Credit: Laura Wiesgickl-Urban

(djd). The German Timber-Frame Road runs for a total of approximately 3,900 kilometers and on eight regional routes through the most charming towns in the country. It is not only a paradise for culture and history lovers, but also an ideal backdrop for motorcyclists. Well over 100 timber-framed towns from eight federal states have joined forces under the motto "Timbered houses connect," full information at www.deutsche-fachwerkstrasse.de. The routes are best explored with a leisurely riding style, and the towns invite you to take a break to admire the sights and strengthen yourself with regional delicacies. In cooperation with a major motorcycle magazine, the most beautiful tours were selected – from short circular tours to multi-day travel experiences. Maps provide details of the individual routes at www.kurviger.de. Each timber-framed town has at least one start/finish tour, making a longer stay with an overnight stay worthwhile. Here are three suggested tours across Germany.

1 ROUTE 1: FROM THE ELBE TO THE HARZ MOUNTAINS. SUGGESTED TOUR: START AND FINISH IN OSTERODE. Length: 283.7 kilometers.

The foothills of the Harz Mountains, the Eichsfeld region, the idyllic Leinebergland, and many other winding delights provide the backdrop for fun on two wheels. Stops should be made at the Tower Clock Museum in Bockenem, the UNESCO World Heritage Fagus Factory in Alfeld, or the PS.Speicher in Einbeck. Also worth seeing are the historic colonial goods store in Northeim, the Heinz Sielmann Foundation's Gut Herbigshagen Nature Experience Center in Duderstadt, and the old granary in Osterode.

2 ROUTE 2: FROM THE RHINE TO THE MAIN AND THE ODENWALD. SUGGESTED TOUR: FROM HANAU-STEINHEIM TO GROSS-UMSTADT. Length: 235 kilometers.

The Rhine and Main rivers, and the Spessart and Odenwald forests lead to half-timbered towns steeped in romance and history on this tour. In addition to the half-timbered towns, there are also impressive palaces and castles to visit. Along the way, the route repeatedly follows the Rhine and Main rivers.

3 ROUTE 3: FROM THE NECKAR TO THE BLACK FOREST AND LAKE CONSTANCE. SUGGESTED TOUR: FROM BAD URACH TO NEHREN. Length: 386.6 kilometers.

The Münsinger Alb, the Große Lautertal, Lake Constance, the Swabian Alb, and the Linzgau are the landscapes through which this route leads. The historic and lovingly restored half-timbered towns invite you to plan a longer stay. A special highlight on this tour is the magical natural spectacle of the "Blautopf" (Blautopf) spring in Blaubeuren (www.blaubeuren.de/Blautopf).



Alsfeld is famous far beyond Hesse for its historic old town. The picturesque, spacious market square with the town hall, shown here, is particularly beautiful.

Photo Credit: DUD/German Half-Timbered House Road/Peter Wahl

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THE NEW 2026 BMW M2 CS

The new BMW M2 CS further raises the bar for sheer driving pleasure at the premium end of the compact high-performance sports car segment. Outstanding agility, a significant increase in power, supreme dynamics, and design details inspired by Motorsport make driving the latest special edition model from BMW M an exhilarating and intensely rewarding experience. The new BMW M2 CS is the next chapter in an unqualified success story, which began with the iconic BMW 2002 Turbo and continued with the BMW 1 Series M Coupe and the first BMW M2 – including the first CS variant, unveiled in 2019. BMW M offered a first glimpse of the exterior design of the BMW M2 CS on May 23rd at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este on the shores of Lake Como.

The latest CS model offers the ultimate in driving pleasure – both as a track tool and in day-to-day use. The BMW M2 CS will be assembled at BMW Group Plant San Luis Potosí in Mexico starting in August 2025. And like other special models from BMW M, the M2 CS will be produced in limited numbers. The market launch will begin in late summer 2025.

The new BMW M2 CS is based on the second generation of the BMW M2 and builds on what is already an extraordinary level of performance. For example, the high-revving inline 6-cylinder engine with M TwinPower Turbo technology develops an impressive 523 hp in the M2 CS – 50 more than in

the standard BMW M2. The M2 CS sends its power to the rear wheels via a standard 8-speed M Steptronic transmission with Drivelogic.

UPGRADED INLINE 6-CYLINDER ENGINE BRINGS SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN POWER AND TORQUE.

For duty in the BMW M2 CS, BMW M has upgraded the 3.0-liter S58 inline 6-cylinder engine found in the standard M2, intensifying an already exceptional performance experience, particularly in highly dynamic driving situations. Their work further sharpens the engine's remarkable power characteristics and perfectly accentuates the linear power

Continued on page 24



Photo Credit: BMW Group



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delivery – sustained into the higher reaches of the rev range – familiar in BMW M models. Compared to the standard BMW M2 with the 8-speed M Steptronic transmission, maximum torque has been raised by 36 lb-ft to 479 and is available across a broad rev range – between 2,700 and 5,620 rpm. The engine produces its maximum power of 523 hp at 6,250 rpm and redlines at 7,200 rpm. And the accelerator mapping and response have been optimized in all drive modes to deliver seemingly instantaneous responses to the driver's inputs.

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to the drivetrain optimizes response. Thanks to the lightning-fast power delivery, in combination with the increased engine power and the reduction in weight, the BMW M2 CS is able to sprint from 0 to 60 mph in just 3.7 seconds – 0.2 seconds quicker than the standard Steptronic-equipped M2. The mid-range sprint from 50-75 mph takes 3.4 seconds. Top speed with the standard M Driver's Package is electronically limited to 188 mph. The dynamic power delivery is backed by an emotionally rich engine note from the M-specific exhaust system with electrically controlled flaps and four exhaust tips characteristic of M, which are finished in matte black on the BMW M2 CS.

LIGHTWEIGHT CARBON FIBER COMPONENTS AND CS-EXCLUSIVE DETAILS.

The exterior of the BMW M2 CS underscores its high performance mission with CFRP components and exclusive details that set it apart. It boasts the signature M exterior mirror caps, a standard M Carbon roof, and a CS-specific rear diffuser, all crafted from exposed carbon fiber. Adding to the sporty and dynamic appearance are a matte black front splitter and a unique black BMW M kidney grille with optimized air inlets. The lightweight CFRP trunk lid with integrated ducktail spoiler is emblazoned with a striking "M2 CS" logo featuring a bold red border.

Four colors are available for the exterior finish of the new BMW M2 CS: Black Sapphire metallic, Brooklyn Grey metallic, and Portimao Blue metallic are available at no extra cost, and BMW Individual Velvet Blue metallic is optionally available at a price of \$3,000. Adaptive LED Headlights with Shadowline dark inlays are also standard.

M-SPECIFIC CONTROLS ENABLE DIRECT ACCESS FOR AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF FUNCTIONS.

The CS carries over the cutting-edge operating concept for setup customization from the standard BMW M2. At the heart is the Setup button on the center console. This provides direct access to the settings options for the engine, Adaptive M Suspension, M Servotronic steering, integrated braking system working in conjunction with the M Compound brakes, and the M Traction Control function, which allows drivers to choose from ten individual intervention thresholds for wheel slip limitation. The M Drift Analyzer shows the angle and duration of drifts executed by the driver, while the M Laptimer is ideal for those striving for the perfect lap.

Semi-automated driving and parking systems fitted as standard include Forward Collision Mitigation, Active Cruise Control with Distance Control, Speed Limit Info, Lane Keeping Assistant, and the Parking Assistant.

(BMW Group)

Photo Credit: BMW Group

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EXPLORER TREMOR: IT'S ALL IN (BOTH) NAMES

Over the past few years, I've watched a significant shift in how people use their vehicles. The pandemic accelerated this trend. People are prioritizing experiences, especially those that involve spending time outdoors. They want to escape the city, explore nature, and create lasting memories with their families and friends. And they need a vehicle that can confidently take them there.

As the Explorer brand manager, I'm excited to finally share something we've been working on tirelessly: the first-ever 2026 Explorer Tremor. Explorer Tremor was born from a deep understanding of what our customers truly want and need that will expand the lineup of America's all-time best-selling SUV.

We already knew the Explorer was capable and versatile. It's always been a vehicle that can handle a family road trip or a week-end camping trip. Explorer customers enjoy off-road and towing adventures more than other customers in the segment.

However, we also know that there is a growing segment of customers who want more — more off-road adventure, more ruggedness, more of that "go anywhere" capability. When we set out to develop an Explorer Tremor, we challenged ourselves to do something different. We wanted to build an off-road machine engineered to handle challenging terrain. Working closely with Brian Naspinsky, our Explorer Vehicle engineering manager, and his team, we set out to create an Explorer that could confidently

Photo Credit: Ford Motor Company

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tackle muddy trails, sandy beaches, and rocky mountain passes. We looked at every aspect of the vehicle — from its suspension and drivetrain to its underbody protection and technology — and made targeted improvements to enhance its off-road performance. I'm incredibly proud of what we've accomplished with the Explorer Tremor. It's a vehicle that combines rugged capability with modern comfort and technology.

Here are just a few of the things that make it so special:

- **Bold and Functional Design:** The first thing that stands out is the aesthetics, adding 18-inch wheels wrapped in all-terrain tires, auxiliary off-road lights, and electric spice-accented tow hooks. But it's not just about looks. We also improved the approach and departure angles to more easily clear obstacles on a trail.
- **Powerful Engine Options:** An available 3.0-liter EcoBoost engine delivers up to 400 horsepower and 415 lb-ft of torque. This engine, the same one you'll find in the Explorer ST, provides plenty of power for conquering challenging terrain. A 2.3L option is also available for those who want a balance of performance and efficiency.
- **Intelligent Drivetrain:** Standard 4-wheel drive (AWD) with a Torsen limited-slip differential ensures traction on slippery/sandy surfaces. You can confidently navigate off-road, knowing that the Explorer Tremor will keep you moving forward.

