

BAVARIANTIMES

News & Magazine for Grafenwoehr | Vilseck | Hohenfels

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55 YEARS LATER:

Pegnitz & U.S. Army Remember 37 Fallen Soldiers



PEGNITZ, Germany – Fifty-five years after a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook crashed near Pegnitz, both the German and American communities gathered at the site to honor the 37 Soldiers who lost their lives and reflect on a tragedy that remains deeply woven into the history of the region, Aug. 18, 2026.

The memorial service brought together local residents and U.S. Soldiers from Grafenwoehr and Ansbach, continuing a tradition of remembrance that has endured for more than five decades.

On Aug. 18, 1971, the crash became the deadliest incident involving American troops in West Germany since the end of World War II. Today, the memorial stands as a reminder of the lives lost and the enduring relationship between the U.S. Army and the people of Pegnitz.

For the people of Pegnitz, the memory of the crash is not simply a historical event recorded in books or marked on a calendar. Mayor Wolfgang Nierhoff said many residents who were alive in 1971 still remember exactly where they were when the helicopter went down.

“For the inhabitants, the residents of Pegnitz, this is a little bit like a 9/11 moment for you Americans, because everyone who lived in 1971 knows exactly what he or she did on that day, at that moment,” said Nierhoff. The comparison reflects how deeply the tragedy remains connected to the collective memory of the community.

The memorial service also represented the U.S. Army’s responsibility to remember those who came before. Col. David Henderson, commander of the 41st Field Artillery Brigade, said honoring fallen Soldiers is an essential part of the Army’s history and its professional identity.

“Regardless if it’s a training accident or if it’s a combat casualty, it’s the American Army’s responsibility to remember the fallen,” said Henderson. “If you don’t remember the fallen, you don’t respect their service.”

For Henderson, the ceremony is also an opportunity to show younger generations of Soldiers how to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

That lesson of remembrance extends beyond the Army itself. Maj. Preston Dihle, deputy commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, said events such as the Pegnitz memorial provide Soldiers with another way to understand the history of those who served before them. He also emphasized that the continued ceremony is driven by the local community, showing the lasting impact the crash had on Pegnitz.

“It’s not a U.S. Army driven-thing; it’s a community-driven thing,” said Dihle. “We’re a part of their history.”

The relationship between Pegnitz and the U.S. Army has continued to grow alongside the annual remembrance. Soldiers from across the region joined residents at this year’s ceremony, where a Chinook rotor blade serves as a physical reminder of the aircraft and the Soldiers whose lives ended there. The blade was presented to the city by the 12th CAB in 2021, further connecting today’s Army aviation community with the history of the crash. Additionally, 41st FAB has an official community partnership with the city.

More than half a century later, the significance of the Pegnitz memorial reaches beyond the circumstances of the crash itself. It represents a shared commitment by German and American communities to remember the 37 Soldiers as people, Soldiers and members of families who should not be forgotten. For Pegnitz, the tragedy remains part of its own history, while for today’s Army, it serves as a reminder that honoring the fallen is a responsibility passed from one generation to the next.

As Soldiers and residents gathered again in 2026, the message remained the same, 55 years later, they are still remembered.

| by **Cpl. Thomas Dixon**

FAMILY DAY AT ROTMAIN-CENTER BAYREUTH: MUSIC, FAMILY FUN, AND HALLOWEEN MAGIC

Fall brings a host of special experiences for the whole family to Rotmain-Center Bayreuth. With a musical Family Day and an atmospheric Halloween special, the center invites visitors to explore, experience, and enjoy the festivities.

On September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., singer-songwriter Pietro Basile will be visiting Rotmain-Center.

Singer-songwriter Pietro Basile has carved out a place for himself in the entertainment industry with an impressive career. He rose to fame with songs such as "Gianna," "Buongiorno," and "Hey Macarena," as well as successful collaborations with Sarah Engels and Andreas Gabalier.

Visitors can look forward to a varied program featuring the singer at our popular Family Days.

Pietro Basile discovered his passion for music at the age of five. He has already toured across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Pietro Basile will be a featured part of our Family Day on September 26, 2026 (10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). The artist will engage personally with the audience; in addition to providing musical entertainment, Pietro will connect with his fans through interviews and an autograph session.

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USAG BAVARIA

U.S. Army Col. Derek Drouin, left, incoming commander of U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, receives the unit guidon from Wesley Leisinger, Chief of Staff, Installation Management Command-Europe, during a change of command ceremony at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, July 14, 2026. USAG Bavaria is home to the 7th Army Training Command at Tower Barracks, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment at Rose Barracks, the Joint Multinational Readiness Center at Hohenfels, the George C. Marshall European Center at Garmisch, and many other tenant units and support organizations. The garrison provides quality services and infrastructure to the units, service members, civilians and Family members.

FARES FLANAGAN WELL, WELCOMES DROUIN DURING CHANGE OF COMMAND

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Spectators from across U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, its partner towns and beyond bade farewell to the garrison commander and welcomed a new garrison commander during a ceremony July 14, 2026 at the Parade Field at Tower Barracks at Grafenwöhr, Germany.

The change of command ceremony represented the official parting of Col. Stephen C. Flanagan and the official onboarding of Col. Derek G. Drouin to the post.

Wesley Leisinger, chief of staff of Installation Management Command – Europe, presided over the ceremony.

The sun shone through a high set of checkered clouds and through a gossamer haze onto the parade field, lined on the north side with U.S. state flags and with canopies and chairs on the south. Flanking the flags were different vehicles representing two of the major directorates of the garrison: Construction vehicles for Public Works and fire engines and military police vehicles for the Emergency Services. An easterly wind rustled the trees, played through the canopy fabric, waved the flags and cooled the spectators.

Soldiers presented flowers to the commanders' wives, first to Carolina Flanagan, the outgoing commander's spouse, who received red roses, signifying loyalty and affection and sorrow at her and her Family's departure. Emily Drouin received yellow rosebuds, signifying friendship and new beginnings.

In the middle of the Parade Field was the color guard, the incoming and outgoing commanders, USAG Bavaria Command Sgt. Maj. James A. Boersma, and Leisinger. Boersma passed the garrison guidon to Flanagan.

Flanagan passed the guidon to Leisinger, representing the official relinquishment of his command.

Leisinger then passed the guidon to Drouin, representing Drouin's official assumption of command.

Once Drouin passed the guidon back to Boersma, Leisinger took the podium and the commanders took their seats in the audience.

"Today's ceremony is not simply about one commander passing off the colors to another," Leisinger said. "The Army has always understood great organizations cannot depend upon one individual. They depend upon leaders who prepare others to succeed, who build strong teams, and who leave an organization better than they found it.

"People remember," continued Leisinger, talking about the qualities of leadership and to Flanagan. "They remember how a leader made them feel. They remember whether they were trusted, whether they were talented, whether they believed their contributions mattered. I remember the past two years, you built that kind of organization here in Bavaria."

Flanagan took command of USAG Bavaria in August 2024. The garrison is comprised of four major communities – at Grafenwöhr and Vilseck, in Hohenfels and at Garmisch-Partenkirchen – spread hundreds of kilometers from each other across the German state of Bayern, from which the garrison derives its name. The garrison supports some of the largest training complexes in Europe.

Leisinger cited that even as the operational tempo across Europe was accelerating and as the garrison undertook new missions as an organization, Flanagan never lost his focus on the Soldiers, Families or mission partners.



"Of the five commands I've had in my career, this was by far the hardest one," Flanagan said, reflecting on his time when he took the podium.

Flanagan spent most of his remarks thanking those who made the mission a success, including the tenant units, IMCOM – Europe and the community partners. He spent the longest time thanking the directorates and supporting offices who comprise the garrison.

"Thank you for the honor of a lifetime," he said to all assembled. "I hope this is not goodbye but 'Auf Wiedersehen.'"

Drouin began his military career in 2003, commissioning as an engineer officer and serving with the 20th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, at Fort Hood, Texas. Throughout his career, he has deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel / Resolute Support in Afghanistan, Operation Spartan Shield in Kuwait and Operation Assure, Deter, and Reinforce in Poland. He holds master's degrees in public administration, operational art and science, and strategic arts.

Leisinger, in his remarks, spoke of Drouin's accomplishments.

"You have already demonstrated in your career that you are a leader who embraces complex challenges," he said of Drouin. "From leading Soldiers to combat, to commanding at various levels, to developing military leaders through advanced military studies, you have consistently demonstrated character, judgment and continual professionalism."

Flanagan's next assignment is as the director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, New York.

Drouin, as he spoke to the gathering, outlined his vision for the garrison: continue to improve the garrison's unique capabilities; build and maintain relationships and strengthen the community; and provide exceptional support to the units, Families Soldiers and retirees.

"Thank you all for being here today," Drouin said. "I look forward to serving with you."

After Drouin concluded his speech, the black powder shooters (Volsbacher Böllerschützen) fired two volleys. Then the assemblage sang the Army Song.

Those who attended the event lined up to wish Flanagan a final farewell. Drouin hosted guests at a reception at the Tower View Conference Center.

| by **Bryan Gatchell**



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NEWS BRIEFS: Our Garrison in Pictures

At a Glance: Key Updates from U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria

A compact overview of the latest events at U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria – captured in pictures. From community events to military news: Our news briefs inform you about what's happening at the garrison.

| by **Editor**



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Thomas Dixon

7TH ARMY NCOA CLASS 08-26 GRADUATION

- ▲ The 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy (7th Army NCOA) hosts their Basic Leaders Course graduation ceremony in the Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Aug. 12, 2026. 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. Kammen Taylor

7TH ARMY NCOA CLASS 08-26 COMMANDANT'S RUN

- ▲ Students, leaders and instructors of the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy conduct a four-mile run for the Commandant's Run in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Aug 11, 2026. 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 Cpl. Thomas Dixon

MEMORIAL SERVICE HELD IN PEGNITZ FOR FALLEN SOLDIERS

- ▲ U.S. Soldiers stationed in Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Ansbach attend a memorial service honoring service members from 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, and 4th Aviation Company, 15th Aviation Group, who were casualties in a 1971 Chinook CH-47 crash in Pegnitz, Germany, Aug. 18, 2026. On Aug. 18, 1971, 37 Soldiers died near Pegnitz, Germany, resulting in the most casualties involving American troops in West Germany since the end of World War II.

STRONGER TOGETHER: ENGINEERING TEAMS MODERNIZE GRAFENWOEHR RAILHEADS

- ▼ A headwall is under construction on June 5 for the tracks and railheads repair project in Grafenwoehr, Germany. 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.





Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jermyiah Pangelinan

VILSECK HEALTH CLINIC CASUALTY EVACUATION

- ▲ U.S. Soldiers and Civilians from the U.S. Army Health Clinic Vilseck train with Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, in a simulated casualty evacuation in Vilseck, Germany, Aug. 20, 2026. U.S. Army Health Clinic Vilseck is located on Rose Barracks at the southern tip of the Grafenwoehr Training Area and provides quality ambulatory care for more than 15,000 Soldiers and their families, while coordinating and facilitating inpatient and specialty care with nearby German host-nation medical facilities and DoD partners.



Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Griffin Payne (2)



Photo Credit: Matthias Plankl

65TH GERMAN-AMERICAN VOLKSFEST STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY TIES AT GRAFENWOEHR

- ▲ With the ribbon cutting and the traditional beer tapping, the 65th German-American Volksfest at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany was officially and festively opened. Bavarian Minister of the Interior Joachim Herrmann, along with Garrison Commander Col. Derek G. Drouin and Brig. Gen. Terry R. Tillis, officially kicked off the festival weekend. Barbara Pueschel displays commemorative beer steins during the German-American Volksfest. The commemorative steins represent the enduring traditions and shared history celebrated by the German and American communities. Community members gather near food vendors and amusement attractions. The festival combined German and American food, entertainment and traditions to foster meaningful community engagement.



OPERATIONAL READINESS TRAINING COMPLEX IN GRAFENWOEHR

- ▲ The first buildings rise on the construction site for the Operational Readiness Training Complex in Grafenwoehr. 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.

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Photo Credit: U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jamie Robinson

MEDDAC BAVARIA HHC CONDUCTS CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

- ▲ U.S. Army Capt. Mendrix I. Punzalan, the outgoing Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, Medical Department Activity Bavaria, relinquishes command to Capt. Joshua M. Godsey, the incoming commander, during a change of command ceremony at MEDDAC Bavaria headquarters in Vilseck, Germany, June 26, 2026. Col. Colin Frament, MEDDAC Bavaria commander, presided over the ceremony, which symbolized the transfer of authority and responsibility for the company.

USAG BAVARIA 'TOPS OUT' FORTHCOMING SEWAGE TREATMENT BUILDING AT HOHENFELS



- ▲ HOHENFELS, Germany – A construction crane holds a ceremonial "crown" above the newly completed roof of an under-construction water treatment facility building Aug. 12, 2026 at U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria – Hohenfels, Germany. The new building is part of many renovations taking place at the community's water treatment facility.

GTA RANGE OPERATIONS COORDINATES TRAINING FOR U.S. AND ALLIED FORCES

- ▼ U.S. Army Capt. Justin Boggs, left, the Grafenwoehr Training Area Range Operations safety officer assigned to the 7th Army Training Command, checks a map of the training areas in Grafenwoehr, Germany, July 28, 2026. Range Operations coordinates training across the Grafenwoehr Training Area while maintaining a safe environment for U.S. and allied forces. The team works closely with unit planners, 7th Army Training Command headquarters, the International Training Branch and command safety personnel to review training plans, validate surface danger zones and ensure training events meet established safety standards before execution.



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

A NEW HOME FOR K9 HEROES: MILITARY WORKING DOG KENNEL OPENS AT USAG BAVARIA

- ▼ The 131st Military Police Detachment, 18th Military Police Brigade, marked a major milestone Aug. 19, 2026 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of its new military working dog kennel at Tower Barracks.



Photo Credit: Ella Haendel

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LT. COL. TYANDRE ELLIS

TAKES HELM OF USAG BAVARIA DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC WORKS

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria reached an important milestone as Lt. Col. Tyandre Ellis officially took over leadership of the Directorate of Public Works during an Assumption of Charter ceremony July 7.

Ellis is one of four individuals selected to pilot this initiative across the Army and the first military director to lead USAG Bavaria's DPW in more than 15 years.

During the ceremony, former U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Commander Col. Stephen Flanagan emphasized the importance of the moment while recognizing the dedication of the DPW workforce.

"Today is a truly historic day for U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria and the Army Installation Management Command," Flanagan said.

He praised DPW employees for maintaining one of the Army's most complex overseas installations supporting operations across Tower Barracks, Rose Barracks, Hohenfels and Garmisch, the directorate enables training and readiness for U.S. forces and NATO allies throughout Europe.

"You are the garrison's warfighters. You fight the daily battles against aging infrastructure, severe weather and resource constraints to keep this installation – from Grafenwoehr to Garmisch – running," Flanagan said. "Thank you for your unwavering dedication."

Flanagan also highlighted the team's recent achievements, noting that USAG Bavaria was ranked the number two Installation Management Command garrison worldwide and the top overseas garrison.

Ellis brings more than 24 years of military experience to the position. His career includes service as an enlisted Soldier, combat engineer and engineering leader with multiple operational assignments, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Most recently, he worked at U.S. European Command as chief of the Engineer Plans and Posture Branch, where he helped shape infrastructure planning and strategic posture across Europe.