- **Off-Road-Tuned Suspension:** We've equipped the Explorer Tremor with a unique suspension system that includes specially tuned springs and sway bars. This gives it an extra inch of ride height and a smooth, controlled ride — on and off the road.
- **Underbody Protection:** There is underbody protection at the front and rear of the vehicle to protect vital components and allow customers to venture off the beaten path with even more confidence.
- **Advanced Technology:** Inside, you'll find all the latest technology, including the Ford Digital Experience, Copilot 360 Assist 2.0, and available features like massaging front seats and an optional 14-speaker premium B&O audio system. We believe that you shouldn't have to sacrifice comfort and convenience when you're exploring the great outdoors. And with available BlueCruise 1.5, long road trips are a breeze.

The 2026 Explorer Tremor joins a compelling lineup that includes the versatile Active, sporty ST-Line, high performance ST, and luxurious Platinum models. It's a testament to our commitment to providing customers with a vehicle that perfectly fits their needs and lifestyles.

For me, the Explorer Tremor represents the culmination of a vision. It's a vehicle that enables opportunities to explore and create memories that will last a lifetime. I can't wait to see where our customers will take it.

(Ford Motor Company)

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WORLD CAR AWARDS: VOLVO EX90 CLAIMS WORLD LUXURY CAR TITLE

The all-electric Volvo EX90 has been crowned the World Luxury Car by the World Car Awards expert jury, ahead of the New York International Auto Show. The seven-seat family SUV was lauded for its comfortable interior, advanced safety features, and distinctive Scandinavian design.

Comprising 96 automotive journalists from 30 countries, the jury evaluated the 510-horsepower, twin-motor EX90, praising its quiet yet powerful ride and luxurious, ergonomic cabin designed for long-distance comfort. Håkan Samuelsson, CEO of Volvo Cars, expressed pleasure at the recognition, noting the EX90's appeal to demanding customers globally.

The EX90's design emphasizes functionality, with a smoothly rounded front and flush elements that optimize aerodynamics and efficiency. Its integrated lidar, combined with cameras, radars,

and ultrasonic sensors, significantly enhances safety. This system is seamlessly housed under a low-profile cover at the center of the roofline to minimize drag. Inside, the EX90 boasts a quiet cabin featuring progressive materials like Nordico, a leather-free upholstery made from recycled and bio-attributed materials. Advanced LED lighting mimics natural sunlight, complemented by backlit wood decor, creating a sophisticated ambiance.

A key advantage of the EX90 is its true seven-seat configuration, offering ample trunk space. It provides up to 324 liters with all seats in use, expanding to 697 liters with the third row folded. This marks Volvo Cars' third World Car Award, following the XC60's 2018 World Car of the Year title and the EX30's 2024 World Urban Car win. In 2018, Håkan Samuelsson was also named the inaugural World Car Person of the Year.

(Volvo Car USA)

Photo Credit: Volvo Car USA

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EXPERIENCE TINA TURNER'S GREATEST HITS

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – An unforgettable evening awaits visitors on August 29 from 8 p.m. at the Schoenberg Natural Stage in Grafenwoehr: TINA is the ultimate tribute concert with Tina Turner's greatest hits. Together with her band, the fantastic singer Caroline Roeschke interprets the rock legend's most well-known songs along with some hidden gems. As an energetic front woman, Roeschke performs songs such as "Simply the Best," "Steamy Window," "What's Love Got To Do" and "Private Dancer" accompanied by her group of thoroughbred musicians. The career of the "Queen of Rock" Turner spanned many decades. The seven-piece formation has set itself the task of presenting this broad spectrum in a captivating live experience. The audience is invited to sing, celebrate and dance along.

Tickets for the concert can be purchased in advance for €20 (plus fees if applicable) at www.okticket.de and at numerous advance booking offices in the region. Tickets will also be available at the box office at a price of €23. Drinks and snacks will be sold during the concert.

| by **City of Grafenwoehr**

Photo Credit: Christian Ringer



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www.grafenwoehr.de



ANNAFEST



WITH CONCERT AND CITY TOUR

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The Grafenwoehr Volunteer Fire Department invites you to this year's Annafest at the Kastenhaus (city park, next to museum) on Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. After the service at the Annaberg Church, the festivities begin at 10 a.m. with a morning pint or coffee and cake. Of course, there will also be delicious grilled food. Starting in the afternoon, the Kemnath Town Band will provide musical entertainment. fun-filled evening in an old Bavarian beer garden atmosphere is guaranteed.

A highlight will be a concert by the "Spielleute Nordoberpfalz" (North Upper Palatinate Musicians), consisting of members of the three marching bands from Grafenwoehr, Pressath, and Erbdorf, at 12:30 p.m.

Although there will be no Anna market this year due to construction work on the market square, guests can participate in a historical city tour of Grafenwoehr, organized by the Catholic Theater Group. The history, from the city's founding to the construction of the military training area, is presented in entertaining scenes in the old town and on Annaberg Hill. Actors take on historical roles and bring the city's history to life. The tour starts at 2 p.m. at the town hall.

The ecclesiastical background of the festival, the consecration of the Annaberg Church more than 250 years ago, will also be honored: the day will be ushered in with a festive service and sermon at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Annaberg Church "Maria Hilf." The service will be accompanied by festive music from the "Ex Animo" choir conducted by Johanna Baumann.

At the beginning, the children meet with all church goers at the Annaberg Church and walk to the grotto with parish assistant Christine Göbl. The festivities will conclude with an atmospheric candlelight procession that will move from Annaberg Hill to the market square at 9 p.m.

| by **Renate Gradl**

Photo Credit: Renate Gradl

EXPERIENCE
BAVARIA'S FESTIVALS:

Oktoberfest and Gäubodenvolksfest

Are you stationed in Bavaria and looking for the ultimate cultural experience? Then you should make a note of two of our most famous festivals: the world-famous Oktoberfest from Saturday, September 20th to Sunday, October 5th, 2025 in Munich and the charming Gäubodenvolksfest from August 8th to 18th, 2025 in Straubing. Both offer you an authentic insight into the Bavarian way of life, but have their own unique charm.

OKTOBERFEST:

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PARTY IN MUNICH

Imagine: More than six million people from all over the world come together to celebrate in huge tents with live music and traditional beer – that's Oktoberfest! Many simply call it "Wiesn," the German word for "pasture" due to the location of the festival grounds on the Theresien pasture, and it's more than just a beer festival; it's a giant amusement park, a culinary discovery journey, and a celebration of tradition.

The history of the Wiesn dates back to 1810, when it began as a wedding celebration for a Bavarian prince. Today, it's the largest folk festival in the world and an absolute must-see when visiting Bavaria. What can you expect?

- **HUGE BEER TENTS:** These are owned by Munich breweries and are the heart of the festival. They serve the special "Oktoberfest beer," which is stronger than regular beer. The atmosphere is lively, with oompah bands and thousands of people singing and swaying together.
- **HEARTY BAVARIAN FOOD:** You absolutely have to try half a Hendl (chicken), a Schweinshaxn (pork knuckle), oxen shreds on a roll (you'll find a BBQ recipe on page 50), or a giant Brezn (pretzel). Accompany it with Radi (radish) or Obazda (cheese concoction).
- **ENDLESS RIDES:** From classic carousels to modern roller coasters – there's a thrill for everyone here. →

An unforgettable view: Oktoberfest panorama in the evening glow, crowned by the majestic Alpine backdrop.

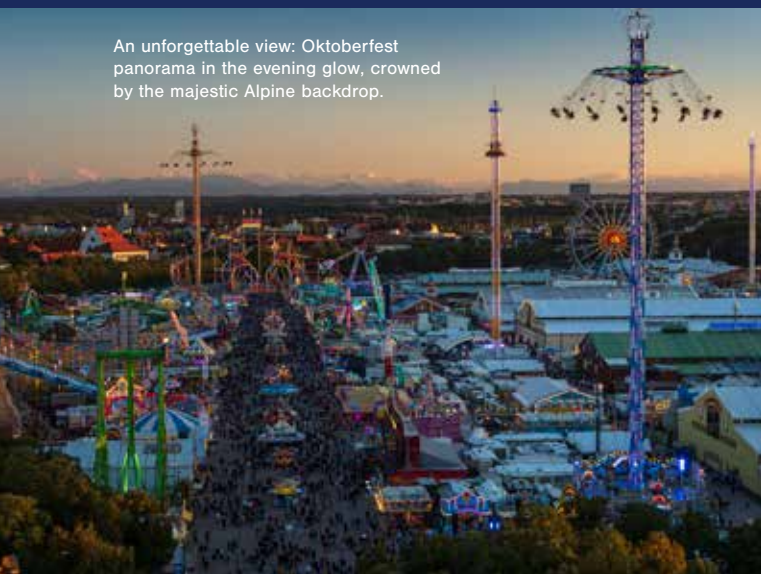


Photo Credit: München Tourismus (Jörg Lutz)

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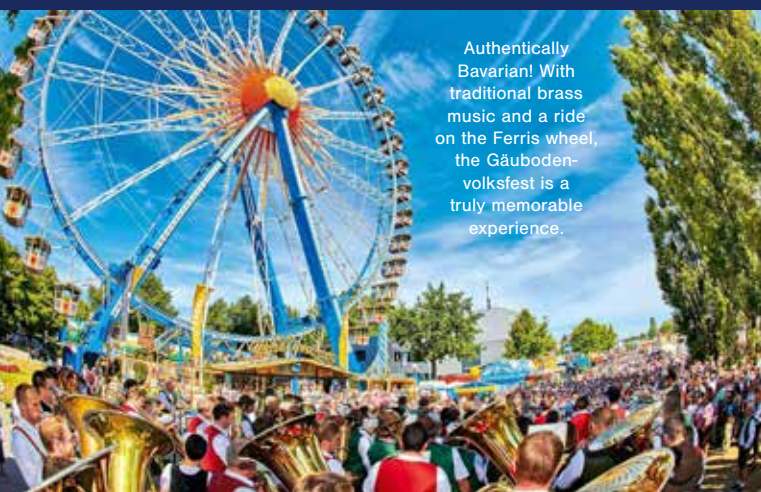


www.poellinger-tracht.de

- **TRADITIONAL CLOTHES:** A highlight is seeing the many visitors in traditional Bavarian costumes. Lederhosen for men and dirndls for women are standard here and create a unique atmosphere. Many visitors, including those from the USA, love to dress up for this occasion!
- The Oktoberfest is known for its lively, international atmosphere. It's the perfect place to meet new people and experience Bavarian hospitality.