Addressing the workforce for the first time as DPW director, Ellis emphasized that although his background is in operational engineering, his success will depend on the knowledge and expertise of the people who make up the directorate.

"I am not DPW. You are the experts, you have the expertise, you are the drive – you are DPW," Ellis said. "My role is to provide

you with the necessary purpose, direction, communication and motivation to excel, while continuously improving our team." Ellis said his leadership would be based on transparency, reliability, professionalism and accountability, while ensuring the directorate continues delivering reliable support to Soldiers, Families and tenant organizations across the garrison.

He also highlighted the strategic importance of the organization's work, explaining that installation infrastructure is essential to military readiness.

"Brave Soldiers win battles, but logistics and infrastructure win wars," Ellis said. "You build the foundation that allows the warfighter to win." The ceremony also recognized the support of Ellis' family and welcomed them to the Bavaria community. "I am incredibly grateful that this next chapter allows us to stay in Germany and plant our boots right here in Grafenwoehr – because as we are quickly learning, life is truly better in Bavaria."

Ellis thanked Army leaders, mentors and the Engineer Regiment for their trust and support, describing the assignment as a valuable opportunity to further develop his leadership while continuing to serve Soldiers across the European region.

Editor's note: Col. Stephen Flanagan relinquished command of U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria on July 14, 2026.

| by Noah Reed,
U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Public Affairs Intern

Lt. Col. Tyandre Ellis officially took over leadership of the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Directorate of Public Works during an Assumption of Charter ceremony July 7.



GERMANY OFFICIALLY ADOPTS GARMISCH MILITARY POLICE LIAISON-PENNE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF WEAPONS LAW

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany – In a breakthrough for preventive law enforcement and international diplomacy, German legal and government authorities have officially cleared and adopted an English translation of the German Weapon Law (Waffengesetz) guide, developed right here at the U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria – Garmisch Provost Marshal Office.

The achievement is being hailed by military leadership as a critical turning point that will fundamentally change how English-speaking personnel navigate host nation legal waters.

This development is highly important to the USAG Bavaria-Garmisch community because Garmisch is a unique, high-profile hub where strict host-nation laws directly intersect with a revolving international community, said Phil Merchant, USAG Bavaria – Garmisch deputy garrison manager.

The massive undertaking, which required months of meticulous coordination beginning December 2025, was spearheaded by Veronika Neumann, a Garmisch military police language specialist and liaison administrator. Working closely with the provost marshal and German authorities, Neumann successfully navigated the dense complexities of German jurisprudence to secure official publishing clearance.

What started as a localized initiative to protect U.S. personnel has quickly evolved into a nationwide standard. German authorities announced that Neumann's English translation is being distributed to international embassies, major airports, domestic media outlets, and official Polizei web platforms. The practical rollout is already underway. Prominent law enforcement bodies, such as the Deutsche Polizeigewerkschaft (DPoLG) Berlin, have featured the new guidance on their official website and social media outlets at <https://www.dpolg.berlin/>.

MITIGATING THE TRANSIT FRICTION POINT

For years, one of the most persistent legal friction points for U.S. service members, contractors, and Families traveling through major transit hubs like the Munich Airport has been accidental infractions of Germany's strict weapon regulations.

Unlike the United States, German law tightly restricts items that many Americans carry daily without a second thought. Common locking pocketknives, specific civilian multitools, and even stray pieces of live ammunition left at the bottom of a tactical backpack can trigger immediate, severe legal consequences at airport security checkpoints.



"By standardizing and widely distributing this guidance, we are directly addressing this vulnerability," said Maj. Carrie Fermin, the community provost marshal, during a high-level coordination meeting with senior German Polizei officials. "This is proactive force protection. We are giving our personnel the exact blueprint they need to stay compliant before they ever step foot in a German airport."

'UNPRECEDENTED' LEVEL OF TRUST

Beyond the immediate legal benefits for travelers, military officials emphasize that the national adoption of the document represents a profound strategic milestone in U.S.-German relations.

Command leadership stated that the project has fostered an "unprecedented level of trust and operational synergy" between American military law enforcement and host nation Polizei counterparts. By trusting an element of the Provost Marshal Office to author the definitive English translation of their own sensitive legal statutes, German authorities have signaled a deep, integrated partnership.



Information on the German Weapons Act:

The Weapons Act (WaffG, latest update: July 17, 2025) applies to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany. This poster serves to identify some of the most common weapons and dangerous objects and to enable appropriate measures to be taken. In addition, regulations on weapon-free zones and the right of assembly must be observed. Scan the QR code to learn more.



| by USAG Bavaria Directorate of Emergency Services



EXPLORE LOCAL HISTORY: DISCOVER GRAFENWOEHR'S AMERICAN-GERMAN HERITAGE

CHECK OUT UNIQUE MILITARY ARTIFACTS, HISTORIC TRAINING AREA INSIGHTS, AND A PIANO ONCE PLAYED BY THE KING OF ROCK 'N' ROLL HIMSELF.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – The Culture and Military Museum (Kultur- und Militärmuseum) features an exhibition – unique in Germany—that illustrates the evolution of the military training area and the coexistence of Germans and Americans. Images, films, and artifacts tell the story of the displacement of former villages, the construction of the camp, the World War I era (including the prisoner-of-war camp), the Wehrmacht period, the bombing raids, and the arrival of American forces. The military section even displays an original barrel segment from Hitler's "Dora" super-heavy railway gun. The upper floor of the military section focuses on the lives of soldiers – their experiences, the allure of military service, and their fates – documenting the evolution of uniforms from the colorful "old-style" tunics to modern combat gear.

MUSEUM IN THE HISTORIC *KASTENHAUS*

With the help of professional museum designers and the dedicated efforts of volunteers, members of the local history association comprehensively modernized and revamped the exhibition in 2015. The exhibits span a wide range of topics: from the town's founding in 1361, religious life, traditional crafts, and agriculture, through the rearmament of the Nazi era, to the German-American coexistence of today. Elvis Presley, perhaps the most famous American soldier, was stationed in Grafenwoehr; the grand piano he played during a concert at the legendary Micky Bar is also part of the new exhibition. All texts and interactive media stations in the museum are bilingual (German and English).

The museum complex is housed in a new exhibition hall, the historic Kastenhaus (a granary dating back to 1532), and the Torschusterhaus, all located right by the town pond. The Lower Gate (Unteres Tor) – once part of the town's fortifications – formerly stood next to the Torschusterhaus. On April 21, 1945, it

The Cultural and Military Museum, located by the town pond in Grafenwoehr's historic old town, offers fascinating insights into regional history.



Discover historical exhibitions and the original grand piano from the Mickey Bar, which Elvis Presley played.

MASTER YOUR POST'S HISTORY: GRAB THE GRAFENWOEHR BOOK

"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 covers the Museum of Culture and Military History. "Grafenwoehr Training Area, Yesterday – Today – Edition 2024" is available in bookstores, in the military museum 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."



was blown up by American forces to allow the passage of tanks and heavy equipment.

The Cultural and Military Museum is open on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Group tours are available at any time. From April to October, the local history association offers a monthly tour through the military training area.

| by Gerald Morgenstern



For more information and opening hours for the Grafenwoehr Museum, please visit the website at www.museumgrafenwoehr.de



Kultur- und
Militärmuseum
GRAFENWOEHR

Barbecue season is in full swing, but diet isn't the only thing that can put a strain on the stomach.

HEARTBURN - AN UNDERESTIMATED RISK FACTOR

(DJD). The barbecue was lovely, and the sausages and other treats tasted delicious – yet no sooner are you in bed than a burning sensation begins behind the breastbone. For many people, heartburn and acid reflux are bothersome, everyday nuisances. New data now reveal that diet is often not the only factor involved. A recent survey of 1,001 people aged 35 to 65 suffering from reflux symptoms shows that many experience recurring issues. Women report regular or even chronic symptoms more frequently than men.

The Abdomen Reacts Sensitive to Stress

Respondents identified acidic foods and beverages (59 percent) as the primary triggers, followed by spicy or fatty foods (51 percent) and heavy meals (49 percent). Surprisingly, stress also ranks high on the list: 39 percent identify it as a personal trigger—ranking even higher than late-night meals or alcohol. This aspect has also been scientifically researched.

A study involving 439 medical students revealed a clear pattern: the higher the stress level, the more frequently reflux symptoms occurred. This makes sense, as the stomach often reacts sensitively when the mind is under pressure.

DESIRE FOR RAPID RELIEF

Those who cite stress as a trigger primarily describe personal pressures, conflicts, mental stress, and sleep deprivation. However, hormonal changes can also play a role: around one in five women aged 50 to 59 identifies menopause as a cause or aggravating factor for their symptoms. While triggers vary widely, there is a consensus regarding treatment: 84 percent expect a heartburn remedy to provide rapid, noticeable relief. For acute symptoms, over-the-counter antacids can neutralize stomach acid. Riopan, for example, contains the active ingredient magaldrate and belongs to the class of layered-lattice antacids. It can neutralize excess stomach acid as needed, contributing to rapid and long-lasting relief.

When should you see a doctor?

Frequent heartburn should be evaluated by a doctor. This is particularly important if symptoms occur several times a week or are accompanied by difficulty swallowing, weight loss, or pain. You can also take steps yourself to prevent it; for instance, eating smaller meals, drinking plenty of still water or tea, allowing sufficient time between dinner and bedtime, and practicing regular relaxation exercises can often help.

Photo Credit: DJD/Dr. Kade/graphicswizd/123RF



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The bristles of interdental brushes fill the entire gap between teeth, allowing them to reach hard-to-access areas and clean nooks and crannies on the tooth surfaces.

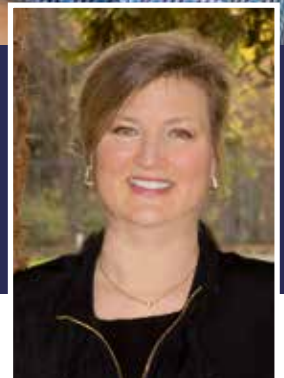
THE OFTEN-OVERLOOKED DETAIL IN DENTAL CARE

DENTAL HEALTH DAY: Why Brushing Alone Isn't Enough



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BRACES AND INVISALIGN

(DJD). Chewing is something we usually do without a second thought. When eating a breakfast roll or a snack during a break, hardly anyone considers that this physical act exercises the jaw and muscles, prepares the body for digestion, and contributes significantly to overall health and quality of life. Dental Health Day on September 25th – featuring the motto "Health Begins in the Mouth – Chew Your Way to Fitness!" – serves as a reminder of the importance of proper chewing at any age, and highlights a crucial detail many people overlook in their dental care routine.

What does chewing have to do with dental care?

Healthy teeth and gums are essential for effective chewing. However, food particles often get stuck between teeth, fostering the buildup of plaque and bacteria – precisely in the areas a toothbrush cannot reach. That is why cleaning the spaces between teeth using interdental brushes or dental floss is a vital part of a thorough oral care routine.

Is the importance of cleaning between teeth widely known?

According to a YouGov survey commissioned by oral hygiene specialist TePe, cleaning the spaces between teeth is frequently neglected: 57 percent of respondents do not clean them daily. Some simply forget, others lack the motivation, and some only reach for interdental brushes or floss when they feel something stuck between their teeth.

Why are interdental brushes particularly effective?

Most respondents overestimate the effectiveness of toothbrushes. In reality, they clean only about 60 percent of the tooth surfaces. The remaining 40 percent or so is located between the



teeth, where interdental brushes come into play: their bristles fill the entire interdental space, allowing them not only to reach hard-to-access gaps but also to clean nooks and crannies on the tooth surfaces. Used in conjunction with a standard toothbrush, this ensures that all five surfaces of the tooth are thoroughly cleared of bacterial plaque.

How often should interdental brushes be used, and which size is the right one?

Dentists recommend daily use. However, surveys show that just over a third of users actually follow this advice. Furthermore, nearly half of users rely on a single brush size – even though the gaps between teeth vary in size and can change over time. A dental professional can determine the correct sizes for you – ideally during your next check-up or professional cleaning appointment.

Photo Credit: DJD/www.tepe.com (2)



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FAT LIVER

AN UNDERESTIMATED RISK

AROUND ONE IN FOUR PEOPLE IS AFFECTED – AND MANY REMAIN UNAWARE OF IT FOR A LONG TIME



Fatty liver disease can often be reversed with early treatment and regular physical activity.

(DJD). It works around the clock without us paying it much heed. It is often only when health falters that people realize the pivotal role the liver plays in the body's overall metabolism. Metabolic fatty liver disease is one of the most common chronic conditions; in Germany, approximately one in four adults is affected. It typically develops as a result of physical inactivity and consistently excessive calorie intake, and is linked to metabolic risk factors such as excess weight, type 2 diabetes, high blood lipid levels, and high blood pressure. Highly processed foods and sugary drinks can contribute to its development.

INITIALLY PAINLESS

However, it is not only severely overweight individuals who can develop fatty liver; lean people can be affected too. Many sufferers remain unaware of the condition for a long time. "Public awareness of the disease is still relatively low. This is partly because it causes no pain or severe symptoms in the early stages and is therefore often mistaken for a harmless condition," explains Prof. Dr. Münevver Demir, a specialist in internal medicine and gastroenterology at Charité Berlin. Her message: "The earlier the disease is detected, the lower the risk of it progressing." Left untreated, fatty liver can promote inflammation, lead to severe long-term liver damage, and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

THE CONDITION IS OFTEN REVERSIBLE

With timely intervention, however, fatty liver is often reversible. Many affected individuals seek targeted support for their liver. One scientifically studied approach involves essential phospholipids—building blocks of cell membranes that can help stabilize damaged liver cells and promote their recovery. The herbal medicine Essentiale, for example, contains essential phospholipids derived from soybeans. Positive effects have been observed in a study involving people with metabolic fatty liver disease. Additionally, the preparation can alleviate liver-related symptoms, such as a sensation of pressure in the upper right abdomen.

A LIVER-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE

However, the most important basis is a liver-friendly daily routine. Increased physical activity, weight loss (if overweight), and a diet low in processed foods and high in fiber can help relieve the burden on the liver. Recommended choices include whole-grain products, plenty of vegetables and fruit, and sugar-free beverages or coffee. Anyone suffering from persistent fatigue, digestive issues, or pressure in the upper right abdomen – especially those with known metabolic risk factors – should have these symptoms evaluated by a doctor.

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MANDATORY INFORMATION

Essentiale® Capsule 600 mg. Active ingredient: de-oiled, enriched phospholipids from soybeans. Therapeutic indications: Improvement of subjective symptoms—such as loss of appetite and a sensation of pressure in the right upper abdomen—associated with liver damage caused by hepatotoxic substances or poor nutrition (toxic-nutritional liver damage) and with chronic liver inflammation (hepatitis). Warning: Contains soy proteins and 15.6 mg of ethanol (alcohol) per capsule. Pharmacy-only. For risks and side effects, read the package leaflet and consult your doctor or pharmacist. A. Nattermann & Cie. GmbH, Brüningstraße 50, 65929 Frankfurt am Main. Date: February 2026.