SCAN THE QR-CODE FOR
MORE INFORMATION.



Authentically Bavarian! With traditional brass music and a ride on the Ferris wheel, the Gäubodenvolksfest is a truly memorable experience.

THE GÄUBODENVOLKSFEST: BAVARIAN CHARM IN STRAUBING

Straubing is located about an hour southeast of Hohenfels and 1.5 hours from Grafenwoehr, where you'll find the Gäubodenvolksfest – often affectionately referred to as the "little Oktoberfest." This festival is a hidden gem for anyone looking for a more authentic, less crowded Bavarian experience.

The Gäubodenvolksfest is even older than the Oktoberfest and has a strong connection to regional agriculture. It feels more intimate and local, yet still large enough to inspire you.

- **TRADITIONAL AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY:** The beer tents here may not be quite as gigantic as in Munich, but the atmosphere is no less welcoming. Here, you'll mainly meet locals who live and celebrate their traditions.
- **OSTBAYERNSSCHAU:** A large consumer fair takes place alongside the Volksfest, giving you insights into the regional economy and culture.
- **AUTHENTIC BAVARIAN CUISINE AND MUSIC:** Experience traditional Bavarian bands and enjoy local specialties in a more relaxed environment. Prices are often a bit more reasonable here than in Munich.

| by Editor



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Photo Credit: Straubinger Ausstellungs GmbH (Foto Bernhard)



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THE HERBSTDULT FEST INVITES YOU
TO REGENSBURG FROM AUGUST 29TH
TO SEPTEMBER 14TH

GREAT ATTRACTIONS AT THE LARGEST FOLK FESTIVAL IN UPPER PALATINATE

Three festival tents, two fish tents, a beer village and around 100 other attractions - these are the two Regensburg Dult fests in May and in the fall. From August 29th to September 14th, the city of Regensburg hosts and invites you to the largest folk festival in the Upper Palatinate. All program and site information can be found on the Internet at www.r-dult.com.

For a total of 17 days, the Dultplatz on the Protzenweiher between the Danube and the canal presents itself to visitors in a very colorful way. On the one hand, there is the amusement dult with its tents, rides, amusement booths such as throwing, shooting and spicker booths as well as numerous candy traders, and on the other hand, the goods dult, which invites visitors from all generations to stroll and shop. From socks to pans, traditional clothes to shaving brushes, everything that makes everyday life easier is concentrated in one place.

And with this ease, you can then immerse yourself in the colorful hustle and bustle of the shopping streets. In addition to the wide range of attractions, there are special days during the Dult for senior citizens (always on Mondays), for families and children (always on Wednesdays) and - very popular - the "Girls' Night," on which ladies of all ages can try out the rides at a reduced price and are treated to other discounted offers throughout the Dultplatz. Girls' Night is always on the second Thursday of the Dult. There is good news to report about the variety of beers. Festival beers and beer specialties from Regensburg's three foundation breweries are offered. As far as the food is concerned, everyone can choose according to taste and budget. Apart from the classics such as chicken, knuckle of pork, pretzels and bratwurst, there are also vegetarian dishes, burgers and salads - not to mention the fish on offer, which is a special feature among Bavarian folk festivals.

Visually, the Regensburger Dult is characterized by the Ferris wheel and the two large festival tents - Hahn and Glöckl - which can be seen from afar. There will be a special highlight on Friday, September 12th, at 10 p.m.: with the certified and themed high-altitude fireworks display, the organizers not only captivate the people on the fest grounds, but also the city and the surrounding area. With special program items such as Dult church services, several charity events and a backstage tour behind the scenes of the fairground companies, the Dult can easily inspire three generations to visit the Dult together.

Photo Credit: Hans-Christian Wagner



www.r-dult.com

REGENSBURG AUTUMN DULT. AUG 29 — SEP 14



Let's go for
Family Fun!



Fireworks

FRI, Aug 29, 2025
FRI, Sep 12, 2025
starting at 10 p.m.



Senior Citizens Day

MON, Sep 01, 2025
in the Glöckl fest tent
MON, Sep 08, 2025
in the Hahn fest tent
starting at 1 p.m.



Kids & Family Day

WED, Sep 03, 2025
WED, Sep 10, 2025
Special fares twice all rides
all day long



Ladies' Night

THUR, Sep 11, 2025
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starting at 6 p.m.



Table reservations www.gloeckl.net
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(fest tent office starting at 1 p.m.
only during the fest)

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REEPERBAHN FESTIVAL 2025

MUSIC FOR ALL: FOUR DAYS LIVE MUSIC IN ST. PAULI

HAMBURG, Germany – From September 17-20, 2025, Hamburg's Reeperbahn will once again become a vibrant hotspot for international music – open to everyone. To mark its 20th anniversary, the Reeperbahn Festival invites you to a special musical experience under the motto "Imagine Togetherness!" Around 800 concerts and cultural events at 70 venues offer something for everyone – from indie, hip-hop, and electronic music to pop, soul, and international newcomers.

The focus is on the audience: The festival deliberately opens many program items to all music lovers, even without tickets. Whether in the freely accessible Festival Village, on open-air stages, or at urban cultural events – music and encounters are at the forefront. For four days, the Reeperbahn will become a stage for discoveries, emotions, and new favorite songs.

A musical highlight is the renowned young talent competition Anchor, where international talents compete live for the favor of a prominent jury. Genre diversity and artistic freedom also characterize the lineup – from intimate club concerts to energetic open-air shows.

The Reeperbahn Festival is far more than a music industry event – it's a celebration of music, for the curious, fans, and anyone who wants to experience Hamburg's cultural energy. A visit to the Reeperbahn Festival can be perfectly combined with a city trip to Hamburg – music, culture, and maritime flair included.

| by Editor

Photo Credit: Dominik_Friess

EXPLORE | EXPLORE | EXPLORE



TOURISM BROCHURE FOR THE UPPER PALATINATE HILLS ALSO AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

Grafenwoehr, Germany – The popular tourism brochure for the Upper Palatinate Hills is now also available online in English. The translation is aimed primarily at the numerous US Americans stationed in the region and their families. The English edition offers a comprehensive overview of the region's diverse recreational activities as well as its cultural and scenic highlights. It also presents the individual towns and communities with their unique features. "Many American families spend several years in our region. With the English version of our brochure, we want to make it easier for them to access the beauty and offerings of their new home," explains Daniela Koslowski, Regional Manager of the ILE Region of the Four Cities Triangle.



The English brochure is now available for free download on the ILE Region of the Four Cities Triangle website.



Photo Credit: ILE Region VierStädtedreieck im Oberpfälzer Hügelland e.V

BAVARIANTIMES

To avoid culture shock in the supermarket or on the highway, it's worth taking a look at the most important measurements Americans should keep in mind during their stay in Europe. Here are the most common measurements that regularly need to be converted from US units to European units – from temperature to speed.

CHEAT

FROM

Inches to centimeters

WHAT AMERICANS
NEED TO CONVERT IN EUROPE

SHEET

LENGTH & DISTANCE

US-unit	EU-unit	Conversion example
1 Inch (Zoll)	1 in = 2,54 cm	A 13-inch laptop corresponds to approximately 33 cm of screen diagonal.
1 Foot (Fuß)	1 ft = 0,3048 m	A 6-foot-tall person is approximately 1.83 m tall.
1 Yard	1 yd = 0,9144 m	A 100-yard football field measures approximately 91.4 m .
1 Mile	1 mi = 1,609 km	60 mph on US highways corresponds to approximately 97 km/h in Europe.

ENERGY/CALORIES

US-unit	EU-unit	Conversion example
Calorie (kcal)	1 kcal = 4,184 kJ	A portion of chips with 250 kcal corresponds to approximately 1,046 kJ .

LIQUID VOLUME

US-unit	EU-unit	Conversion example
Fluid Ounce (fl oz)	1 fl oz = 29,57 ml	A small soda can (12 fl oz) is equal to 355 ml .
Cup	1 cup = 236,6 ml	In many recipes, 1 cup of milk is equal to about 1/4 liter .
Pint	1 pint = 473 ml	A pint of beer in the US is equal to just under 1/2 liter in Germany.
Gallon (US)	1 gal = 3,785 l	A full 15-gallon US car tank holds about 57 liters .