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DON'T JUST WAIT OUT A COLD

FROM SORE THROAT TO RUNNY NOSE: THE RIGHT SUPPORT FOR EVERY STAGE OF THE ILLNESS

(DJD). A scratchy throat, a tingling nose, and suddenly it's here – the first cold of the year. Cough, sniffle, and hoarseness season has begun. On average, adults catch a cold two to four times a year. Rarely is there just a single symptom; the infection usually affects multiple areas of the respiratory tract, and the symptoms evolve over time. While a sore throat or difficulty swallowing often dominates the early stages, a stuffy nose, irritated mucous membranes, or sinus pressure can make daily life difficult later on. That is why it makes sense to tailor your medication to the specific stage of the illness. Acting at the first sign of symptoms can often positively influence the course of the cold and improve your well-being.

THE RIGHT HELP FOR EVERY SYMPTOM

For an irritated throat, soothing lozenges can calm and moisturize the mouth and throat area. If a stuffy nose then becomes the main issue, most people want just one thing: to breathe freely again. Nasal sprays can make nasal breathing easier, making both daily activities and sleep more comfortable. One example

is the gently decongestant Emser Nasal Spray; unlike many chemical preparations, it carries no risk of habituation. It contains natural mineral salt, liquefies viscous mucus, and activates the cilia (tiny hairs) of the mucous membrane. Caring for stressed mucous membranes is equally important. Frequent nose-blowing, as well as dry air from heating systems or the outdoors, can cause further irritation. A nourishing nasal ointment helps protect these sensitive areas and keep them moist.

PRACTICAL EVERYDAY MEASURES

To complement this, many people suffering from a cold turn to inhalations and nasal rinses. These can moisturize the airways and loosen stubborn mucus. Regardless of this, simple measures can provide additional support to the body: drinking plenty of fluids and airing out rooms regularly helps keep mucous membranes moist and preserves their natural protective function. Furthermore, choosing rest over a hectic schedule and avoiding strenuous physical activity gives the immune system the chance to overcome the infection.

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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.

RIGHT OF WAY & STOP

- **Priority road (yellow diamond sign)** → Vehicles on this road have the right of way. 
- **Yield (triangle upside down, red border, white inside)** → corresponds to "Yield" in the USA. 
- **Stop sign (octagonal, red with "STOP")** → as in the USA, absolute stopping is mandatory. 

CHEAT

Basic traffic signs

IN GERMANY

SHEET

SPEED



- **Round sign, white with a red border, number in the center** → speed limit (e.g., "60" = 60 km/h).

- **Crossed-out sign** → End of speed limit. 



- **Autobahn (blue sign with bridge/motorway symbol)** → No general speed limit, but recommended speed: 130 km/h.

NO ENTRY OR TRANSIT

- **Red circle with a white crossbar** → "No entry." 
- **Red circle with a white center** → "No entry" (usually for all vehicles). 

PARKING

- **Blue "P" sign** → Parking permitted. 
- **Crossed-out "P" or sign with arrows** → No parking / restricted stopping.  

MOTORWAY & COUNTRY ROAD



- **Blue Autobahn sign** → Start of Autobahn.

- **Blue sign with car symbol** → Expressway. 

- **Town entrance (yellow town sign)** → In-town = 50 km/h. 



- **Town exit (crossed-out sign)** → Start of country road = 100 km/h.

SPECIAL INFO

- **Right before left:** If there are no signs, traffic coming from the right has the right of way in Germany. (Very important and often unusual for US drivers!) **! IMPORTANT !**
- **No right turns on red,** unless a small green arrow sign (on a black background) is posted
- **Autobahn rules:**
 - Keep to the right always drive on the right, only use the left to overtake.
 - No speed limit does not mean "free passage all the time" – there are many sections with speed limits.

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



FALL CAR CHECK: ARRIVE SAFELY IN DAMP, FOGGY, AND DARK CONDITIONS



Properly adjusted headlights are a key safety feature.

Good Visibility Means Safety

(DJD). Persistent rain, fog, and earlier sunsets – fall brings significant changes to driving conditions. To ensure your vehicle's systems function reliably, a thorough fall check-up at a professional workshop is highly recommended. Experts will inspect safety-critical components such as tires, brakes, lighting, windshield wipers, and the battery. This allows minor defects to be fixed before adverse weather turns them into dangerous situations or leads to costly consequential damage.

CLEAR VISION INSTEAD OF DRIVING BLIND

During the darker months of the year, the golden rule of the road is "see and be seen." Yet, one indispensable component is often neglected by many drivers: the windshield wiper. If the wiper blade leaves streaks on the glass, light from oncoming vehicles scatters dangerously. "Pedestrians or cyclists at the roadside can quickly disappear from view, leaving you driving blind. That's why it is advisable to check your wiper blades well before the first frost and replace them if necessary," says Bosch expert Antoine Robert. If a persistent streak remains in your direct line of sight after wiping, or if more than three streaks appear in the peripheral areas, the blades have reached the end of their service life. A simple trick helps protect the material on cold nights: placing an insulating sheet or a piece of cardboard under the wiper arms prevents the rubber blades from freezing to the windshield and tearing when the wipers are accidentally switched on.

MORE LIGHT FOR GREATER SAFETY

A lighting check at the workshop also ensures that headlights are correctly adjusted and do not blind oncoming traffic. Drivers still using older halogen technology no longer have to settle for poor light output. Modern lighting components can significantly improve visibility. For instance, the road-legal Bosch LED Powerlight+ retrofit bulb can boost light output by up to 220 percent compared to older halogen technology.

PUTTING THE POWER SUPPLY TO THE TEST

It is not uncommon for cars to fail to start during fall and winter. Aging starter batteries top the list of breakdown causes, as low temperatures severely impair their performance. A capacity test at a workshop can reveal weaknesses before the car refuses to start in the morning. This issue requires special attention for electric vehicles, where the entire thermal management system and the drivetrain rely on the battery. Specialized workshops now offer cost-effective and sustainable repair solutions for these vehicles.



Photo Credit:DJD/Robert Bosch (3)

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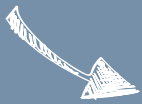
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Everything you need winter tires

Be smart
and
drive safe
Bavaria!

Winter tires must be marked with the 3-peak mountain and snowflake by Sept. 30, 2025.



Winter Tire Rules by Country

BASICS

- All-season tires must have the proper markings to qualify as winter-ready. Don't assume yours are sufficient!
- If you're renting a car or driving across borders, confirm tire requirements with the local agency to avoid tickets & problems.

BY COUNTRY

- **Germany:** Required during winter road conditions (snow, ice, slush). No fixed dates, but don't wait – winter comes. Tires need to have the alpine symbol. The M+S symbol may no longer be sufficient.
- **Austria:** Nov 1 – Apr 15 mandatory during winter conditions. Minimum tread depth of 4 mm for radial tires
- **Belgium:** Not mandatory but driving conditions can be harsh in certain regions
- **Czech Republic:** Nov 1 – Mar 31.
- **Croatia:** Nov 15 – Apr 15, 4 winter or all-season tires
- **France:** In designated marked areas, Nov 1 – Mar 31 (look for signage)
- **Luxembourg:** Required in winter conditions (no fixed dates).
- **Switzerland:** Not explicitly mandatory, but vehicles must remain "controllable." Lack of proper tires can lead to fines and insurance issues.
- **Netherlands:** Not mandatory, but highly recommended for safety.

Editor's Note: Check local official sites for updates & laws. Summary of what I could find.

in Germany

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Warm weather is giving way to cold, which means you should prepare your vehicle now for winter. One important thing to know before you hit the road in winter is that Germany has different tire requirements than the United States.

European winter tires have two kinds of markings: a snowflake for snow tires or M+S for tires designed to work in mud and snow, or "matsch und schnee" in German. All-season or all-weather tires may also have the markings and are acceptable for winter driving, but tires designed specifically for snow function better than all-weather tires.

Because you reside in Germany, you may be asking: What kind of winter tires does the German law require? First, it is very important to look for certain signs placed on the tire.

In November 2010, the Bundestag, Germany's parliament, passed a federal law that is much more specific about winter tires. This German federal law was amended in 2015 to require the use of winter tires when conditions are icy. As of January 2018, new winter tires must be marked with the Alpine-Symbol (a 3-peak mountain with a snowflake in the center).

If you own all-season tires or winter tires marked with M+S and produced prior to 2018, they are still approved until Sept. 30, 2024.

The law also apply to motorbikes, trucks and buses, regardless of whether the driver is the owner or is renting the vehicle. All of these vehicles must be equipped with winter tires if you drive in snow or icy conditions.

The German law mandated by the Bundestag requiring winter tires during icy conditions does not specify specific dates, according to ADAC, the German auto club that provides roadside assistance and air rescue. Many German drivers, however, abide by the general rule of "von O bis O" (from O to O), which means snow tires should be put on in October and remain on until Ostern (Easter).

According to the USAG Bavaria Safety office and ADAC, to drive in Germany – no matter the road conditions – ensure you have a tire tread depth of at least 1.6 millimeters. The best is to have 4 millimeters, according to ADAC. A one euro coin can be used for a quick "tread check." When placed in the tire's tread, you should not be able to see the golden edge of the coin. If you can, the tire needs to be replaced.

Community members can change tires, by themselves, at the on-post Auto Skills Center.

to know about

In some parts of Germany, particularly in the southern mountainous region, snow chains may be required if directed by road signs or police. USAG Bavaria Safety office and ADAC recommend carrying snow chains and checking your route prior to heading out. Know how to put snow chains on before you need them, and make sure you don't exceed 50 kph when driving with them.

If you're unsure if other countries have similar tire laws, check the European Road Safety website. And for more on winter driving, check out the Army Europe Drivers Handbook and Examination.

Remember, if you don't follow these requirements, you can receive a ticket of 80 euro or higher. If you have questions, contact USAG Bavaria Safety office at DSN 526-2303, CIV 09641-70-526-2303.

Be smart and drive safe Bavaria!

Editor's Note: This article was originally published October, 2021 by USAG Bavaria Public Affairs.

| by USAG Bavaria Public Affairs

Tires marked only with M+S, which stands for mud and snow traction, may serve as your winter tire through Sept. 30, 2024.



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MEET THE NEW AUDI SQ9:

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For drivers craving monumental power and uncompromised space, Audi is raising the bar. The German automaker has officially debuted its first-ever Audi SQ9, a high-performance, full-sized luxury SUV engineered specifically with American buyers in mind. Landing in U.S. showrooms in the fourth quarter of 2026, this performance halo for the brand's new Q9 flagship family combines effortless muscle with cutting-edge technology.

MONSTROUS V8 PERFORMANCE MEETS EVERYDAY UTILITY

Under the hood, the SQ9 packs a heavily revised 4.0-liter twin-turbo V8 engine pumping out a robust 591 horsepower and 590 lb-ft of torque. Paired with an eight-speed Tiptronic transmission and a brand-new rear-biased quattro all-wheel-drive system, it rockets from 0 to 60 mph in a blistering 3.8 seconds – making it the quickest accelerating three-row SUV in its class.

Despite its sports-car-rivalling acceleration, the SQ9 honors heavy-duty demands with a 7,700-pound towing capacity, perfect for hauling boats, horse trailers, or weekend gear.

FIRST-CLASS COMFORT FOR SIX OR SEVEN

Measuring 208.9 inches long with a spacious 123.5-inch wheelbase, the SQ9 delivers genuine three-row seating fit for adults. Families can choose between a standard seven-seat layout or available second-row captain's chairs for a limousine-like experience.

Interior highlights designed to make every road trip a joy include:

Massive Panoramic Sunroof: Spanning over 16 square feet with a nine-segment dimmable "virtual shade."

Advanced Climate Control: Five-zone automatic climate control ensuring comfort all the way to the third row.

Audi Digital Stage: A seamless display architecture featuring a 14.5-inch MMI touch screen, head-up display, and an active privacy-mode passenger display.

Immersive Audio: An available Bang & Olufsen 4D sound system featuring seat actuators that let you physically feel the bass.



GROUNDBREAKING LIGHTING AND U.S. TECH

The Q9 family introduces several advanced lighting technologies to the U.S. market for the first time. Thanks to newly approved Department of Transportation regulations, the SQ9 features Digital Matrix LED headlights with adaptive driving beam functionality, slashing glare for oncoming traffic while maximizing road illumination. At the rear, world-first curved digital OLED taillights allow for customizable light signatures and enhanced visibility.

For highway cruising, the SQ9 introduces hands-free Level 2+ partial automated driving at speeds up to 85 mph on approved highways via adaptive cruise assist plus.

PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

U.S. deliveries for the new Audi flagship family kick off in Q4 2026. The base Q9 starts at \$87,700, while the performance-focused Audi SQ9 starts at \$118,000. For Americans abroad looking for a taste of home-grown luxury scale paired with German engineering excellence, the SQ9 is poised to command the road.

(Audi USA)

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VOLVO'S NEW "SAFETY COACH" APP REWARDS SAFE DRIVING AND LOWER INSURANCE RATES

Imagine a co-pilot that helps you build safer driving habits while trimming down your monthly car insurance bill. That is the driving force behind Safety Coach, an innovative app introduced by Volvo Cars in partnership with Cambridge Mobile Telematics (CMT).

Designed for Volvo models starting from the 2020 model year, the optional app delivers real-time insights directly to your infotainment screen and mobile device. By tracking everyday habits like braking, acceleration, and cornering, Safety Coach generates a dynamic score rooted in Volvo's decades of real-world safety research.

"Staying within expected speed ranges and avoiding abrupt maneuvers makes your driving easier for others to anticipate," notes Mikael Ljung Aust, driver behavior expert at Volvo.

Coming Soon to the US and Europe

While rolling out first in Sweden and Norway—paired with usage-based insurance discounts from Volvia—Volvo plans a broader expansion into the United States and other European markets.

Privacy remains a priority: drivers must explicitly opt in to track their habits, and can choose a secondary opt-in to share anonymous scoring data with insurance partners for tailored, lower rates. It is a win-win integration for tech-savvy drivers looking to optimize both road safety and household savings. (Volvo USA)



Photo Credit: Volvo Car USA

If you are interested in VOLVO, we are your partner of choice. As one of the largest Volvo dealers in Bavaria and the metropolitan areas of Munich, Regensburg and Nürnberg, we have a lot of experience!

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THE F-150 LOBO

When we set out to design the Ford Lobo family of pickup trucks, we didn't need to be convinced that street truck culture across America is alive and well. I drive a street truck myself and am currently working on a 1995 Ranger drift truck, so I know this world. These vehicles have been a part of my life for years.

So, when it came time to imagine an F-150 Lobo — on the heels of helping create the new Maverick Lobo last year — I didn't have to look far to know what prospective customers would want.

DROP IT.

**GIVE IT V8 SOUND AND PERFORMANCE.
MAKE DUAL EXHAUST TIPS STANDARD.
ADD AGGRESSIVE STYLING.**

AND GIVE IT A FACE THAT LOOKS ... SINISTER.

The project represented a new application of the Lobo name, one that was born in 1997 by Ford of Mexico. Lobo aligns with the truck's aggressive, street-inspired identity and carries significant heritage.



Incidentally, I was born at about the same time, so this is not a case of me recalling the trucks of my youth and infusing that style into a new product. Born and raised in New Hampshire, it wasn't until I came to Detroit to study at the College for Creative Studies that my love of street trucks was born. And there's no place like Detroit to ignite a passion for cars and trucks.

Our team knows what the street truck crowd wants because we've seen their trucks. Continuing what Maverick Lobo started last year, the F-150 Lobo is designed to serve a new segment of potential F-150 customers. For years, they have been taking factory pickup trucks and lowering them. Adding more power. Leaning on street styling. From an automaker, this has been an untapped market for two decades.