SPEED

US-unit	EU-unit	Conversion example
Miles per Hour (mph)	1 mph = 1,609 km/h	70 mph speed limit is approximately 113 km/h on German Autobahns.

TEMPERATURE

US-unit	EU-unit	Conversion example
Fahrenheit (°F)	°C = (°F - 32) ÷ 1,8	68 °F corresponds to a comfortable 20 °C , 98.6 °F body temperature is 37 °C .

TIP

Many smartphones and smartwatches offer conversion functions – or you can use online calculators or apps like **"Convert Units"** or **"Unit Converter."** This makes the jump across the Atlantic easy, even for numbers.

Take a Photo of our
Cheat Sheet and share it



JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

BUCKET LIST

FOR BAVARIA

LIVING IN EUROPE PROVIDES AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BEST VACATIONS. FIGURING OUT WHERE TO GO OVER THE HOLIDAY SEASON CAN BE OVERWHELMING WITH SO MUCH TO SEE AND DO. IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO GET AWAY, STAY IN AN IGLOO. FOLLOWING ARE SOME BUCKET-LIST WORTHY ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

1) BEER GARDEN HOPPING IN MUNICH



Immerse yourself in authentic Munich! Spend a relaxing afternoon or evening in various beer gardens, such as the Hirschgarten. Enjoy a liter of Bavarian beer with pretzels, Obazda (traditional Bavarian cheese mix), and radish for a sociable experience.

2) KALTENBERG KNIGHT'S TOURNAMENT



Illustrative image

Experience Europe's largest knight's tournament in Kaltenberg! Immerse yourself in a spectacular medieval festival with shows, markets, and jugglers. A unique cultural experience for the whole family! Tip: Book tickets early.

3) HISTORIC REGENSBURG & DANUBE CRUISE



Immerse yourself in Regensburg's UNESCO-listed Old Town, with its cathedral and Stone Bridge. A relaxing Danube cruise completes the experience. Explore the picturesque town and its rich history; the visitor center offers in-depth insights.

4) VISIT THE ALLIANZ ARENA AND FC BAYERN MUSEUM



Soccer fans, take note! Explore the Allianz Arena and the FC Bayern Museum. Experience the locker rooms and immerse yourself in German soccer culture – a highlight for sports enthusiasts. Check the schedule for a live match!

5) BAMBERG BREWERY MUSEUM



Illustrative image

Located in the former Michelsberg Monastery, the Bamberg Brewery Museum showcases over 1,000 years of Franconian brewing history across three floors. A highlight is the beer mug collection. Afterwards, enjoy a fresh Bamberg beer in the beer garden.

6) HIKE THROUGH THE PARTNACH GORGE



Experience a natural wonder: Hike through the Partnach or Höllental Gorge near Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Roaring waterfalls, narrow paths, and tunnels await – spectacular and photogenic, even in the rain. Sturdy shoes and a rain jacket recommended!

Take it easy

GERMAN

YOUR SURVIVAL GUIDE TO WHAT
YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW

ETIQUETTE

FROM UNWRITTEN RULES TO genuine
surprises – THIS IS HOW YOU navigate
everyday life in Germany.

Those who live abroad for an extended period often develop a unique perspective on the peculiarities of their host country. What is self-evident to locals can seem strange to newcomers – and vice versa. On the occasion of a visit from abroad, a look was taken at common advice for travelers to Germany. The result: Some recommendations are still spot on, while others are now considered outdated.

Especially in rural areas, short, friendly
conversations are quite common.



SMALL TALK – YES OR NO?

Contrary to the widespread assumption that small talk hardly ever occurs in Germany, experience reveals a more nuanced picture. While longer conversations, such as those at the supermarket checkout, are rather uncommon in everyday life – especially in rural areas – short, friendly conversations are quite common, provided you have a good command of the German language. A practical example: Anyone trying to order a "Brezel" using the English term "Pretzel" is often met with incomprehension – an indication of how important basic language skills are for everyday communication.

NOTE: In regions with US Army bases – such as those near Ramstein, Grafenwoehr, or Wiesbaden – the language barrier is often less noticeable. Many people in these areas are accustomed to dealing with English-speaking visitors, and simple orders or small talk in English are usually understood. Cultural adaptation is often easier in such environments. →



THE MATTER OF STANDING UP PEEING

One of the most curious, but according to research, most frequently cited, pieces of advice for men: Peeing while standing up should be avoided in Germany if possible. While this is considered an expression of masculinity in some other countries, it is rather frowned upon here – especially in private households. This raises the question of how this behavior is even supposed to attract attention. Nevertheless, this example in particular shows how cultural differences are often reflected in seemingly small everyday habits.



The Second World War remains a particularly sensitive topic.

A SENSITIVE TOPIC: HISTORY

One point that appears on almost every list of rules of conduct for Germany and can cause both surprise and understanding concerns how to deal with German history. Jokes or symbols related to World War II, Hitler, or National Socialism are absolutely taboo and even prohibited by law in Germany. Even though it may be obvious to most people around the world that such topics are not suitable for casual remarks, the repeated mention in advice books underscores the particular sensitivity required in this context.



GERMAN UNFRIENDLINESS? A MYTH!

A widespread cliché states that Germans are unfriendly and that one should not expect any cordiality. However, actual experiences often paint a more nuanced picture. Especially in rural areas, many people are open, helpful, and friendly. The notion that there is generally less cordiality in Germany is misguided. As in any other country, interpersonal interaction depends heavily on the specific situation and individual personality.

German homes are often very well insulated, which saves energy, but without regular ventilation, this can lead to problems such as mold growth and poor air quality.



LEARNING TO VENTILATE

The topic of ventilation presents a challenge for many people from abroad. While in other countries, air conditioning and leaky windows ensure continuous air exchange, in Germany, targeted bursts of ventilation are essential to prevent mold growth. Especially for people from warm, humid climates, where windows often don't close completely and air conditioning runs around the clock, the concept of regular ventilation – especially in cold temperatures – can be unfamiliar and difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it is important to familiarize yourself with this practice to avoid health and structural damage.

A zebra crossing, officially called a pedestrian crossing, is a specially marked area on the road intended to allow pedestrians to cross the road safely. As a driver, you must stop at a zebra crossing as soon as a pedestrian is clearly about to enter the roadway.



zebra crossings are sacred

The seriousness with which zebra crossings are treated in Germany surprises many visitors. While in other countries they often have only symbolic significance, here they are considered mandatory traffic facilities. Pedestrians often cross the road without eye contact – expecting drivers to stop. Even though cyclists don't actually have priority at zebra crossings, they sometimes use them recklessly. Anyone familiar with other traffic practices should adapt to the prevailing mentality in Germany and be especially vigilant.



TRUST IS A TOP PRIORITY

A frequently cited example of how you are not treated as a thief in Germany is paying at a gas station: you fill up first and then pay. This principle of trust is also evident in other places, such as farm shops in rural areas, where customers can independently pick up goods, put money into a cash register, and even get change. This is a beautiful aspect of German culture that reflects trust in people's honesty.

FIRST FILL UP - THEN PAY



WATER IS NOT A GIFT

Free tap water is rarely offered at the table in German restaurants. Those who are thirsty must order and pay for water, often in bottles and at considerable prices. This is a big difference from countries like the USA, where tap water with ice cubes is served as a matter of course and free of charge. Even mineral water, which is very popular in Germany, takes some getting used to for many newcomers.

In Germany, shaking hands is the classic and widespread form of greeting and farewell.



SHAKING HANDS INSTEAD OF HUGGING?

The question of the appropriate greeting is also a frequently discussed aspect in intercultural comparisons. While in some countries, such as the USA, hugging is common in everyday life, in Germany, shaking hands plays a much more important role – it is even taught in kindergarten. Whether you should actually shake hands with every new acquaintance depends on the situation. In general, however, it's advisable to avoid spontaneous hugs and opt for a more formal greeting first.

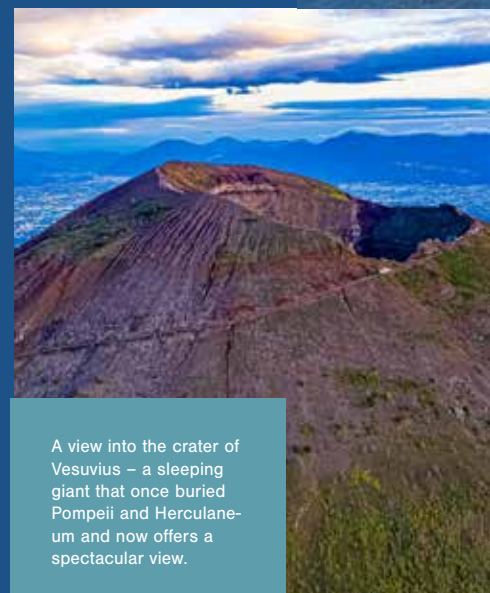
| by Editor



DOLCE VITA & ANCIENT WONDERS:

A JOURNEY THROUGH NAPLES AND ALONG THE AMALFI COAST

Naples *Italy*



A view into the crater of Vesuvius – a sleeping giant that once buried Pompeii and Herculaneum and now offers a spectacular view.

Naples and the Amalfi Coast – the names alone conjure up images of lively alleys, azure sea, and the incomparable Italian way of life. A journey to this region is a feast for the senses, a blend of ancient history, breathtaking nature, and culinary delights. Let's immerse ourselves in an unforgettable trip through Southern Italy.