So, on the bones of the Built Ford Tough F-150 truck, we created a street truck that rolls off the line ready to roar, with proven durability and a Ford factory limited warranty for more confidence and peace of mind than aftermarket solutions.

F-150 Lobo is a package on STX, comes as a SuperCrew, and is powered by a 5.0-liter V8 engine that puts out 400 horsepower and 410 lb.-ft. of torque, which is already a superstar in the street truck community. And, we've included our upgraded two-speed automatic 4WD system. The challenge for our design team was making the truck look as aggressive as it drives and sounds.

Street truck culture is about looks and performance, and that's where things got fun for us.

Already lower than a base F-150 with an updated suspension that drops the rear of the truck 2 inches, we added a 10-piece ground appearance package that visually lowers the truck even more. As part of the body kit, Lobo gets a wide gloss-black mesh lower grille.

A unique upper grille gives F-150 Lobo an unmistakable face on the road. When you see its grille and light bar rolling up behind you in the rearview mirror, you'll know.

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To best capture today's popular street styling, we added black-accented exterior features such as hood vents, exhaust, and badging, not to mention unique Lobo 22-inch gloss-black wheels.

For an even more aggressive look, we equipped F-150 Lobo with a cowl hood. Updated headlamps draw a family line with Maverick Lobo, and the taillamps are upgraded from the STX Package for a premium look.

The new F-150 Lobo is available in five exterior colors – Agate Black Metallic, Atlas Blue Metallic, Carbonized Gray, Oxford White, and Rapid Red Metallic Tinted Clearcoat – helping customers give their truck the personality they desire. The all-black version looks straight menacing.

We built Lobo to be the powerful and stylish street truck enthusiasts truly want, from the factory. We integrated significant, often costly modifications and handled the updates typically challenging for owners, delivering a complete foundation straight off the line. While Lobo is ready for the road just as it is, we know some will take this great foundation for future personalization.

This is a solution that comes straight from Ford. It's been a long time coming, and to have the opportunity to play a role in this revival has been as big a thrill as it will be to drive one.

(Ford USA)

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MINI USA FLIPS THE SCRIPT WITH THE ROOFTOP EDITION

MINI USA is turning one of its most famous design signatures upside down with the debut of the **MINI Rooftop Edition**. As the fifth release in the exclusive **MINI Icon Drops** campaign—a series of eight limited-edition models rolling out through 2026—this release brings a fresh, color-flipped twist to the iconic contrast roof.

Available exclusively on the **MINI Cooper S 2 Door** and **MINI Cooper S 4 Door**, the Rooftop Edition plays with inverse combinations of **Indigo Sunset Blue Metallic** and **Melting Silver III Metallic**.

Flip the Colors. Keep the Icon.

The concept is playful yet striking:

- **Option A:** Indigo Sunset Blue Metallic body paired with a Melting Silver III Metallic roof and mirror caps.
- **Option B:** Melting Silver III Metallic body with an Indigo Sunset Blue Metallic roof and mirror caps.

Coordinating bonnet and boot stripes tie the whole look together, creating a bold, unmistakable two-tone presence. Meanwhile, the interior takes a more restrained, driver-focused approach featuring dark, modern John Cooper Works sport seats and MINI's signature minimalist design, letting the exterior colors take center stage.

Part of the Exclusive MINI Icon Drops

Inspired by sneaker culture, the **MINI Icon Drops** series brings the excitement of limited-edition collectability to the automotive

world. Rooted in MINI's rich history of special editions that dates back to the 1960s, this campaign transforms each release into a major cultural event.

The Rooftop Edition follows four previous U.S. drops:

- **MINI Cooper S 2 Door 1965 Victory Edition** (celebrating the Monte Carlo Rally win)
- **MINI Cooper S 4 Door Red Line Edition**
- **MINI Paul Smith Editions**
- **MINI Cooper Heritage Edition**

This year is especially meaningful as **2026 marks 25 years** since the launch of the modern MINI, celebrating a quarter-century of style and cultural relevance.

Availability & Timeline

For American enthusiasts stationed abroad or looking back home, production for the limited MINI Rooftop Edition kicks off in **September 2026**, with vehicles arriving at U.S. dealerships in **October 2026**.

Blending heritage with a bold, inverted twist, the Rooftop Edition proves that MINI's most classic icon is ready for a brand-new point of view.

(BMW USA)

Photo Credit: BMW USA (3)





WELCOME TO J.B. LELL CAR DEALERSHIPS

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Over the past years, Autohaus J.B. Lell has experienced healthy growth and expansion, driven by our commitment to quality and innovation. We have not only invested in top-qualified employees but have also continually broadened our range of products and services. Today, our dealerships in Schwandorf, Kümmerbruck, Weiden, Wunsiedel, and the MINI Haus in Schwandorf proudly carry the LELL name, standing as pillars of excellence in the automotive world.

The highlight of our modernization journey is the newly completed dealership in Schwandorf. Spanning along Industriestraße, it now includes a dedicated

BMW ALPINA area that invites you to experience driving pleasure, innovation, and sheer confidence. Every detail has been designed to ignite your enthusiasm for automotive excellence.

In line with the future of mobility, our dealership is also home to a BMW i showroom, complete with the necessary charging infrastructure. Our team of BMW i specialists is fully trained to provide expert advice on the cutting-edge world of electric mobility. We invite you to experience this new era of premium and innovation firsthand. While our business has evolved over 40 years, one thing remains unchanged: Lell's dedica-

tion to providing exceptional customer service.

For us, your needs and desires always come first. Our dealerships represent a unique value proposition – outstanding service, personalized advice, and unwavering professionalism. We are constantly striving to exceed your expectations and enhance your experience. Thanks to our company's growth, our team now includes over 200 highly qualified professionals, ready to serve both local and international customers. For our international clientele, we offer English-speaking staff to ensure the same high level of service. Our priority is simple: meeting

and exceeding the expectations of all our customers.

Our dealerships are equipped with state-of-the-art workshops, always feature the latest vehicle models, and offer exclusive promotions and events. Lell is more than just a car dealership – it's a hub for automotive enthusiasts, a place where customers, employees, and BMW fans come together to share their passion. Whether you're looking for BMW, BMW M, BMW i, or MINI, we are here to turn your automotive dreams into reality.

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35 SINGERS, A LIVE BAND,
AND ROUSING SPIRITUALS ON
OCT. 18 STARTING AT 5 P.M.
DONATIONS ARE WELCOME.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – "Living Water" is known for modern gospel music enriched with highlights of traditional spirituals. The gospel choir aims to thrill the audience with this repertoire during their concert on Oct. 18 at Friedenskirche Grafenwöhr. "Sometimes quiet and contemplative, other times powerful and dynamic—these predominantly modern gospel songs create a special atmosphere in churches and concert halls," says choir director Merle Neumann. Naturally, gospel classics like "Oh Happy Day" and "Amen" are audience favorites; these well-known spirituals invite everyone to sing and clap along.

In addition to the vocal power of the nearly 35 active singers, the rotating soloists for individual songs are impressive—not to mention the band, whose palpable joy in performing is an essential part of the experience. The concert begins at 5 p.m. Admission is free; donations are requested.

| by Renate Gradi



Photo Credit: Living Water, Maximilian Lawrenz

DISCOVER PRESSATH'S FALL MARKET: FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



DISCOVER REGIONAL GOODS, STREET FOOD, AND FAMILY FUN ON SUNDAY, OCT. 18, 2026, AS THE NEWLY RENOVATED BAHNHOFSTRASSE HOSTS THIS CLASSIC BAVARIAN MARKET.

PRESSATH, Germany – The second market Sunday of the year is approaching: On Sunday, October 18, 2026, Bahnhofstraße in Pressath will become a gathering place for vendors, visitors, and families from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event centers on the traditional Michaelmas Market (Michaelmarkt), which boasts a decades-long history in the town and is now being revitalized with a high-quality selection of regional goods.

Following the renovation of Bahnhofstraße, the market offers an attractive setting right in the town center. Visitors can look forward to a diverse range of products and finger food offered by the participating vendors. Families with children can enjoy a bouncy castle and an interactive musical entertainment program. The Gasthof Heining and the adjacent Netto supermarket will also be open on this Sunday. A flea market will take place in the REWE parking lot, as usual.

The town of Pressath hopes for a strong turnout of vendors and visitors to ensure a successful market Sunday.

| by Franziska Nugent



THE STIMULATORS

BRING COPACABANA VIBES

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Get ready for a night of Latin rhythms, rock, blues, reggae, ska and jazz as Munich's The Stimulators take the stage in Grafenwoehr's city auditorium on Friday, Oct. 23, at 8 p.m. For decades, the six-member band has been thrilling audiences across Europe and the United States with its energetic live shows. After more than 1,500 concerts, The Stimulators have earned a reputation for turning every performance into a party. Their unique sound has been described as being "like driving a convertible along Copacabana." Expect hot Latin grooves, Southern-style soul, Caribbean vibes and plenty of rock 'n' roll energy. The setlist features crowd favorites such as "Caipirinha," "Flying Down to Rio" and "I Like It," along with tracks including "Rock Steady Cumbia," "Django Style" and "Ride Your Donkey."

Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are available online through okticket.de for 24€ or at the box office for 27€.

| by Pirmin Balk

HALLOWEEN

THE TRUE STORY OF JACK O'LANTERN AND PUMPKINS

Although a Halloween pumpkin is usually called a "Jack O'Lantern," the figure who gave it its name was originally not a pumpkin, but a turnip. The legend tells of Stingy Jack, a miserly, heavy-drinking Irishman who even tricked the Devil.

According to legend, Jack invited the Devil for a drink one evening and persuaded him to transform into a coin to pay the tab. No sooner had the transformation taken place than Jack slipped the coin into his pocket next to a silver cross, preventing the Devil from changing back – until he swore to leave Jack alone for a year and never to claim his soul.

A year later, Jack tricked him again: he lured him up an apple tree and, while the Devil was up there, carved a cross into the trunk so he could not climb down. Only when the Devil swore once more never to claim Jack's soul did Jack let him go.

When Jack died, Saint Peter denied him entry to Heaven because of his sinful life – yet Hell was also closed to him, as the Devil kept his oath. Thus, Stingy Jack was condemned to wander eternally as a restless spirit between Heaven and Hell. To mock him, the Devil gave him an ember from the fires of Hell, which Jack placed inside a hollowed-out turnip to light his way. Since then, he has wandered as "Jack of the Lantern" – or "Jack O'Lantern" for short.

FROM TURNIP LIGHT TO PUMPKIN HIGHLIGHT

On "All Hallows' Eve," the Irish traditionally hollowed out turnips and other root vegetables, carved spooky faces into them, and placed them in windows with a light inside to ward off evil spirits like Stingy Jack. Irish immigrants brought this tradition to the USA in the 19th century – and discovered the pumpkin there; as a larger vegetable that was easier to hollow out, it quickly became the most popular Halloween decoration.

As for us: The tradition lives on! We look forward to decorating, carving pumpkins, baking pumpkin pie, and trick-or-treating. There are countless ways to celebrate this holiday – let yourself catch the "Halloween bug." Happy Halloween!



HALLOWEEN EVENTS

HALLOWEEN FRANKENSTEIN AUF BURG KÖNIGSTEIN: "THE NIGHTMARE RETURNS"

From Oct. 16 to Nov. 1, 2026, the ruins of Königstein Castle in the Taunus region will once again transform into a scene of horror. Featuring elaborately staged live horror in a historic setting and a multitude of performers, Halloween Frankenstein ranks among Germany's largest Halloween events – a must for all fans of the spooky and the macabre.

You can also book this event through MWR Bavaria; find more information at grafenwoehr.armymwr.com.

SPOOKY WALK THROUGH THE GHOST TOWN OF ESCHENBACH I.D.OPF.

On Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., the Old Town of Eschenbach will once again transform into a delightfully eerie ghost town.

Visitors can expect a pure Halloween atmosphere at numerous stations around Karlsplatz and Marienplatz: witches on the prowl, a spooky garden, terrifying costumes, and creepy decorations in the Old Town alleys create the perfect goosebump-inducing experience. For the little ones, there are sweets for trick-or-treating at many of the stations. Last year, the event drew around 6,000 visitors.

Where? Old Town Eschenbach i.d.OPf. (Karlsplatz / Marienplatz),
When? Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Free admission

| by Editor

A Golden Fall in the Glass

The Best Wine Festivals in October

From cozy tent festivals in the Steigerwald region and historic old-town celebrations to Germany's largest wine festival: Discover where Franconia and the Palatinate celebrate the new vintage.

In Franconia and along the Wine Route, October is a time for celebrating the harvest, enjoying good company, and embracing the true joy of living. As winemakers bring in their final grapes, picturesque wine villages and traditional festival halls host events that perfectly blend tradition with a lively party atmosphere.

1. ABTSWIND WINE FESTIVAL

- **When:** Every Saturday in October (starting around 5:00 PM).
- **Address:** Alte Untersambacher Str. 4, 97355 Abtswind
- **Size & Setting:** One of the most famous and atmospheric tent-based wine festivals at the foot of the Steigerwald hills (Kitzingen district). It attracts several thousand visitors on each event day.
- **Special Feature & Highlight:** The festival takes place in a large, heated tent complete with a separate "wine barn" (Wein-Stadl), ensuring a cozy atmosphere for enjoying wine even in cooler fall weather. The absolute highlight is the weekly changing music program: every festival Saturday, a different well-known live band (playing everything from party hits to upbeat crowd-pleasers) gets the crowd fired up.

2. ESCHERNDORF WINE FALL (ON THE MAIN RIVER LOOP)

- **When:** Saturdays in October (starting at 5:00 PM)
- **Address:** Bocksbeutelstraße 3, 97332 Volkach (Escherndorf district)
- **Size & Setting:** A traditional, atmospheric event series held in the elegant wine hall of Escherndorf (a district of Volkach). Deeply rooted in the region, it is a popular destination often visited by tour groups and excursion parties.
- **Special Feature & Highlight:** The combination of premium wines from renowned vineyard sites – such as the Escherndorfer Lump – and hearty Franconian cuisine prepared by the in-house butcher. As a highlight, many visitors combine their evening visit to the Winzerhalle (winemakers' hall) with a guided daytime hike through the vineyards, leading down from the historic Vogelsburg site amidst the colorful fall foliage.

Photo Credit: Lukas Gojda, allinamand – stock.adobe.com



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3. GAMBACH WINE FESTIVAL

- **When:** On selected weekends/Sundays in October (e.g., early and mid-October).
- **Address:** Stadtweg 4, 97753 Karlstadt (Gambach district).
- **Scale & Setting:** Organized by the Gambach Music Association (Karlstadt), the festival has evolved over more than 50 years into a massive event. Visitors travel from all over Franconia and beyond, often arriving in large tour buses.
- **Special Feature & Highlight:** The local music hall is packed to capacity on event days. The highlight is the legendary party atmosphere, fueled by brass band music that transitions seamlessly into modern party and rock beats (performed by well-known bands such as get up).

4. BRINGING IN THE LAST LOAD (*EINHOLEN DER LETZTEN FUHRE*) IN IPHOFEN

- **When:** On the second Saturday in October (October 10, 2026).
- **Venue:** Historic market square and old town of Iphofen; Address: Marktplatz, 97346 Iphofen.
- **Scale & Setting:** A traditional, historic old-town festival in the wine town of Iphofen that celebrates the official conclusion of the grape harvest.
- **Special Feature & Highlight:** Authentic local customs take center stage here. The highlight is the festive parade, featuring winemakers traveling through the historic old town to the market square with decorated wagons, tractors, and traditional music. This is accompanied by stalls serving Franconian specialties, onion tart, and the season's last fresh Federweißer (young, partially fermented wine, known locally as "Bremser").



German Wine
Harvest Festival
in Neustadt an
der Weinstraße.

5. GERMAN WINE HARVEST FESTIVAL IN NEUSTADT AN DER WEINSTRASSE (PALATINATE)

- **When:** Late September to mid-October (September 25 to October 12, 2026).
- **Location:** City center and market square (plus the "Haiselscher" wine village at Hetzelplatz); Address: Marktplatz, 67433 Neustadt an der Weinstraße.
- **Size & Scope:** One of Germany's absolute largest and most popular wine festivals, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors from home and abroad.
- **Special Features & Highlights:** The festival comprises several major areas: the historic "Haiselscher" winegrowers' village with rustic half-timbered huts, the upscale w.i.n.e.FESTIVAL set in a Mediterranean-style garden, and a large fairground. The absolute mega-highlight is Germany's largest winegrowers' festival parade, held on the second weekend of October (October 11, 2026), featuring over 100 magnificent floats, marching bands, and the newly crowned Wine Queens.

AMBERGER MICHAELI-DULT,

SEPT. 25 – OCT. 4, 2026

"O'ZAPFT IS!" - JOIN THE FUN AT AMBERG'S TRADITIONAL FAIR

Festivals are an integral part of Bavarian culture, blending tradition with modernity. Amberg hosts its traditional fair – the "Dult" – twice a year, in the spring and fall. It's almost that time of the year again: The Amberg Michaeli-Dult invites everyone to celebrate from Sept. 25 to Oct. 4, 2026!

With attractions and thrilling rides for all ages, a cozy atmosphere, a varied musical lineup, and – above all – a wide array of culinary specialties, the Amberg fairs delight thousands of visitors every year. The medieval city of Amberg boasts a brewing tradition spanning over 500 years, and its beers are renowned for their exceptional quality. Naturally, Amberg beer is served in the festival tent and beer garden – this time provided by the Sterk Brewery.

A major highlight of the Michaeli-Dult is the two fireworks displays – taking place on Friday, Sept. 25, and Friday, Oct. 2 – which light up the sky above the fairgrounds with a spectacular array of colors. The program also offers plenty of variety with events such as Children's and Family Day, a Country Music Night, and a boxing match.

For more information and the full festival program, visit www.amberger-dult.de

Amberg

DULT

Sept 25 – Oct 4, 2026

TRADITIONAL BAVARIAN FUNFAIR

WED, SEP 30
KIDS & FAMILY
DAY

FRI,
SEP 25 & OCT 2
FIREWORKS

Straight from the field:

How to get fresh pumpkins in Franconia and the Upper Palatinate

Photo Credit: Oschi – stock.adobe.com

Photo Credit: stockmotion – stock.adobe.com (AI-generated)

Fall is here, and that means it's finally pumpkin season again! In this overview, you'll find some places in the region where you can get these orange giants fresh from the field.

Freshly harvested pumpkins not only taste good – a trip to a pumpkin patch is also a wonderful seasonal destination. Here's a small selection of fields and farms in the region where you can either harvest the pumpkins yourself or get them fresh from the field.

PUMPKINS FOR HALLOWEEN, TOO

Pumpkin carving is one of the most well-known Halloween traditions. The tradition originated in Ireland. There, the legend of "Jack O'Lantern" was told, a cunning farmer who outwitted the devil. After his death, Jack was allowed neither into heaven nor hell and since then has wandered through the darkness with a hollowed-out turnip and a glowing coal as a lantern. When Irish immigrants came to America, they replaced the turnip with the pumpkin, which was more common there – larger, easier to work with, and bright orange. This is how the tradition we know today was born.

Special Halloween pumpkins are particularly suitable for carving: they are large and round, have a relatively soft shell, and are long-lasting.

Smaller edible pumpkins like the Hokkaido pumpkin are edible, but difficult to carve.

Today, pumpkin carving is an integral part of Halloween preparations for many families and children. It combines creativity, craftsmanship, and fun – and at the same time, provides atmospheric decoration during the dark season.

Not all pumpkin varieties are equally suitable for Halloween pumpkin carving – some are too small, too hard, or quickly become mushy. Here are the best tips:

SUITABLE PUMPKIN VARIETIES

- **Halloween Pumpkin (Jack O'Lantern / Howden Pumpkin)**
A classic for hollowing out: large, round, strong shell, but not too hard. Easy to carve and has plenty of space inside.
- **Rocket / Early Harvest**
Medium size, rather smooth shell, perfect for more detailed carving.
- **Ghost Rider**
Vivid orange, thick-walled, very stable – lasts longer, ideal for large faces.
- **Racer F1**
Popular in competitions, consistent shape, easy to hollow out.

About the Pumpkin

This fruit is relatively low in calories due to its high water content of around 90 percent. However, it contains plenty of vitamins and important minerals such as iron and potassium. Pumpkins get their orange color from their high beta-carotene content, which can be converted into vitamin A by the body. Pumpkins are becoming more popular in Germany every year, also due to their positive effects on blood lipid levels and the digestive tract.

The pumpkin is therefore an extremely healthy berry. Yes, you read that right – a berry. According to the definition, berries are fruits whose seeds lie freely within the flesh. This also applies to pumpkins.

PICK-YOUR-OWN PUMPKIN**Jerry's Pumpkin Patch**

Address: Lohweg 7, 92367 Pilsach

Cell Phones: +49 171 7239 338 or +49 171 7239 343

The pick-your-own field is expected to open in mid-September; further information will be announced. The field has an American owner near Hohenfels.

Piggyback Harvest Experience –**Harvest Your Own Field**

Address: Vacher Str. 30, 91056 Erlangen

Phone: +49 911 762570

Farm Shops / Gemüse KönigAddress: Winterleitenstr. 5, 92690 Pressath
Zintlhammer

Phone: +49 9644 91268

Lang Farm Shop

Address: Altenparkstein 25, 92665 Kirchendemenreuth

Phone: +49 9681 1570

Beutnerhof

Address: Weidener Str. 31, 92694 Etzenricht

Phone: +49 961 43612

Gut Aschach - Albert Freidl

Address: Gut Aschach 1, 93138 Lappersdorf

Phone: +49 941 82198

Roidl Hof Irlach

Address: Irlacher Dorfstraße 9, 92442 Wackersdorf

Phone: +49 9431 6714

Schnell's Pumpkin Seeds - Farm Shop

Address: Ringstraße 4, 91126 Kammerstein

Phone: +49 9122 830703

Beerenhof Wiesneth

Address: Mülles 9, 92256 Hahnbach

Phone: +49 9664 953399

Kremmeldorfer Kürbisacker

Address: Am Gries 96117 Kremmeldorf

Phone: +49 176 47392886

PUMPKIN FESTIVAL IN ALTENDORF

On the first Sunday in October, the pumpkin season traditionally reaches its peak with the Pumpkin Festival, which is now known far beyond the county's borders. Many farms open their doors on this day and present pumpkins of various sizes, shapes, and colors, as well as a variety of culinary specialties featuring this fall vegetable. Anyone who has tasted the variety of these delicacies will inevitably fall under the spell of pumpkins.

The Pumpkin Festival takes place in 96146 Altendorf (approx. 1.25 hours from Grafenwoehr).

| by Editor

Pumpkin Festival in Ludwigsburg

World's largest pumpkin exhibition from August 22 to November 1, 2026

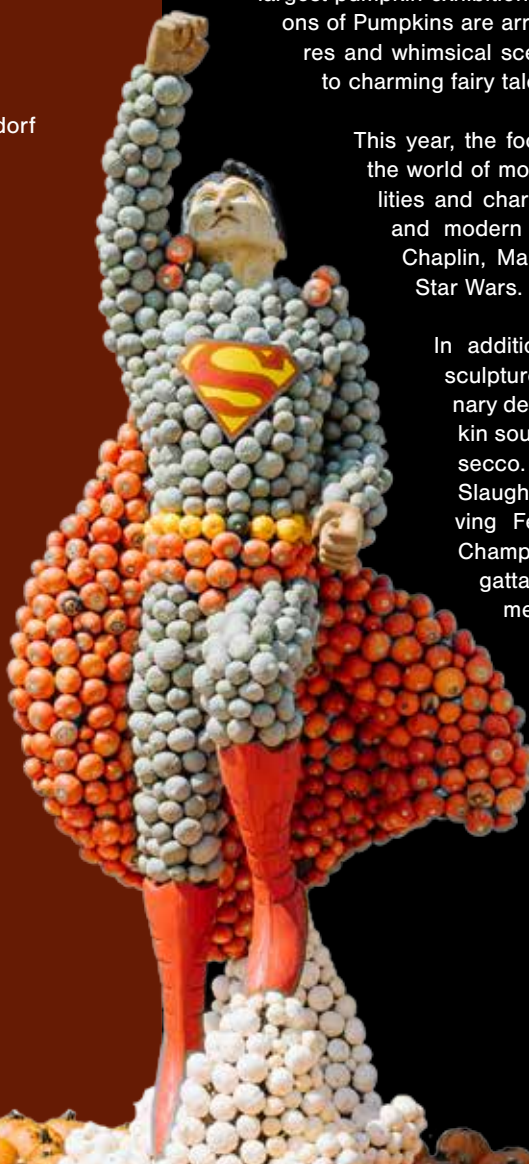
LUDWIGSBURG, Germany – Experience the magical Pumpkin Fest in Ludwigsburg. It's an amazing spectacle that transforms the magnificent grounds of Ludwigsburg Residential Palace into a vibrant fall wonderland. As the world's largest pumpkin exhibition, it's an absolute must-see! Millions of Pumpkins are arranged into breathtaking sculptures and whimsical scenes – from towering dinosaurs to charming fairy tale characters.

This year, the focus is on pumpkin figures from the world of movies, including famous personalities and characters from Hollywood classics and modern blockbusters such as Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe, Harry Potter, and Star Wars.

In addition to the impressive pumpkin sculptures, visitors can also enjoy culinary delights such as the famous pumpkin soup, pumpkin ravioli, and pumpkin secco. Events such as the Pumpkin Slaughter Festival, the Pumpkin Carving Festival, the Pumpkin Weighing Championships, and the Pumpkin Regatta provide additional entertainment.

The exhibition ends in early November, but some pumpkin figures can still be admired until early December as part of the Luminous Dream Trails.

Taste the flavors of fall! Indulge in a delicious array of pumpkin-themed culinary delights all over the place and enjoy exciting activities for all ages in this magic atmosphere.



OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

BUCKET LIST

FOR BAVARIA IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

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:

NATURE EXPERIENCE IN THE BAVARIAN FOREST NATIONAL PARK



Photo Credit: Erlebnis Akademie AG/
Baumwipfelpfad Bayerischer Wald

The Neuschönau Treetop Walk in the Bavarian Forest features a 1,300-meter-long, accessible walkway through the treetops, a 44-meter-high observation tower with views of the Alps, and an adjoining animal enclosure.

ROYAL ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC ROMANCE



Photo Credit: yorgen67 - stock.adobe.com

Perched high above Füssen against a dramatic mountain backdrop stand the world-famous royal castles of Neuschwanstein (built from 1869 onwards) and the colorful Hohenschwangau. Booking tickets online in advance is mandatory.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST THERMAL SPA AND WATER PARK



Photo Credit: Thermo Erding GmbH

Located northeast of Munich, Thermo Erding offers a perfect paradise for both relaxation and excitement, featuring a tropical South Seas atmosphere, high-speed slides, a large wave pool lagoon, and over 90 saunas.

ENGAGING WITH RECENT GERMAN HISTORY



Photo Credit: Harald - stock.adobe.com

At Obersalzberg in the Berchtesgadener Land region, the modern exhibition "Idyll and Crime" explores the site's Nazi-era past as a seat of government. Visitors can also tour parts of the extensive underground bunker system.

CENTURIES-OLD MONASTERY BREWERY AND BAVARIAN HOSPITALITY



Photo Credit: ARGUM

Andechs – the "Holy Mountain" overlooking Lake Ammersee – is Bavaria's oldest pilgrimage site. It boasts a magnificent Rococo church and a world-famous brewery monastery, complete with a traditional tavern and a shady beer garden.

FALL DELIGHTS AT MUNICH'S VIKTUALIENMARKT



Photo Credit: fottoo - stock.adobe.com

In the fall, Munich's Viktualienmarkt offers food lovers fresh mushrooms, a colorful variety of pumpkins, and the classic pairing of sparkling Federweißer (young wine) with savory onion tart.

AMERICAN IN **BAVARIA** DICTIONARY

Here is your "**American in Bavaria Dictionary**" – organized for everyday use, ranging from medical care to social interactions.

In Bavaria – especially around the garrisons in Grafenwöhr, Vilseck, and Hohenfels – language is much more than just grammar. It's a door opener. While in northern Germany you say "Moin," you can get by with standard German in Bavaria, but a few words of dialect will win you the hearts of the locals (and maybe even a free beer).



1. THE WASTE DISPOSAL DICTIONARY

Term	Pronunciation (US-Phonetic)	Meaning / Context	Insider-Tip
Gelber Sack	Gell-ber Zack	Yellow sack for lightweight packaging (plastics, metals, composites).	These yellow bags are usually available free of charge at the town hall (citizens' office) or are distributed to households once a year on a roll.
Wertstoffhof	Vairt-stoff-hohf	Local recycling center / dump for bulky waste, electronics, and hazardous materials.	Disposing of bulky waste or old electrical appliances at the recycling center is free; it's best to have your proof of residence ready.
Pfand	Pfahnd	Deposit system on bottles and cans (usually 8 or 25 cents).	Never throw deposit bottles in 'the regular trash—collecting and returning them is a lucrative source of income and protects the environment.

2. THE SHOPPING DICTIONARY

Term	Pronunciation (US-Phonetic)	Meaning / Context	Insider-Tip
Ladenschluss	Lah-den-schloss	Closing time / Regulations on store operating hours.	Always plan your weekend shopping for Friday or Saturday morning – on Saturday evening the shelves are often emptier and the lines longer.
Bargeld	Bar-gelt	Cash currency.	Always carry an "emergency reserve" of cash; especially for smaller amounts or in rural areas, this is often the only accepted form of payment.
Kassenzettel	Kass-en-tsett-el	Store receipt.	Always keep this for larger purchases, as it serves as the official proof of purchase for warranty claims or exchanges in Germany.

FACTS: RULES OF CONDUCT (OFF-POST)

1. WASTE SEPARATION IS MANDATORY (NO EXCEPTIONS):

In Germany, **waste must be strictly separated** into categories (yellow bag, organic waste, paper, residual waste). Incorrectly filled bins are simply left uncollected by the garbage collectors, which immediately leads to problems with the neighbors in apartment buildings.

2. STORE CLOSING TIMES RESTRICT SPONTANEITY:

Since supermarkets in **Bavaria usually close at 8:00 p.m.** on weekdays and remain **completely closed on Sundays**, planning your shopping in advance on Friday or Saturday morning is essential.

3. QUIET HOURS ARE ENSHRINED IN LAW:

The legally mandated **quiet hours** (nights and midday on weekdays, and 24 hours a day on Sundays) **require absolute consideration**; noisy activities such as drilling or mowing the lawn are not tolerated during these times.