NAPLES: THE PULSATING HEART OF SOUTHERN ITALY

Arriving in **Naples** is like jumping into cold water – in the best sense of the word. The city welcomes you with a wave of sounds, smells, and apparent chaos, which quickly reveals itself as pure, unadulterated vitality. Naples is loud, chaotic, and beautiful all at once. You immediately sense that this is a city with character.

Here, in the birthplace of pizza, enjoying a slice of Margherita is almost a religious experience. Whether at the legendary L'Antica Pizzeria da Michele or the equally famous Sorbillo, the simplicity of the ingredients, paired with the perfect wood-fired oven, makes every pizza a poem. But Naples is more than just pizza. The street food is a revelation: from cuoppo, fried seafood or vegetables in

a cone, to the sweet temptations of sfogliatella (puff pastry parcels with ricotta filling) to the airy baba (rum-soaked yeast cake). And, of course, the coffee culture: An espresso at the bar, quickly consumed, strong, and aromatic, is as much a part of everyday life as breathing.

The **old town**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, is a labyrinth of narrow streets. A stroll through **Spaccanapoli**, the perfectly straight main axis that bisects the old town, leads past countless churches, palaces, and the vibrant life of the Neapolitans. Particularly fascinating is **Via San Gregorio Armeno**, the famous Nativity Scene Street, where elaborate nativity figures and scenes are created and sold year-round.

An absolute must-see is the **National Archaeological Museum**. It houses the incredible treasures from **Pompeii and Herculaneum** – mosaics, frescoes, sculptures, and everyday objects that bring Roman life before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius to life. You get a sense of the splendor and tragic end of these ancient cities.



Positano: Where pastel-colored houses cling to the cliffs and the myth of the Amalfi Coast comes to life. A breathtaking sight that invites you to dream."

Away from the hustle and bustle, the **Lungomare**, the waterfront promenade, offers a welcome respite. With the imposing **Castel dell'Ovo** in the foreground, a stroll here, especially at sunset, is simply magical. A completely different perspective of the city is offered by **Underground Naples (Napoli Sotterranea)**, an extensive network of tunnels beneath the city that reveals the layers of its history. The monumental **Royal Palace (Palazzo Reale)** and the expansive **Piazza del Plebiscito** next to it bear witness to Naples' royal past and invite you to marvel at the architecture and grandeur.

A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME TO POMPEII & HERCULANEUM AND THE GIANT VESUVIUS

From Naples, excursions to **Pompeii and Herculaneum** are essential. The fascination of wandering through the streets of these buried cities is indescribable. You see the well-preserved houses, baths, theaters, and shops and can imagine what life was like here almost 2,000 years ago, before **Vesuvius** buried everything in 79 AD. While Pompeii is vast and impressive in its size, Herculaneum, which was covered by a pyroclastic flow, often features better-preserved buildings and even organic materials such as wood. The impressions are profound and serve as a reminder of the transience of life.

The climb to **Vesuvius** is a worthwhile addition. The hike to the crater rim is steep, but the **view** over the Gulf of Naples, the surrounding towns, and the vastness of the sea is simply magnificent and gives a sense of the immense power of this sleeping giant.

THE AMALFI COAST: A TRUE POSTCARD IDYLL

After vibrant Naples, the **Amalfi Coast** is a welcome oasis of beauty and tranquility. The drive along the **winding roads** is spectacular and at times a bit nerve-racking, but the views of the **turquoise sea** and the **colorful villages clinging to the cliffs** are simply breathtaking and justify every turn.

Positano is the postcard motif par excellence – the steep, pastel-colored houses that cling to the sea are an iconic sight. Here you can relax on the beach, stroll through charming boutiques, and simply enjoy the unique ambiance.

Amalfi, the former maritime republic, impresses with its magnificent **cathedral**, which combines Byzantine, Arabic, and Romanesque elements. A visit to the **Paper Museum** provides insights into the region's historic papermaking.

Ravello sits majestically high above the sea and is known for its tranquil elegance and spectacular gardens. **Villa Rufolo** and **Villa Cimbrone**, in particular, offer breathtaking panoramic views from their terraces, that will never be forgotten.

CULINARY DELIGHTS ON THE AMALFI COAST

The Amalfi Coast also has much to offer in terms of cuisine. Fresh **seafood** is naturally at the top of the menu here – freshly caught fish and seafood are prepared in a variety of ways. The region is also famous for its **lemons**, which are enormous and aromatic. Lemon products can be found everywhere: the famous **limoncello**, refreshing lemon cake, or lemon sorbet.

The **regional specialties** are simple but of the highest quality: creamy **mozzarella di bufala**, sun-ripened tomatoes, and excellent olive oil – every bite is a feast. The cuisine of the Amalfi Coast is a celebration of fresh ingredients and the Mediterranean way of life. This journey through Naples and along the Amalfi Coast is an unforgettable experience that touches all the senses and offers a deep insight into the rich culture and beauty of southern Italy.

| by **Editor**

A piece of Naples on your plate: Nothing beats an authentic Margherita pizza, straight from its birthplace.



Off to a water adventure!

The Tirschenreuth Pond Tour leads over narrow dams and past tall reed beds – right into a pond landscape with around 2,000 bodies of water.

Twelve varied tours lead along picturesque waterways to tranquil retreats, cultural highlights, and unforgettable views.

(djd). Water is the elixir of life and a habitat. It refreshes, moves, invigorates – and exerts a magical attraction on active and recreational nature lovers. Those who enjoy strolling through tranquil river valleys, listening to the babbling of murmuring streams, or lingering at idyllic swimming lakes will find a true paradise of watery hiking tours in the Upper Palatinate Forest. This pristine low mountain region on the Bavarian-Czech border consists of abundant forests and expansive water landscapes. Nature and its treasures are just as much a part of the authentic lifestyle here as the cultural and culinary traditions.

Wanderlust meets nature in the Upper Palatinate Forest



The Tirschenreuth Pond Basin is one of many water-rich hiking areas in the Upper Palatinate Forest.



The Upper Palatinate "Water Paths" lead along rivers, streams, to lakes, and over bridges.

BEST VIEWS OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The "Green Roof of Europe" can be experienced up close on the numerous "Waterside Trails." The six- to 15-kilometer circular tours introduce leisurely hikers to the extraordinary aquatic world of the Upper Palatinate Forest. The Tirschenreuth Pond Tour leads over narrow dams and past high reed beds – right into a pond landscape with around 2,000 bodies of water. The pond basin was created centuries ago for traditional carp pond farming and is now part of Germany's intangible cultural heritage. Its size and structure are best viewed from the Himmelsleiter (Stairway to Heaven), an architecturally spectacular observation tower. Hikers can also enjoy the best views of the landscape and birdlife from the viewing platforms in the Rußweiher Lake area near Eschenbach. At www.oberpfaelzerwald.de/wege-am-wasser you can find further information on a total of twelve enjoyable hikes along streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds – including a tour called "Between Heaven and Hell" and another that leads over seven bridges.

TAKE A BREAK AND IMMERSE YOURSELF

Intensely experience the allure of a vast lake – that's what the Eixendorfer Seeweg offers. While the 100-hectare reservoir "swallowed" a village and a railway embankment during its formation, it also gave rise to a diverse flora and fauna, as well as a popular area for water sports enthusiasts. The Crafts Museum and the Panorama Hotel on the lake invite you to take a break. Those seeking relaxation will find it on the Boulder Trail near Floß. Various themed stations encourage hikers to reflect on themselves and the surrounding nature. The water, which you encounter again and again on the circular tour, offers space and opportunity for contemplation, reflection, and relaxation. The natural scenery in the Doost Nature Reserve is particularly impressive, with its bizarre granite formations formed by water and erosion.

Learn all about this fascinating tradition that attracts thousands of visitors to the Alps every year.

Farewell to alpine summer: The colorful spectacle of the **Almabtrieb** (cattle drive)

As the days grow shorter and the leaves slowly change color, a special time in the Alps draws to a close: the summer on the alpine pastures. For both humans and animals, this marks the return to the valley. This traditional event, celebrated in many places as the Almabtrieb (cattle drive), is far more than just a cattle drive. It is a living testament to Alpine culture, a colorful celebration of thanksgiving, and a spectacle that captivates thousands of visitors every year. After cows, sheep, goats, and horses have spent around 100 days on the lush mountain pastures tending the landscape, they are ceremoniously brought down to the valley by their shepherds. There, not only the winter stable awaits, but also a cheering crowd, duly celebrating this ancient tradition.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CATTLE DRIVE REGIONAL NAMES

The name for this tradition varies by region. While in most parts of Germany and Austria, it is often referred to as the Almabtrieb (cattle drive), in the Allgäu region, it is often called Viehscheid (cattle separation). In Switzerland, the event is called Alpabzug or Alpabfahrt (mountain descent).

WHEN DOES THE CATTLE DRIVE TAKE PLACE?

The cattle drive usually takes place between mid-September and mid-October. The exact time depends on weather conditions, the condition of the pastures, and the onset of the cold spell. Dates are often only announced at relatively short notice, so it is advisable to check with local tourist offices for information.

WHY ARE THE ANIMALS DECORATED?

The elaborate decoration of the animals is a deeply rooted token of gratitude. It expresses joy and gratitude that the summer on the mountain pastures passed without any misfortunes or losses. The wreathed cow, often the lead animal of the herd, wears a magnificent headdress made of fir branches, flowers, colorful ribbons, and mirrors, which are intended to ward off evil spirits. However, if there has been an accident or a death during the summer, the decorations are omitted out of respect and mourning.

WHICH ANIMALS PARTICIPATE IN THE ALMABTRIEB (CATTLE DRIVE)?

It is mainly cows (cattle) that participate in the Almabtrieb

(cattle drive). But sheep, goats, and horses that have spent the summer on the high pastures are also driven down to the valley in festive decorations.

WHY DO THE ANIMALS GO TO THE ALPINE PASTURES IN THE FIRST PLACE?

In summer, the alpine pastures provide plenty of fresh, nutrient-rich grass and herbs, which are often not available in sufficient quantities in the valley. This promotes the health and robustness of the animals. At the same time, the grazing animals are important landscape maintainers, as their grazing prevents the alpine meadows from becoming overgrown and bushy.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KEEP IN MIND AS A SPECTATOR?

As a visitor, safety should be your top priority. Stay on the designated paths and keep a safe distance from the animals. Loud noises, sudden movements, or dogs running loose can frighten the animals. Arrive early to secure a good spot.

WHERE ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CATTLE DRIVES?

Here are some of the most famous places and countries for their impressive cattle drives:

• Germany (Upper Bavaria):

Bad Hindelang | Oberstdorf | Oberstaufen | Pfronten
Immenstadt | Gunzesried | Mittenwald

• Austria:

Reith im Alpbachtal | Mayrhofen im Zillertal | Achensee region (e.g., Pertisau, Gramai-Alm) | Wildschönau (Auffach)
Tannheimer Tal (e.g., Tannheim) | Filzmoos | Maishofen

• Switzerland:

Appenzellerland (Appenzell) | Engstligenalp | Freiburgerland

Immerse yourself in this authentic natural and cultural experience and be enchanted by the splendor of the decorated herds and the sound of the bells.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT?

Since dates and procedures are subject to change, we recommend that you contact the respective tourist information offices or visit their official websites for current information and exact dates.

| by Editor

The Romantic Road:

A GERMAN FAIRYTALE TRAIL FOR TRAVELERS

290

MILES OF SCENERY

From the vineyards of Franconia to the foothills of the Alps.

29

CHARMING TOWNS

Each with a unique story, from medieval walls to royal castles.

For many American travelers, the Romantic Road embodies the "quintessentially German" image of half-timbered houses, impressive cathedrals, and classic market squares. The name itself suggests an enchantment that many visitors experience when they see the medieval towns or the famous fairytale castle of Neuschwanstein.

The route offers a harmonious blend of nature, culture, art, and cuisine, appealing to history buffs, art lovers, festivalgoers, and outdoor adventurers alike.

Its early popularity among American soldiers and their families cemented its appeal as a source of authentic, traditional, and historic German experiences. It is not just a series of sights, but a carefully curated, comprehensive German experience that combines diverse cultural landscapes and historical eras within a manageable geographical corridor.

The Romantic Road, Germany's oldest and most popular holiday route, was established in 1950 to boost post-war tourism. It stretches 400 to 460 kilometers from Wuerzburg in the north to Fuessen in the south, connecting 29 charming towns and majestic castles. This route offers a wealth of European history, art, and culture and passes through diverse landscapes – from the Main River to the Franconian wine region, the Tauber Valley, the Nördlingen Ries crater, the Lechfeld Valley, and the Pfaffenwinkel region in the Alps.

Best time to visit

The spring and fall months (April, May, September, and October) are considered ideal times to visit. The weather is milder, and the cities are less crowded. In the fall, a visit can also be easily combined with Munich's Oktoberfest.

Accommodation options

The Romantic Road offers a variety of accommodations, from historic castles to cozy bed and breakfasts. Towns like Wuerzburg and Rothenburg ob der Tauber feature traditional hotels and family-run inns in the historic center. Dinkelsbuehl and Noerdlingen offer accommodations in their cobblestone streets. Augsburg, as a larger city, offers a wide range, including a small hostel in the Fuggerei. In Fuessen, there are hotels with Alpine views and options near Neuschwanstein Castle. Advance booking is strongly recommended, especially during peak season and at Christmas.

Hospitality and cuisine

Along the route, there's a mix of rustic inns and upscale gourmet restaurants serving regional and seasonal cuisine from Franconia, Baden, Württemberg, Swabia, and Upper Bavaria. Romantic **beer gardens** invite you to linger in the warmer months.

- **Franconian Specialties:** Fried or grilled sausages (Nuremberg or Ansbach bratwurst), "Blaue Zipfel" (sausages cooked in vinegar), and "Schäufele" (crispy roasted pork shoulder with dumplings) are typical. Carp is also a classic.
- **Swabian specialties:** "Maultaschen" (filled dumplings), "Spätzle" (egg noodles), and onion cake are local. "Kässpätzle" (cheese-covered spaetzle with fried onions) are especially popular.
- **Upper Bavarian specialties:** Leberkäse (pork sausage), Weißwurst (white sausage), roast pork, and veal shank are appreciated here.
- **Pastries and sweets:** The "Schneeball" (snowball) in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, "Brezn" (pretzels), and "Krapfen" (Berliner doughnuts) are popular treats.

Wuerzburg

The starting point, home to the Residenz Palace, a UNESCO site with the world's largest ceiling fresco. It's a masterpiece of Baroque art, painstakingly restored after WWII.

Dinkelsbuehl

Considered one of Germany's best-preserved medieval towns, as it survived WWII untouched. It offers a truly authentic glimpse into the past with its colorful half-timbered houses.



Visit Neuschwanstein Castle and immerse yourself in a world full of history and romance.



Wertheim, a picturesque town on the Romantic Road, with its iconic castle and colorful half-timbered houses along the Tauber River.

75

YEARS OF MAGIC
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oldest and most beloved
tourist route.



Fuessen on the Romantic Road
– where medieval charm meets
the majestic Alps. A breathtaking
sight that invites you to dream.



The Romantic Road is far more than just a scenic route through southern Germany; it is a carefully curated experience that not only meets but exceeds American travelers' expectations of a "fairytale Germany." The route offers a unique blend of historical authenticity, cultural depth, and scenic beauty, spanning 29 charming towns.

| by Editor



You can find much more
information and details for your
travel planning on the official
Romantic Road website at
www.romantischestrassen.de/en/



Photo Credit: Romantische Straße Touristik-Arbeitsgemeinschaft GbR (2)

Visit the enormous DEVIL'S CAVE!

Please note: In the Devil's Cave, there
are over 400 steps. Photography is al-
lowed only without flash!
Please stay with the group!

The residents of this region had named the
tremendous cave gorge the „Teufelsloch“
(Devil's Hole) hundreds of years ago. But
after the discovery, as one could see the
huge dimensions of the cave, it was called
„Teufelshöhle“, which means `Devil's
Cave`.

➤ „Devil's Hole“

is the first hall in the cave, is 30 feet high and
above it there are 50 feet of stone. 27 years

further there was a cave-in. In October 1922
the cave-explorer, a mining engineer called
Prof. Dr. Hans Brandt, gave the order to break
a passage through the cave-in. His
workers had to dig 30 feet before they found
the natural course of the cave. During the
next ten years the cave was extended to
one mile, which can be visited up to now.

Right behind the entrance, one can see the
first limestone- formations. The „Pope`s
Crown“, the „Organ“ and the „Curtain“.
They are between 10 000 and 12 000 years
old.

The limestones hanging from the ceiling are
called stalactites and the ones growing out
of the ground are the stalagmites. To build
up 1 mm of limestone it takes 13 years.
Next to our journey into „Devil's Cave“ is

Bears Grotto. Visitors can see even a com-
plete skeleton of a cave bear. The bear was
approximately 12 feet high and his weight
was 900 pounds. After passing the „Nibel-
lung Grotto“ the visitor enters the

➤ „Barbarossa Dome“.

In this hall one can see „Barbarossas Be-
ard“ which forms a fine waterfall. A stalag-
mite arising from the ground in the form of a
Pagoda Pillar „Emperor Barbarossa“ is the
most beautiful formation in the cavern and
it is 200 000 years old.

If the visitor looks downwards in the „Bar-
barossa Dome“ he can see the deepest
location of the cave: it is situated 230 feet
below the upper surface of the cavern. The
visitor has to go up „Mount Calvary“ and af-
ter he has reached the last step, he can see

the multi-colour illuminated „Crucifixion“ to
his right. After the „Three-Kaisers-Grotto“
and the „Witches Shaft“ the visitor enters the

➤ „Colossal Hall“.

This cave is 42 feet high and above it there
are 147 feet of stone. In this hall one can
find the two oldest limestones of `Devil's
Cave`. The first stalacmite resembles a
„tree“, the other one is called „Goliath“.
Their age is thought to be over 300 000
years.

Then one walks through the „Candle Hall“
and finally reaches the exit. As the exit is 82
feet higher, the visitor has to pass a romantic
gorge to get back to the entrance.

THANK YOU FOR VISITING!

Fascination Devil's Cave

Pottenstein/Fränkische Schweiz

Detailed information
for our guests
is available at the

Tourism Office
91278 Pottenstein
Phone: 09243-70841
www.pottenstein.de
www.teufelshoehle.de



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Franconian Wine Country:

The Franconian Wine Country, one of Germany's most fascinating wine regions, invites you to discover a unique combination of excellent wine, picturesque scenery, and rich culture. From the signature Bocksbeutel bottle to the diverse culinary delights – the Mainfranken region promises unforgettable experiences for every taste.