FROM ALMDUDLER TO JAGERTEE:

A DRINK GUIDE FOR EXPLORERS

Whether in a cozy Bavarian beer garden, a traditional Viennese coffeehouse, a lively beach bar, or at an après-ski spot in the Alps—drinks are far more than just a way to quench thirst. They represent a taste of home, a social bond, and pure joie de vivre. Every country and region has produced its own unique classics – drinks that tell stories of craftsmanship, tradition, and sometimes even ingenious ways of using up leftovers.

For Americans in particular—who often grew up with a completely different beverage landscape – Central Europe opens up a whole new world of flavors. Let's embark on a journey of taste across Europe and explore the most popular cult and national drinks—with a special focus on how they taste to American connoisseurs.

1. NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES & SOFT DRINKS

From sweet childhood memories to tart, refreshing pick-me-ups – non-alcoholic thirst quenchers have achieved true cult status.

SPEZI (GERMANY – BAVARIA):

What's in it: Cola and orange soda (a mixed drink).

Taste: Remember the taste of a "Suicide" (mixing all the sodas at a fast-food fountain)? Spezi is the grown-up, perfectly balanced European version of that. It tastes like a less sugary, fruity-spicy cola with a distinct note of sweet orange – extremely refreshing!

ALMDUDLER (AUSTRIA):

What's in it: Water, sugar, herbal extracts (lemon balm, sage, gentian, elderflower, cone-flower), citric acid, carbonation.

Taste: Austria's national drink tastes a bit like a blend of American ginger ale and floral herbal tea, all in the form of a sparkling soda. It is herbal, slightly sweet, and wonderfully aromatic.

MALT BEER (GERMANY / EUROPE):

What's in it: Water, barley malt, glucose-fructose syrup, carbonation, hops.

Taste: Despite the name (it is often non-alcoholic or contains only trace amounts of alcohol), it tastes nothing like conventional beer. The flavor is strongly reminiscent of liquid dark bread with caramel – similar to a very malty, sweet root beer, but without the characteristic American wintergreen note.

BITTER LEMON & GINGER ALE (EUROPEAN STYLE):

What's in it: Water, sugar, carbonation, citric acid, quinine or ginger extract.

Taste: Fans of American sodas will notice that European counterparts are often less artificially sweet and significantly more bitter. Bitter Lemon stands out for its authentic, refreshing bitterness derived from grapefruit and quinine, while European ginger ale is often punchier and more ginger-forward than many mild US varieties.

AFRI COLA (GERMANY):

What's in it: Water, sugar, carbonation, caffeine, flavoring.

Taste: A true retro classic. It has a fuller body and is less cloying than the famous US cola giants; it delivers a strong caffeine kick and features a subtle, spicy citrus note.

KOFOLA (CZECH REPUBLIC / SLOVAKIA):

What's in it: KOFO syrup (fruit and herbal syrup, caramel, licorice root extract, caffeine), carbonation.

Taste: Eastern Europe's answer to cola. It has a very distinctive, spicy licorice and herbal note (resembling a blend of cola and licorice) but is less acidic.

CLUB MATE (GERMANY):

What's in it: Water, mate tea extract, sugar, caffeine, carbonation.

Taste: An absolute favorite of the Berlin hipster and tech scenes. To US palates accustomed to sweet iced tea, Club Mate tastes unusual at first – tart, smoky, grassy, and bitter—but delivers a massive caffeine kick that quickly becomes addictive (it's an acquired taste).



FROM THE ALPS TO PUBS AND COFFEEHOUSES: WHAT GLASSES AND CUPS REVEAL ABOUT THE CULTURE – INCLUDING AN EXCLUSIVE TASTE GUIDE FOR AMERICAN PALATES.

RIVELLA (SWITZERLAND):

What's in it: Water, milk serum (whey), sugar, carbonation, lactic acid, herbal extracts.

Taste: A total "WTF" moment for US tourists – in a good way! Being whey-based sounds exotic to Americans, but it tastes like a fizzy, fruity-herbal soda with a hint of yogurt-like freshness. Hard to compare, but perhaps closest to a sparkling, sweet herbal kefir.

2. APERITIFS & ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

As the workday winds down, it's time for aperitifs, bitter liqueurs, and traditional spirits.

HUGO, LILLET WILD BERRY, APEROL SPRITZ, SARTI SPRITZ:

Taste: These fizzy, trendy drinks dominate every European summer. They are the European counterpart to the American spritzer or sweet cocktail, yet far lighter and more refreshing. While **Aperol Spritz** (bittersweet orange and rhubarb) and **Sarti Spritz** (fruity blood orange) evoke upscale Italian-Mediterranean bar culture, the floral **Hugo** (elderflower and mint) and the berry-forward **Lillet Wild Berry** win points for their pure, uncomplicated lightness.



AMARO CULTURE (CYNAR / CAMPARI / AVERNA / RAMAZZOTTI) & LILLET:

Taste: The perfect digestif after a heavy meal. Herbal bitters like **Averna** or **Ramazzotti** taste like a complex, dark, spiced medicinal tonic with notes of caramel. **Cynar** (artichoke-based) is even earthier and more bitter. For Americans accustomed to sweet cocktails, this offers a revelation in flavor, embodying the idea that "bitter is the new sweet." **Lillet**, on the other hand, is a mild, elegant aperitif wine that melts on the tongue with wonderful fruity and floral notes.

METAXA (GREECE):

Taste: A fascinating spirit that sits somewhere between brandy, cognac, and liqueur. It tastes smooth and extremely sweet, with heavy notes of dried raisins, honey, aged wood, and Mediterranean spices.

ANISE SPIRITS (PASTIS / PERNOD / OUZU / RAKI):

Taste: Anyone who likes American candy is familiar with the taste of black licorice. That is exactly what awaits you here in liquid form (turning milky-cloudy when water is added due to the essential oil anethole). Bold, herbal, and intense.

GERMAN & AUSTRIAN FRUIT BRANDY / SCHNAPS:

Taste: Unlike sweet American "schnapps" (which is often liqueur-like), European fruit brandies are crystal-clear, high-proof spirits with no added sugar. They taste pure, intense, and authentically of the fruit itself (apple, William's pear, plum); they deliver a brief burn on the finish while unfolding a clean fruit aroma.

RADLER / ALSTERWASSER / PANACHÉ:

Taste: The quintessential European summer session beer. It tastes like a light, quaffable, slightly hoppy beer that is perfectly mellowed by lemon soda, making it incredibly thirst-quenching.

BERLINER WEISSE (WITH A SHOT OF SYRUP):

Taste: A tart, top-fermented beer ("The Champagne of Berlin") that gains a vibrant color and a sweet-and-sour, almost candy-like contrast from a shot of raspberry or woodruff syrup.

3. COFFEE CULTURE

In Europe, coffee has long been both a lifestyle choice and a moment of pure enjoyment. It is where Italian elegance meets a rich tradition of coffeehouse culture.

ESPRESSO MACCHIATO / CORTADO:

Taste: Forget large, watered-down drip coffee served in a paper cup. An espresso macchiato ("stained" with a spoonful of milk foam) or a Spanish cortado (equal parts espresso and warm milk) offers concentrated coffee intensity paired with perfect, velvety creaminess – ideal for a quick energy boost.

EISKAFFEE (GERMAN-STYLE ICED COFFEE):

Taste: This isn't just cold iced coffee from a carton; it's a true dessert-style indulgence! Strong, chilled coffee meets creamy Bourbon vanilla ice cream, a generous dollop of whipped cream, and chocolate sprinkles – the epitome of a cozy summer afternoon at a café.

4. HOT DRINKS & WINTER SPECIALTIES

When snow falls outside, these traditional hot drinks provide comforting warmth from the inside out.

GLÜHWEIN (MULLED WINE):

Taste: Similar to American mulled wine, but often more intensely spiced. It features the flavors of hot red wine, sweet cane sugar, aromatic cinnamon, cloves, and fresh oranges. An essential companion to any Christmas market visit.

JAGERTEE (GERMANY, AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND):

Taste: A stark contrast to mild hot cocoa. Authentic Jagertee contains strong Inländer rum (at least 37.5% ABV) combined with black tea, red wine, and robust spices. It warms skiers up instantly after a run and packs a real punch!

EIERLIKÖR (OR ADVocaAT):

Taste: Similar to American eggnog but much thicker and more concentrated – more like a creamy, alcoholic pudding made from egg yolks, fine brandy, and vanilla. In Europe, it is often enjoyed straight from wafer cups or consumed during the holidays.

CONCLUSION

Whether non-alcoholic with Alpine herbs, sparkling in a glass on a summer evening, or steaming hot at a winter ski lodge, the world of beverages in the heart of Europe is incredibly diverse. It reflects the history, agriculture, and way of life of the people.

Which of these classics – be it the fizzy Spezi, the surprising Rivella, or the warming Jagertee – is an absolute must for your next cozy get-together? Try something new next time and enjoy a taste of living culture in your glass!

GERMAN SUPERMARKET SURVIVAL GUIDE

How to Understand German Supermarkets: A Quick-Reference Translator for US Military Families

Welcome to Germany! Doing your weekly grocery shopping at a German supermarket might seem intimidating at first, but it is one of the absolute best parts of living abroad. This handy cheat sheet helps you bridge the gap between the US commis-

sary and local German supermarkets like Edeka, Rewe, Lidl, or Aldi. Use this guide to easily translate ingredient lists on packaging, avoid the dreaded "milk and egg shock," and master the lightning-fast German checkout process like a pro.

1. ESSENTIAL GERMAN SUPERMARKET VOCABULARY & INGREDIENT TRANSLATOR

TERM	PRONUNCIATION	TRANSLATION & KEY SHOPPING PRO-TIPS
Zucker 	Tsook-er	Sugar. Standard term on all ingredient lists. Look out for hidden sugars in processed foods.
mit / ohne Zucker	mit / oh-neh Tsook-er	With / Without Sugar. 'Ohne Zucker' means no sugar added (great for healthy choices).
süß / gesüßt	sues / ge-zues-t	Sweet / Sweetened. Labeled on canned foods, processed fruits, and drinks.
ungesüßt	oon-ge-zues-t	Unsweetened. No sweeteners added. Crucial for baking supplies or natural purées.
glutenfrei	gloo-ten-fry	Gluten-free. Look for this and the Crossed Grain symbol (especially the popular 'Schär' brand).
laktosefrei	lak-toh-zeh-fry	Lactose-free. Extremely common across German milk, yogurts, and cheeses.
pflanzlich 	pflants-lik	Plant-based. Vegan options. Look for the brand 'Alpro' for soy, oat, or almond products.
Bio	Bee-oh	Organic. Strictly regulated in the EU. Look for the green hexagonal national organic seal.
Grieß	Grees	Semolina (Wheat). Warning: Made of wheat! It is not gluten-free unless specifically marked.
Hafer 	Hah-fer	Oat. Crucial for non-dairy milk labels (e.g., 'Haferdrink' or 'Hafermilch').
gekocht & gefärbt	ge-kokt & ge-fehrt	Cooked & Dyed. Pre-boiled, multi-colored eggs sold at room temp. Safe, ready-to-eat snack!
frisch	frish	Fresh. Labeled as 'frische Milch' (refrigerated milk) or 'frische Eier' (raw, unboiled eggs).
Apfelschorle	Ap-fel-shor-leh	Apple Spritzer. Apple juice mixed with carbonated mineral water. A staple German beverage.
Rucola	Roo-koh-lah	Arugula. Also called 'rocket' or 'Rauke'. Field salad is sold as 'Feldsalat'.
Ahornsirup	A-horn-zee-roop	Maple Syrup. Pure maple syrup is available but expensive. Standard table syrup is rare.
Honig 	Hoh-nik	Honey. High quality. Labeled as 'Deutscher Imkerhonig' to indicate certified local German honey.
scharf / Schärfe	sharf / shehr-feh	Spicy / Heat. Signifies hot/spicy (e.g., 'scharfe Soße' for hot sauce, 'scharfer Senf' for hot mustard).
Senf	Zenf	Mustard. Germany is famous for its mustard. It's a major allergen and always printed in bold.

2. THE MILK & EGG CULTURE SHOCK

Many newcomers experience a bit of culture shock when looking at the refrigerated aisle. German preservation methods differ significantly from those in the USA. Here is how to handle the two most common surprises:

THE MILK DILEMMA

Long-life milk (UHT milk): Unopened pasteurized UHT milk is found on open shelves without refrigeration. Thanks to ultra-high-temperature (UHT) processing, it remains shelf-stable for months without cooling. However, once opened, it **MUST** be stored in the refrigerator!

Fresh milk (Frischmilch): This is a refrigerated product and is always found in the dairy section.

Buttermilk: This is very popular in Germany and is often available in the refrigerated section in flavored varieties (such as lemon).

Plant-based alternatives: If you are looking for plant-based milk substitutes, look for the word pflanzlich (plant-based) or terms like Hafer (oat). Brands such as Alpro or Oatly (e.g., the Barista Edition) are widely available on German milk shelves.

Cream (whipping cream): Labeled as Schlag-sahne or Sahne. It is either found on the unrefrigerated baking aisle shelves next to the condensed milk (it has been heated and can be kept outside the refrigerator), or in the refrigerated section. The latter must be kept in the refrigerator. Once opened, it should be used up within a few days.

THE LOWDOWN ON EGGS

Room-temperature eggs: Raw eggs ("fresh eggs") are sold on store shelves at room temperature. Unlike in the USA, eggs in Germany are not washed before sale. This keeps the protective "cuticle" intact, which naturally blocks bacteria.

Dyed eggs: Brightly painted or dyed eggs sold on standard shelves are not raw. They are hard-boiled, dyed, and shelf-stable without refrigeration. Perfect for a quick snack on the go!



3. GERMAN SUPERMARKET ETIQUETTE & THE “CHECKOUT PRINT”

German cash registers are designed for pure efficiency, not casual small talk. Understanding the unwritten rules of the “cash battle” is essential to survival:

ACTION	THE GERMAN RULE	MILITARY PRO-TIP / EXPLANATION
Einkaufswagen (Shopping Cart) 	Bring a 1-Euro, 2-Euro- oder 50-Cent-coin to unlock a shopping cart. Tip: A 25-cent coin (or a quarter) also works.	The carts are linked together in rows. Insert a coin (or a plastic shopping cart token) to release the cart. Return it to the collection rack to get your coin back. Never leave shopping carts unattended in the parking lot!
Eintüten (Bagging) 	You must bring your own reusable bags and pack your purchases yourself.	There are no baggers. Bring reusable bags or purchase paper or plastic bags at the checkout. Place scanned items back into your shopping cart immediately and pack them at the side counter.
Kassensprint (Checkout Race)	German cashiers are lightning-fast. Speed is practically a national sport here.	German cashiers sit on comfortable chairs and scan items at extreme speed. Have your payment method (card or cash) ready immediately. Packing your items right at the checkout is strongly discouraged – it holds up the line!
Kassenbon (Barrier Gate) 	Always keep your receipt until you have left the store.	At modern self-checkout terminals (e.g., at Edeka), you must scan the barcode printed on your receipt at the exit gate. No exit without scanning! Do not throw away your receipt while still inside the store.

4. HOUSEHOLD & PRODUCT DIFFERENCES TO EXPECT

Adapting your household routine is part of the adventure of living abroad. German products often take a different approach to household efficiency. Pay attention to these key differences:

Dishwasher Salt (Spezialsalz)

German tap water has a very high calcium content (hard water). It is essential to fill your dishwasher's salt compartment with special dishwasher salt. Using American dishwashing products from the PX can damage German appliances and trigger error messages.

Yellow Fanta & Spezi

German Fanta is yellow because the European Union strictly regulates artificial food coloring; natural orange juice concentrates are used instead. Spezi (or Mezzo Mix) is an extremely popular canned blend of cola and orange soda.

SodaStream Cylinder Exchanges

If you use a SodaStream, do not buy replacement cylinders online or at the PX. You can exchange empty cylinders for fresh ones at the service counter of Edeka or other supermarkets for a small service fee.

“Paprika” Chips

While Cheddar cheese or BBQ flavors dominate in America, Germany's standard chip flavor is paprika (e.g., funny-frisch Paprika chips). They have a savory, spiced taste comparable to a mild BBQ flavor.

SETTLING IN FASTER: GERMAN STORES AND THEIR US COUNTERPARTS

Find out which American supermarkets and home improvement stores offer the closest matches to the brands you know.

Moving to a new country can be overwhelming, especially when navigating everyday shopping. To help you settle in, this guide provides a quick translation of common German stores into their US equivalents. Whether you are looking for groceries, electronics, home improvement supplies, or clothing, this list will help you find the stores that feel most familiar based on your usual shopping habits.

CATEGORY	GERMAN STORE	AMERICAN EQUIVALENT
Discount & Department Stores	Action	Big Lots (Discount retail chain)
	Kaufland	Walmart or Target (Hypermarkets)
Grocery Stores	Edeka, Netto, Rewe, ALDI, Lidl	Local grocery stores (ALDI and Lidl is also in the US)
Drugstores & Beauty	DM & Rossmann	Walgreens and CVS
	Douglas	Sephora
Clothing & Footwear	C&A	JCPenney clothing section
	Peek & Cloppenburg, Breuninger, Wöhr	Macy's
	KiK, famila	Kmart
	Deichmann	Payless Shoe Source
Electronics	MediaMarkt, Saturn	Best Buy
Home Improvement	Hornbach, Obi, Hagebaumarkt	The Home Depot
Sports & Recreation	Decathlon, Sport Scheck, Intersport	Dick's Sporting Goods
Dollar & Variety Stores	Tedi	Dollar General, 99 Cent Store

| by Editor



CONNECT WITH LOCAL TRADITIONS, UNDERSTAND GERMAN RULES, AND UNLOCK THE BEST EXPERIENCES OF YOUR OVERSEAS TOUR.

"Welcome to Germany!" – for many relocating to Germany following a PCS move, this phrase marks the start of an exciting adventure. But what exactly makes daily life – amidst Bavarian beer gardens, northern coastal landscapes, and historic cities – so distinctive? Whether you are seeking the unparalleled quality of local bakeries, appreciating the relaxed discipline found on the Autobahn, or enjoying breathtaking nature right on your doorstep, we have rounded up the top nine highlights that make Germany a special home for every newcomer. Join us as we explore the culture, the rules, and the little pleasures that make life here so enjoyable.

1. THE BAKERIES

German bakeries are in a league of their own. You can find fresh bread, handmade pastries, and Krapfen (doughnuts) everywhere – treats so good they might just ruin ordinary American doughnuts for you forever.

Germany boasts an incredible variety of baked goods, with many specialties varying by region. One of the best parts of living here is a trip to the local bakery first thing in the morning: shelves filled with fresh loaves, aromatic pretzels, and exquisite cakes await you.

And let's not forget the traditional afternoon ritual of "Kaffee und Kuchen" (coffee and cake). Every bakery has its own recipes, and many traditional family-run shops are happy to take custom orders for special cakes.

Typical highlights found at the bakery counter:

- **Krapfen:** (Known by this name in southern Germany – filled pastries that give doughnuts a run for their money).
- **Nussecken & Nusschnecken:** Nutty triangles and nut-filled swirls—crispy, nutty, and perfect with coffee.

WELCOME TO GERMANY

- **Quarkbällchen:** Small, fluffy dough balls made with Quark (a type of fresh curd cheese).
- **Taschen (Turnovers):** Whether cherry, Quark, or apple – always fresh and fruity.
- **Pretzels:** The traditional Bavarian lye-dough specialty (best enjoyed fresh with butter!).
- **Classic Cheesecake:** Generally lighter, fluffier, and less sweet than American cheesecake.

2. THE AUTOBAHN

Yes, driving fast is exciting, but what really stands out on German autobahns is the tremendous discipline of the drivers. People look out for one another, strictly observe the rule of keeping to the right, and flow harmoniously with the traffic.

A prime example of how well-organized Germany is can be seen in the Rettungsgasse (emergency corridor): even during hours-long traffic jams, drivers – as if by magic – immediately form a precise lane down the middle for emergency vehicles.

Although high speeds are common and speed limits are absent on many stretches, driving here – once you've adjusted to the traffic rules – feels surprisingly safe, disciplined, and smooth.

3. NATURE IS EVERYWHERE

Lakes, dense forests, rolling hills, and imposing mountains right on your doorstep: unlike in the US, you often don't need to undertake hours-long drives to experience spectacular scenery – nature is omnipresent in Germany.

4. SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS

One of the most striking things after moving to Germany is how safe and clean daily life feels. Towns and villages are extremely pedestrian-friendly, public spaces are impeccably maintained, and it is perfectly normal for children to play outside on the street or in parks.

Of course, there are always exceptions depending on where you live, but for most US families – especially in their local neighborhoods – many typical worries suddenly vanish:

- No fear of crime around every corner (though, naturally, one still exercises caution in major cities like Berlin).
- No worrying about Amazon packages being stolen from the doorstep ("porch pirates" are hardly an issue here).
- No panic if an expensive robotic lawnmower or garden furniture is left outside.
- Relaxed evening walks back to the car across unlit parking lots.
- No heart attack if you accidentally forget to lock the garage or the front door.

10 ESSENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR YOUR PCS MOVE

5. FESTIVALS, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

Wine festivals, beer festivals, Christmas markets, and traditional village fairs: regardless of the season, there is almost always a festival taking place nearby. Germany knows how to bring neighborhoods and communities together through centuries-old traditions like few other countries.

Pro tip for newcomers: Don't be shy about visiting the local Volksfest or village fair. You don't need perfect German to have a great time enjoying a Maß (liter) of beer, fresh pretzels, and local specialties!

6. TRAVELING IN EUROPE IS EASY

One of the best things about living in Germany as an American is how accessible travel becomes. Weekend trips to other countries suddenly become part of everyday life rather than a once-in-a-lifetime vacation.

Traveling in Europe: From Bavaria, you can reach Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, or Switzerland in just a few hours by car. Budget airlines and the European rail network make city trips to Paris, Rome, or Prague extremely easy.

7. WASTE SEPARATION (RECYCLING)

Paper, organic waste, the "Yellow Bag" (packaging), glass, and general waste must be meticulously separated. Improper sorting can lead to trouble with your landlord or neighbors.

8. QUIET HOURS

Sundays and public holidays are strictly designated as quiet days. On weekdays, too, loud activities like lawn mowing or drilling are off-limits between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM, as well as during midday rest periods.

9. WELLNESS CULT: GERMAN SAUNA CULTURE

Americans often find it difficult at first, but: shed your inhibitions and leave your swimwear outside! Once you've tried traditional

German sauna culture – which is strictly textile-free (no swim-suits allowed) in the vast majority of thermal baths and sauna complexes – you'll understand why locals love it so much.

Pro tip for newcomers: If you can't bring yourself to do it at first, look specifically for "textile sauna" days (usually on certain days of the week).

10. FAST FOOD: THE DÖNER

Affordable, filling, and just right after a long day or a late night out: the Döner Kebab lives up to all the hype.

Why it's a must: Fresh flatbread, crispy meat (chicken or veal), crunchy salad, and legendary garlic or herb sauce make it the perfect meal on the go.

Pro tip for newcomers: In addition to the classic Döner, you should definitely try the Dürüm (wrapped in a thin flatbread) or the vegetarian version with grilled vegetables and feta cheese.



| by Editor

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TWO CULTURES, ONE FALL:

A FOCUS ON HOLIDAYS

A guide for the Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, and Hohenfels region — how we experience the coming months together, blending Bavarian tradition and American heritage.

Fall in the Upper Palatinate is a special time. In the area surrounding U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, the landscape is defined not only by golden forests but also by a busy holiday calendar. For local residents and the U.S. community, this means planning is key. From German Unity Day to Thanksgiving, here is what you need to know about the dates that will impact your daily routine.

GERMAN FALL HOLIDAYS

Several important dates mark the German calendar in October and November:



OCTOBER / NOVEMBER

The fall season kicks off with a regional peculiarity that directly affects the communities surrounding the military training areas:

DAY OF GERMAN UNITY (October 3):

A nationwide public holiday commemorating the **reunification of Germany in 1990**. Please plan accordingly, as shops off post will be closed.

REFORMATION DAY (October 31):

While this is a public holiday in many northern and eastern German states, it remains a **regular workday in Bavaria**. However, you may experience delays in logistics and deliveries coming from northern Germany.

ALL SAINTS' DAY (November 1):

A public holiday in Bavaria. **It is a quiet day of remembrance**, with public facilities and shops in the region closed.

U.S. HOLIDAYS



Several important dates mark the German calendar in October and November:



OCTOBER / NOVEMBER

COLUMBUS DAY (Second Monday in October):

An **official U.S. federal holiday**. Many areas of USAG Bavaria observe this as a "training holiday" – a good time to double-check appointment schedules on post in advance.

HALLOWEEN (October 31):

A **highlight** for young and old alike. Although not a public holiday, it is deeply **rooted in U.S. culture**; expect **plenty of activity and trick-or-treating** in the residential areas around the installation.

VETERANS DAY (November 11):

An **important U.S. holiday honoring all veterans**. On this day, services on post (such as the PX or post offices) often operate according to adjusted "holiday hours."

THANKSGIVING

(Fourth Thursday in November):

The most **important family holiday** in the U.S. As an official federal holiday, **Thanksgiving centers on community and togetherness**.



TIP:

Take advantage of the various holidays to rediscover the region. When U.S. facilities are closed for the holiday, excursion destinations in the Bavarian Upper Palatinate often offer wonderful alternatives for intercultural family activities.



TRANSYLVANIA

HALLOWEEN TOUR:

A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF THE DRACULA LEGEND

Experience the ultimate fall adventure with a fully organized tour of Romania. Immerse yourself in the authentic history, medieval architecture, and legendary folklore of Transylvania, culminating in an exclusive Halloween celebration at the famous Bran Castle.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS & ITINERARY

UNESCO World Heritage & History: Explore the remarkably well-preserved medieval citadel of Sighișoara – the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler – and visit the massive fortifications of the Prejmer fortified church.

The Ultimate Halloween Party: Enjoy an exclusive night-time tour of Bran Castle ("Dracula's Castle"), followed by a grand Halloween party in a heated marquee within the castle grounds, featuring music, dancing, and costumed revelers.

Cultural & Culinary Experiences: Savor traditional Transylvanian specialties at the rustic "Dacian's Barn" in Poiana Brașov, dine in a historic setting in Bucharest, and experience authentic regional music and dance.

Fairytale Architecture: Marvel at the breathtaking Neo-Renaissance Peleş Castle in Sinaia and discover the vibrant Belle Époque architecture in Bucharest's historic Lipscani district (Old Town).

Sighișoara is a beautiful medieval town in the Transylvania region of Romania. Its historic Old Town has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1999, as it is one of the best-preserved inhabited fortresses in Europe. The town's landmark is the Clock Tower, standing 64 meters tall and featuring mechanical figures.

SAMPLE ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DAY 1: Sighișoara & Traditional Feast

Morning & Afternoon: Discover the walled citadel of Sighișoara. Visit the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler, climb the historic Clock Tower, and visit the Church on the Hill.

DAY 2: Fortified Churches & Guided Tour of Brașov

Morning: Step back in time at the Prejmer Fortified Church and explore the historic "village within a village."

Afternoon: Take a guided walking tour of Brașov's Council Square and marvel at the imposing Black Church.

Evening: Bran Castle & Halloween Celebration

Night: Experience a spooky yet delightful night tour through the mysterious corridors and hidden staircases of Bran Castle.

Late Night: Party the night away at a grand Halloween celebration in a heated fest tent on the castle grounds.

DAY 3: Peleş Castle & Bucharest's Belle Époque

Morning: Drive through the mountain town of Sinaia to visit the breathtaking Peleş Castle, built in the Neo-Renaissance style.

Evening: Arrival in Bucharest to explore the lively Lipscani district.

DAY 4: Palace of the Parliament & Return Journey

Morning: Take a panoramic tour of Bucharest, including a guided interior tour of the monumental Palace of the Parliament (also known as the House of the People).

| by Editor

Bran Castle (known as Dracula's Castle) in Romania celebrates Halloween every year with night tours, spooky activities such as "The Legend of Dracul," and large Halloween parties on the castle grounds.

Four countries, six days, unforgettable impressions. Discover how explorers and families based in Europe can master the ultimate road trip across the borders of Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, making the most of their time off.

The Ultimate 6-Day Balkan Adventure: From the Adriatic Riviera to the Heart of Herzegovina

WHY THE BALKAN REGION BELONGS ON EVERY PERSONAL TRAVEL BUCKET LIST

Those living and working in Europe benefit from unique proximity to the continent's most fascinating and historically rich landscapes. While classic Western destinations are well-known, true adventure lies just beyond the southeastern borders.

For anyone looking to escape the daily grind and explore new horizons, a multi-day journey of discovery through the Balkans offers the perfect blend of millennia-old history, breathtaking coastlines, and welcoming cultures. Whether exploring historic old towns or forging your own path, this 6-day expedition through Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina serves as the ideal guide for an unforgettable European travel adventure.

ROUTE OVERVIEW & DAILY ITINERARY

Days 1–2: The Pearl of the Adriatic & Montenegro's Coast

Split to Dubrovnik (Croatia): The journey begins on the historic coast of Split, heading south toward Dubrovnik. Once there, a guided walking tour through the Old Town reveals traces of a maritime history spanning millennia. Walk along the imposing city walls, stroll through narrow alleyways, savor regional seafood specialties, or take a refreshing dip in the azure waters of the Adriatic.

Budva & Kotor (Montenegro): In the early evening, the route takes you across the border into Montenegro. The next morning is dedicated to Budva's medieval Old Town before continuing in the afternoon to Kotor – the "Bride of the Adriatic." Nestled at the southernmost tip of Southern Europe's only fjord, the town captivates visitors with its winding cobblestone alleys and historic fortifications.

Days 3–4: Insights into Albanian Culture

Exploring Shkodër: After leaving Budva, the journey takes you across the border into Albania to the historic city of Shkodër. A local expert guides you through the city's history and shows you the impressive Rozafa Fortress. Historical back-

ground and lively anecdotes provide a genuine feel for the region's culture before returning to Budva in the evening.

Days 5–6: The Magic of Herzegovina & The Return

Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina): After packing up, the journey continues to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Mostar, a local guide leads a tour through the historic Old Town, considered the jewel of Herzegovina. Highlights include the famous Old Bridge (Stari Most) spanning the Neretva River and the lively old market (čaršija). After extensive sightseeing and enjoying local specialties like čevapi, the group travels back to Split for the final evening together.