WHAT MAKES FRANCONIAN WINE COUNTRY SO SPECIAL

The uniqueness of the Franconian Wine Country lies in the harmonious interplay of its unique wines, the rolling hills along the Main River, and a deeply rooted wine culture. Wines with a distinctive minerality thrive here, originating from the diverse limestone, Keuper, and colored sandstone soils. The region is a paradise for lovers of authentic, terroir-influenced wines and also offers an oasis of peace and relaxation.

THE BOCKSBEUTEL: MORE THAN JUST A BOTTLE

The Bocksbeutel is an unmistakable trademark of the Franconian wine country. This traditional, flat, and bulbous bottle shape is unique worldwide and is exclusively permitted for Franconian quality wines. The Bocksbeutel is not only a visual highlight and an excellent distinguishing feature, but also a protected symbol of the high quality and regional origin of Franconian wines, especially the famous Silvaner wine. It embodies the perfect symbiosis of tradition and enjoyment.

EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY WINE: THE BEST PLACES

In the Franconian wine country, there are numerous opportunities to sample these fine wines. Cozy Häckerwirtschaften (wine taverns) and traditional Straußwirtschaften (temporary wine taverns in wineries), where winemakers offer their own wines and simple, hearty dishes, invite you to linger. Many renowned wineries open their doors for wine tastings and offer tours of their cellars. In the historic old towns, you will also find charming wine taverns and modern wine shops presenting a wide selection of Franconian wines. Particularly recommended are the wine festivals, which are celebrated from spring to fall in many wine-growing towns and offer a lively, authentic atmosphere.

CULINARY DISCOVERIES BEYOND WINE

In addition to the excellent wines, Franconian cuisine offers a wealth of other specialties. Try the hearty and savory Franconian bratwurst with cabbage, the crispy Schäufele (pork shoulder) with dumplings, or the savory onion cake, which pairs perfectly with young wine. Depending on the season, the famous Franconian asparagus also entices with its delicate aroma. Sweet temptations and traditional snacks make every stop a truly enjoyable experience.

CHARMING TOWNS AND PLACES TO VISIT

A visit to the Franconian Wine Country is incomplete without a stop at its charming towns and places:

- **WÜRZBURG:** The region's largest city is the cultural heart of the region, with the UNESCO World Heritage Site Residenz palace, the Marienberg Fortress, and lively wine festivals.

- **VOLKACH:** A picturesque town on the Main River, known for its historic old town, its excellent vineyards, and the idyllic Main Island.

- **IPHOFEN:** One of Franconia's best-preserved medieval towns with a complete city wall and excellent Silvaner wines.

- Smaller, idyllic wine-growing towns such as Randersacker, Sommerach, and Escherndorf with their authentic charm also invite you to explore them.



For more information on hiking trails, hosts, winemakers, and towns in the Franconian Wine Country, simply scan the QR code. Discover the region in depth!



BEST TIME TO VISIT AND ACTIVITIES

The best time to visit the Franconian Wine Country is from April to October. In spring, the vineyards bloom and the first wine festivals take place. Summer attracts with warm weather and numerous events, while fall is the exciting time of the grape harvest and the Federweißer (young wine) wine festivals.

The region is also a paradise for active vacationers: the Franconian Wine Country is ideal for hiking and cycling. The well-developed Main Cycle Path leads directly through the vineyards and idyllic river landscapes. Numerous well-marked hiking trails, such as the Franconian Red Wine Trail, the Wine Trail around Volkach, offer breathtaking views and the opportunity to experience nature up close.

Where Tradition Meets Pleasure

Marienberg Fortress in Wuerzburg is located just a stone's throw from the city center on the left bank of the Main River. It is surrounded by vineyards and overlooks the old university town with its domes, towers, and bridges.

For hiking enthusiasts, the Main Loop near Volkach is equally a treasure trove. Those who want to explore the Main Loop on foot have the perfect opportunity to do that thanks to a specially signposted network of hiking trails. Hike routes range from 1.7 to 15 kilometers in length.

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MEET BAVARIA



Summer Fun at Bulmare!

The summer season at Bulmare runs until September 15! Grab your discounted monthly and seasonal passes now at the front desk. Enjoy sun and water on our spacious lawn featuring a volleyball court, soccer field, table tennis, and a play-ground – perfect for families and friends.

SAVE THE DATE: On August 2, join our big anniversary celebration! We're marking the 75th anniversary of the Burglengenfeld Water Rescue Service and 20 years of Bulmare. Look forward to fun activities for all ages – including a surf simulator! We can't wait to celebrate with you.

Photo Credit: Irina_Evva – stock.adobe.com



We ♥ bathe!

Bulmare

The Wellness Spa

Daily 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Im Naabtalpark 44 · Burglengenfeld · Phone: 09471 60193-0 · www.bulmare.de

High above the Upper Palatinate Forest, perched on a striking 732-meter-high granite rock, sits the imposing Flossenbuerg Castle ruins. It is not only a landmark of the region visible from afar and a popular tourist destination, but also a place of profound historical significance, uniquely combining natural beauty with the weight of history. A trip here is a must for visitors to the Upper Palatinate Forest, not least because of the breathtaking panoramic view from the restored tower.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST: FROM FOUNDING TO DECLINE

The history of Flossenbuerg Castle stretches far back. Founded around 1100 by Count Berengar of Sulzbach, it served as a border fortification and checkpoint for trade routes due to its strategically important location near the Bohemian border. The original structure, often referred to as the "Feste Haus," consisted of a robust residential tower and a high circular wall, the so-called "Hoher Mantel" (High Mantle). Over the centuries, the castle frequently changed hands. Famous figures such as Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria, and the Bohemian kings were among its lords. In the 13th century, the castle underwent a significant expansion with the addition of a massive keep, whose impressive bossed ashlar masonry is still visible today. Later additions in the 16th century included improved gate systems and a mighty battery tower from 1505, which underscored the defensive strength of the complex.

The fateful year for the proud fortress was 1634. During the devastating Thirty Years' War, the castle, after having been abandoned around 1533, was set on fire by dragoons loyal to Sweden. This act sealed its fate; The castle gradually fell into ruin. Over the centuries, it became a quarry for the surrounding houses, which accelerated its further deterioration.

REVIVAL AND EXPLORATION: THE RUINS TODAY

Thanks to extensive excavations and restoration work between 1982 and 1992, the Flossenbuerg castle ruins were saved from complete decay. These efforts not only uncovered hidden details of the complex, such as a cellar vault and the remains of an oven, but also made the history of the site tangible again. Today, the imposing remains of the residential tower, the Hoher Mantel (High Mantle), the keep, and the gates are impressive witnesses to a bygone era. A viewing platform on the highest point of the rock invites visitors to survey the expanse of the Upper Palatinate Forest.

But the castle's fascination is not limited to its architecture. The castle hill itself has been designated a protected geo-site by the Bavarian State Office for the Environment. Here, you can admire the unique onion-shaped granite layering, a geological phenomenon that impressively illustrates the formation of the rock.

A JEWEL OF THE UPPER PALATINATE FOREST WITH A RICH HISTORY

DISCOVER THE FASCINATION OF THE FLOSSENBUERG CASTLE RUINS



The transformer building in Flossenbuerg Concentration Camp is a testament to the camp's infrastructure and the prisoners' forced labor.

A PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE: THE CONNECTION TO FLOSSENBUERG CONCENTRATION CAMP

A visit to the Flossenbuerg castle ruins inevitably leads to reflection on a dark chapter in German history. Just a few kilometers east of the castle, the Flossenbuerg concentration camp was located from 1938 to 1945. Thousands of prisoners, including prominent resistance fighters such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Wilhelm Canaris, and Hans Oster, were forced to labor in the surrounding granite quarries under inhumane conditions. Many lost their lives in the process.



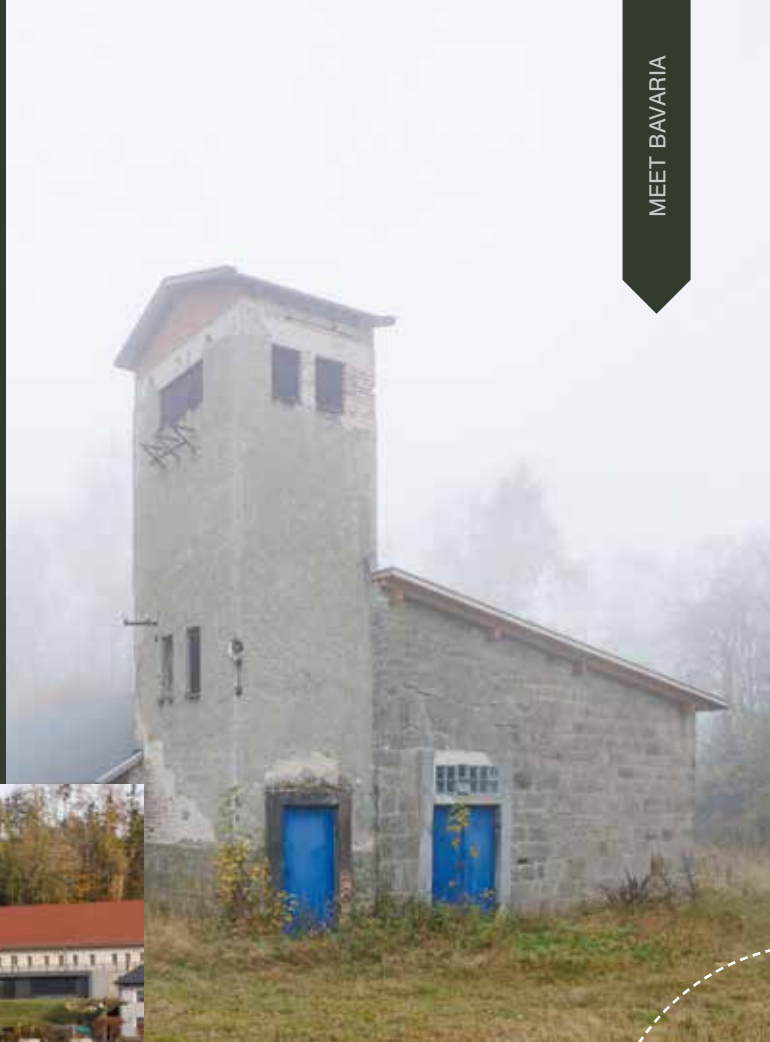
The stone building of the commandant's office in Flossenbuerg, constructed using the prisoners' forced labor, was the center of power in the concentration camp. Used for various purposes after the war, it now serves as an education center.

Today, the Flossenbuerg Concentration Camp Memorial is an important place of remembrance, education, and a warning. The close proximity of the historic fortified castle and the memorial site creates a unique and moving atmosphere that encourages visitors to reflect on the past and contemplate the meaning of freedom and human dignity. The history of Flossenbuerg is inextricably linked to the local granite deposits and the associated industries, which served both the castle during its construction and later the concentration camp.

VISITOR INFORMATION: FLOSSENBUERG CASTLE RUINS

The Flossenbuerg Castle Ruins are freely accessible at all times and promise a worthwhile excursion. The moderate climb to the castle hill takes about 10 to 15 minutes and leads through a charming natural landscape. For more in-depth information about the castle and the history of local stone quarrying, a visit to the Castle and Stonemason Museum in Flossenbuerg is recommended. Group tours can be arranged through the Flossenbuerg municipal administration.

The Flossenbuerg Castle Ruins are more than just a historic building; they are a place that invites you to marvel at nature, reflect on history, and pause for a moment. Experience for yourself the impressive combination of picturesque landscape, fascinating architecture, and a moving past.



HIKES AROUND FLOSSENBUERG



Away from the granite, Flossenbuerg and the wider Upper Palatinate Forest offer a wealth of trails that focus on scenic beauty, natural monuments, and challenging distances.

- **Silberhütte-Waldnaabquelle-Havran-Schellenberg:** A 9.9 km tour that combines many natural highlights of the Upper Palatinate Forest, such as the Entenbühl and the Havran/Rabenberg, with panoramic views.
- **Silberhütte - Hubertus Chapel - Havran Observation Tower - Old Gehenhammer Mill - Schellenberg Castle - Silberhütte:** A 13.7 km moderately difficult circular trail with attractive stops and refreshment options.
- **Flossenbuerg Panorama Trail with the Center of Central Europe:** A 4.8 km scenic circular trail with historical background that leads to the "Center of Central Europe."
- **Havran Loop:** A 17.8 km moderately difficult hike that leads to the Havran lookout mountain in the Czech Republic, offering sweeping views of the Bavarian Forest.
- **Tour at the Center of Central Europe (Hohenstein/Haselstein):** A 7.7 km moderately difficult hike around Hohenstein, allowing you to discover the Haselstein Castle ruins.
- **Doost Nature Reserve:** Known for its countless, man-sized granite boulders in the Girnitz Riverbed. It offers a unique geological experience.

COOKED VEAL TAFELSPITZ

WITH HÖRSERADISH SAUCE

PREPARATION

VEAL TAFELSPITZ:

Wash, peel, and roughly dice the vegetables. Wash the meat, then place it in a large pot with plenty of water, the vegetables, juniper berries, bay leaves, salt, pepper, and nutmeg and simmer gently until tender (approx. 2 hours). Remove the veal Tafelspitz from the stock and keep warm. Strain the stock.

HORSERADISH SAUCE:

Dice the onion, sauté in the butter, add the flour, and continue to sauté until translucent. Then pour the roux with 300 ml of stock and the cream, add the horseradish (peel fresh horseradish and grate it on a vegetable grater), simmer briefly, and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg (if necessary, strain the sauce through a sieve). Slice the meat and serve with the sauce.

SIDE DISH SUGGESTIONS

Veal Tafelspitz with horseradish sauce is best served with light, classic side dishes that emphasize the tender, delicately flavored nature of the dish. Here is a selection of popular Bavarian and seasonally appropriate side dishes:

MAIN SIDE DISHES

- Boiled potatoes – the traditional accompaniment, simple and perfect for soaking up the sauce.
- Parsley potatoes – lightly flavored and pretty in summer.
- Bread dumplings – soft and absorbent, especially if you serve some broth with the boiled beef.
- Fresh farmhouse bread or baguette – especially if you serve the boiled beef cold.
- Butter pretzel or pretzel stick – a light beer garden twist.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg veal Tafelspitz
- Juniper berries
- Bay leaves
- Vegetables (celery, carrots, onions, leeks)
- Salt
- Pepper
- Nutmeg
- Horseradish stick or 5 tbsp. horseradish
- Onion
- 30 g butter
- 30 g flour
- 200 ml cream

FRESH VEGETABLE OR SALAD SIDE DISHES

- Creamed savory cabbage or creamed spinach – tender vegetables that pair well with horseradish.
- Cucumber salad with dill – cooling and refreshing, ideal on warm days.
- Leaf salad with herb vinaigrette – e.g., with lettuce, radishes, chives.

| by **Editor**

Opening hours

daily 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.



FEAST & ENJOY

Beer garden time in the BräuWirt Weiden

A visit to the BräuWirt in Weiden is always an experience. Whether in the idyllic courtyard, at the cozy tables in the middle of the old town, or in the historical ambiance across four floors – this is the perfect place to enjoy summer.

Bavarian delicacies made from regional ingredients and freshly brewed Zoigl beer invite you to enjoy. Alongside the regular menu, our guests can look forward to a weekly changing menu and a special recommendation menu. The inviting rooms also provide the perfect setting for celebrations of any size, whether a small gathering or a

festive event with up to 250 guests. The overall concept of regionality, freshness, and Bavarian hospitality promises wonderful hours. The heart of the establishment beats in the brewery cellar, where light and dark Zoigl beer, Zoigl wheat beer, and seasonal fest or bock beers are brewed.

These beers can be enjoyed not only in the tavern but also at home: For your private celebration, BräuWirt offers beers in kegs and party kegs, and you can even rent the necessary equipment here.

Cheers!

ORIGINAL "OCHSENFETZEN":

THE TASTE OF BAVARIA THAT THRILLS



RECIPE FOR BEEF SHREDS

(INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE)

- 600 g ribeye or rump steak (alternatively: rump or roast beef)
- 2 onions
- 4 crusty breads (alternatively: baguette or roll)
- Cocktail sauce
- Beef rub (e.g., Magic Dust or Texas Rub)
- Clarified butter
- Salt and pepper

PREPARATION

1. **Prepare the meat:** Cut the ribeye or rump steak into wafer-thin slices the day before.
2. **Marinate:** Place the meat slices in a sealable container. Mix them with the beef rub, salt, and a little oil and let them marinate overnight in the refrigerator.
3. **Slice the onions:** Slice the onions into thin rings.
4. **Preheat the grill:** Preheat the grill to high temperature.
5. **Brown the ox strips:** Briefly and quickly fry the ox strips on both sides until they are noticeably browned. Depending on your preference, they can still be slightly pink on the inside.
6. **Sauté the onions:** Meanwhile, sauté the onion rings in a little clarified butter in a pan until they are translucent and lightly browned. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. **Prepare the crusty bread:** Cut the crusty bread open and spread the underside generously with cocktail sauce.
8. **Top and enjoy:** Spread the seared ox strips on the buttered underside of the bread and top with the sautéed onions. Cover and enjoy immediately!

OKTOBERFEST'S FAVORITE SHAVED BEEF SERVED ON A TRADITIONAL GERMAN ROLL – WAFER-THIN, TENDER, AND GRILLED TO PERFECTION IN SECONDS: EXPERIENCE THE INCOMPARABLE PLEASURE OF BEEF THAT COMBINES TRADITION AND PURE FLAVOR.

Ochsenfetzen (sliced oxen) are among the most famous specialties at the Oktoberfest in Munich – this year they are also available at the Volksfest in Grafenwoehr. At the Oktoberfest, the ox is traditionally cooked on a spit for hours until the meat is extremely tender. From this whole ox, the wafer-thin slices, known as "Ochsenfetzen," are then cut directly from the spit and often served in a roll with sauce – the famous "Ochsen-schwein" (ox sandwich).

Ochsenfetzen are wafer-thin slices of tender, well-aged beef, usually from the leg, rump, or loin. Despite the name, they don't necessarily come from oxen, but often from young bulls or heifers. Thus, the term "ox shreds" refers less to a specific cut of meat than to the thinness of the cut and the method of preparation. Meat for ox shreds is often offered by local butchers as prepared, marinated cuts of meat, ideal for quick cooking.

ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION OF OUR RECIPE



The wafer-thin slices of meat can be used in a variety of ways – whether as quick "blitz steaks," as a topping for fresh salads, with oriental spices, or in a classic bun with sauce.

Other dishes also rely on thinly sliced, quickly cooked beef – such as Philly cheesesteak, bulgogi, or shaved steak. But this Bavarian classic brings its own unique, rustic and authentic character.

In summary, ox shreds are an uncomplicated yet delicious way to enjoy beef – ideal for those who like it quick and flavorful.

Wanna see how it's done? Scan the QR code and watch the full video on Instagram! Learn the trick. Like it. Share it with your grill crew.



| by Christoph Rauh and Matthias Plankl

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