Fast Facts

- **COUNTRIES VISITED:** 4 nations (Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina) within 6 days.
- **CURRENCY:** Multiple currencies are used (Euros in Montenegro; Kuna/Euros in Croatia; Lek in Albania; BAM/Convertible Mark in Bosnia and Herzegovina). **Tip:** Small Euro bills are always useful in historic old towns and at markets.
- **BORDER CROSSINGS:** Since travel takes place outside the Schengen Area, carrying valid passports and all necessary residence and travel documents is mandatory.

THE 5-STEP TRAVEL CHECKLIST

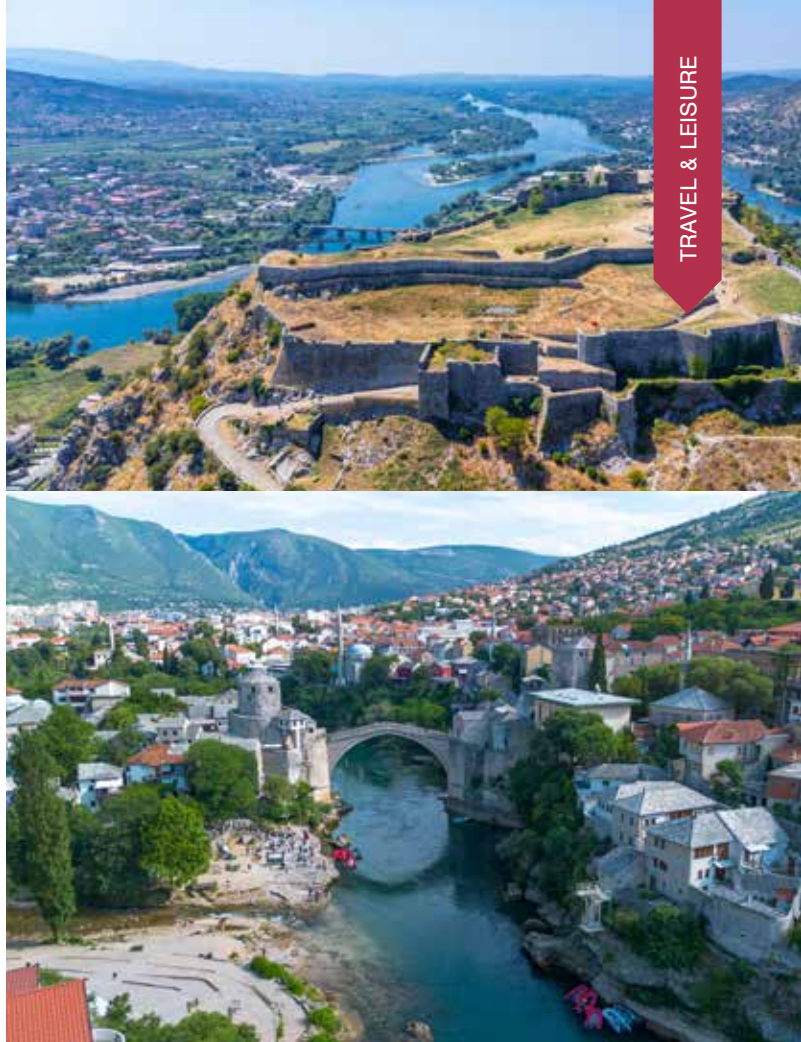
1. **Check documents:** Ensure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date and keep all border and identification documents handy.
2. **Arrange for international vehicle insurance:** If using your own vehicle or a rental car, check in advance whether your insurance covers Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rental agencies often require advance notification and an additional cross-border fee.

3. **Download offline navigation:** Since roaming charges may apply or connections may be unstable outside the EU (especially in Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia), you should download digital maps (such as Google Maps or Maps.me) for offline use beforehand.
4. **Plan for cash reserves:** While larger restaurants accept card payments, many smaller shops, market booths, and toll roads in Albania and Bosnia require cash in the local currency or euros.
5. **Footwear & clothing:** Non-slip walking shoes are essential for navigating historic cobblestone streets (especially in Dubrovnik, Kotor, and Mostar); respectful attire is recommended when visiting religious sites.

Expert Pro-Tip

Avoid border delays: At the border crossings between Croatia and Montenegro (such as Debeli Brijeg), as well as upon re-entry, long waiting times caused by tour buses can occur during the day. Leave your accommodation around 7:00 a.m. to clear the checkpoints quickly and enjoy the old towns in a relaxed atmosphere during the morning hours.

| by Editor



TRAVEL & LEISURE



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Simply call 01378-803201* and provide the keyword "CHRISTMAS," along with your name, preferred date, address, and telephone number. The deadline for entries is November 8, 2026.

Good luck, and enjoy the event!

*Telemedia Interactive GmbH; 50 cents per call from German landlines; calls from mobile networks cost more. Privacy policy available at:
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Participation is open only to individuals aged 18 or older (excluding employees of Oberpfalz Medien GmbH and their relatives). Legal recourse is excluded.

Photo Credit: TNT Productions

A RIOT OF COLOR AND PEAKS: WHY GOLDEN FALL IN THE ALPS IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR



FROM CRYSTAL-CLEAR VISTAS AND GLOWING LARCH FORESTS TO CULINARY DELIGHTS: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ALPINE FALL – FEATURING THE BEST TIPS FOR ACTIVE TRAVELERS, GOURMETS, AND NATURE LOVERS.

Summer is slowly bidding farewell, and with it, the bustle at the Alps' popular hotspots fades away. Yet, anyone who thinks the travel season is over is sorely mistaken: for many connoisseurs, nature enthusiasts, and active travelers, the absolute best time of year is just beginning. As nature dons its most spectacular attire, the Alps reveal their most dramatic, colorful, and – at the same time – most peaceful side.

Our comprehensive seasonal overview reveals why fall in the mountains holds such a magical allure, which regions are absolute must-sees, and how to ensure your getaway becomes an unforgettable experience.

From Hiking to Wellness: The Best Fall Activities

1. HIKING WITH PANORAMIC VIEWS

Since mornings at higher altitudes can turn chilly and bring the risk of frost from October onwards, it is best to shift leisurely hikes to mid-altitude areas and alpine pasture regions. Make the most of warm afternoon hours on sunny high plateaus – though be sure to check the opening times of mountain huts and cable cars beforehand.

2. CULINARY DELIGHTS & TRADITIONS:

Almabtrieb and Törggelen

The Almabtrieb (September/October): When cows return from summer pastures to the valley, they are adorned with magnificent decorations. Many Alpine villages celebrate this event with grand festivals, music, and regional delicacies.

Törggelen in South Tyrol: A centuries-old tradition. After a hike through vineyards or fall forests, visitors stop at traditional wine taverns (Buschenschänken). Hearty barley soups, Schlutzkrapfen (similar to Italian ravioli), homemade sausage with sauerkraut, sweet Krapfen

(a type of doughnut), roasted chestnuts (Keschtn), and Suuser (young, fermenting wine) are all served.

3. CYCLING & BIKEPACKING

Fall is peak season for mountain bikers and gravel bikers. The trails are dry, and while the climbs may make you sweat, the cooler air makes them much more manageable. Many regions also offer guided e-bike tours.

4. WELLNESS IN THE MOUNTAINS

When the mountain air turns crisp in the evening, nothing beats combining activity with relaxation. Thermal spa regions like the Ötztal (Aqua Dome in Tyrol) or the Gasten Valley (Salzburg region) entice visitors with heated outdoor pools and direct views of the fall mountain landscape.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR YOUR FALL TRIP TO THE ALPS

- **Weather Changes & Earlier Dusk:** Days are noticeably shorter, and mountain weather can change rapidly. Plan shorter tours than you would in high summer.
- **The Right Gear:** Be sure to pack a hat, gloves, a warm fleece or down jacket, and sturdy hiking boots with good tread. At altitudes of 1,500 to 2,000 meters, the first snow can fall unexpectedly in the fall, or overnight frost can make paths slippery.
- **Check Opening Hours:** Find out in advance whether mountain lifts, hotels, and mountain huts are still open, as many businesses switch to the off-season or close for seasonal breaks after the summer holidays.

| by Editor

BAVARIAN HOSPITALITY AT ITS BEST: ENJOY THE BOOTSHAUS IN AMBERG'S HISTORIC CENTRE IN AUTUMN

The Bootshaus is the address for Bavarian upscale cuisine in the historic old town of Amberg. But not only that – the five houses, partly protected as historic monument and more than 800 years old, also offer a beautiful boutique hotel – for those that search for something special to stay for the night, or an unforgettable experience for a visit from abroad.

No two rooms in the Bootshaus are the same, but each one is unforgettable. It can be the half-timbered wall setting striking accents, or the historic roof truss, the beamed ceiling and a round arch creating an atmospheric ambience. The 19 guest rooms range from 15 double rooms to 4 suites of varying sizes, all offering the highest levels of comfort and state-of-the-art facilities. Now, in autumn, two of the suites, that have an integrated private sauna, offer a particularly cozy stay. Not forgetting the free-standing bathtub! And always right there – the river "Vils" – atmospherically staged offering an ever-changing beautiful sight.

The restaurant also impresses with great cuisine and beer from its town Amberg. All dishes are freshly prepared with regional ingredients. Having the different seasons in mind, the recipes and

menus are always carefully crafted. In autumn you can expect fresh dishes with venison or mushrooms from the nearby forests. The cozy dining area invites you to enjoy a hearty snack or a fine dinner, while you can still catch some sun rays during the day at the terrace overlooking the river.

The team at the Bootshaus speak English throughout, and the restaurant menu, room information and website are available in English, too.

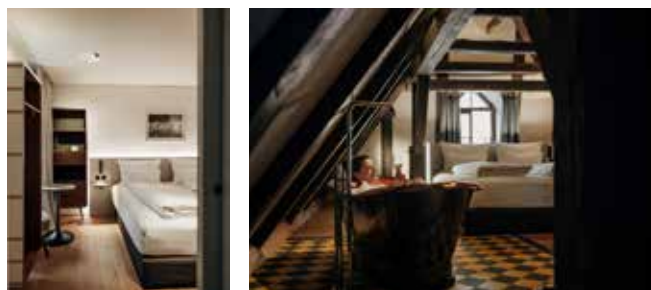


Photo Credit: Miriam Koch (2)

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Pure fall enjoyment:

PUMPKIN SOUP –

ONE CLASSIC, ONE WITH A SOPHISTICATED SURPRISE

Fall smells of golden leaves, cool air, and warming soups. Nothing fits this season better than a velvety pumpkin soup. Whether traditionally served with sour cream or surprisingly refined with silken tofu – both recipes bring heart and soul into bowls full of well-being.

CLASSIC PUMPKIN SOUP

Ingredients for four to six people

- One medium-sized Hokkaido pumpkin
- 2 onions
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons butter
- about 1/2 liter broth
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
- Salt
- Pepper
- 200g sour cream

PUMPKIN SOUP RECIPE

Wash the pumpkin and remove any brown, tangled parts. Remove the seeds, dice the pumpkin flesh, and sauté in hot butter along with the chopped onions and garlic. Add broth and season with marjoram, salt, and pepper. The pumpkin should just be covered with liquid. Cover and simmer for about half an hour until softened.

Now stir the sour cream into the soup. To prevent it from curdling, transfer the sour cream to a separate bowl and stir in a few tablespoons of the hot sauce. Only when the mixture is creamy, add it to the rest of the pumpkin cream soup in the pot. Purée everything with a blender and season to taste. Dish with a drizzle of pumpkin seed oil, a few pumpkin seeds, and a drizzle of fresh sour cream before serving.

PUMPKIN SOUP WITH SILKEN TOFU

Ingredients for pumpkin soup with silken tofu (serves 3 to 4)

- 400 g silken tofu
- 1 kg pumpkin (Hokkaido)
- 2 onions
- 200 ml orange juice
- 1 l vegetable broth
- 50 g ginger
- 1/2 bunch cilantro
- A dash of olive oil
- A pinch of chili or cayenne pepper
- Salt



HOW TO PREPARE PUMPKIN SOUP WITH SILKEN TOFU

Peel the onion and chop into large cubes, peel the ginger and finely chop it.

Wash the pumpkin, dry it, halve it, scoop out the seeds with a spoon, and cut the flesh into slightly larger pieces.

Heat a large splash of olive oil in a pot on the stove-top, sauté the diced onion until translucent, add the pumpkin pieces, deglaze with orange juice (reserve a small splash for the tofu) and vegetable stock, add the ginger, and simmer gently over medium heat until softened.

Then blend with a blender until creamy, season with salt, cayenne pepper, and another splash of orange juice, if desired, and pass through a fine sieve.

Pluck the cilantro leaves from the sprigs and finely chop.

Place the silken tofu in a bowl, season with a splash of orange juice and a pinch of salt, and stir in the cilantro.

Fill the hot pumpkin soup into deep bowls, sprinkle with the seasoned silken tofu, and serve.

MEETING POINT FOR TECH PROFESSIONALS – THE CONRAD PROFISTORE WERNBERG

For more than a century, Conrad Electronic has been the go-to address for technology and electronics.

The family-owned company now focuses on the B2B sector. However, the Conrad Profistore in Wernberg is open to all residents of the Upper Palatinate region who also rely on professional-grade technology for their homes.

TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONICS FROM A SINGLE SOURCE

A new monitor, a spare part for your washing machine, or a specialized measuring device? Innovative smart home technology or the latest consumer electronics? The Conrad Profistore in Wernberg is the central hub for business and private customers to meet all their technological needs smoothly and quickly from a single source.

**LOOKING FOR TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRONICS,
AND GREAT SERVICE?**

A RELAXED SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

At the Wernberg store, tech enthusiasts will find everything they need for the smooth implementation of their projects, explains Profistore Manager Roland Riedlbauer: "From electronic components and tools to the latest consumer electronics: In addition to a huge product selection, we focus on special services for a relaxed shopping experience, easy accessibility, and fast availability."

A WIDE SELECTION, EXPERT ADVICE

Upon request, the on-site team also assists customers in finding the right technology for their needs. "Whether you're looking for a new sound system, need help choosing smart home devices, or want to solve a tricky electronics problem – we're happy to advise you personally. We're also here to help with questions about specific products or picking up online orders," says Roland Riedlbauer.

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CONRAD



Soulful Christmas,
pure heartfelt warmth
and powerful voices:

A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS

A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS is the extraordinary Christmas show created by renowned pianist **Toby Mayerl**. A concert evening that blends an inspiring variety of American Christmas songs, selected German classics and special instrumental pieces into a truly unique musical experience.

Since its first live performance in 2021, the show has captivated audiences: **sold out shows**, standing ovations and genuinely emotional moments. In 2026, the show once again tours across Bavaria.

The show features outstanding artists from the Northern Bavarian music scene:

- the charismatic singer **Diana Laden**,
- **Michael "Michon" Deiml** (vocals & percussion),
- US singer **Charles Johnson**, cultural award recipient of the City of Bayreuth and known from The Voice of Germany,

- guitarist **Michael "Dandy" Dandorfer**,
- bassist **Harry Zawrel**,
- multi instrumentalist **Markus "Mackl" Strobl** (guitar & saxophone),
- and **Wolfram Glaser** on drums.

For more than 90 minutes, music by Donny Hathaway, Stephanie Mills, Wilson Pickett and Dionne Warwick meets funky arrangements, rare Christmas gems and beloved traditional pieces – until everyone joins in for the joyful "Boogie Woogie Santa Claus."

Live during Advent 2026 in Sulzbach Rosenberg and Ursensollen.

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