

DEUTSCHES REINSHEITSGEBOT / GERMAN PURITY LAW

beer ingredient: die Bierzutat, die Bierzutaten

GERMANY'S HOP ROAD

special menus featuring regional food products—lamb, asparagus, mushrooms, potatoes, large white radishes, sheep’s-milk cheese—paired with the local beers.

Surely the most unusual food product from the Hallertau is *Hopfensprossen* (hops sprouts), also known as *Hopfenspargel* (hops asparagus) because they resemble small asparagus stalks. When the pale young shoots of the hops plants peek up from the brown earth in March and April, some of them are plucked for use in cooking. Hops shoots are used as an ingredient in soups; as a salad garnish or a salad themselves, dressed with vinegar and oil, and sprinkled with chopped bell peppers, hard-boiled eggs, and fresh herbs; and as a vegetable main dish in cream sauce seasoned with garlic and nutmeg, topped with minced fresh parsley, basil, and sage.

Hops also make an appearance as ingredients in breads, sausages, mustards, and jams; in distilled liquors and sweet liqueurs; and the hops leaves are used as a wrapping for a salt-and-caraway-flavored cheese known as *Hopfkäse*. Since ancient times, hops have been valued for their medicinal properties, too. Even today they are used in making cosmetics and some kinds of plant-based medicines.

Once you’ve eaten and drunk your way around the Hallertau, you might want to burn off all those calories on the local hike-and-bike trails. Then when your legs are aching and your feet refuse to budge, relax at a spa in a wooden tub full of warm water scented with honey and hops oil, with hops cones floating on the surface like little green bubbles.

A HOP-ING GOOD TIME

If you are interested in learning more about the Hallertau region and the world of hops, the following websites will provide additional information:

- [www.hopfenland-hallertau.de](http://www.hopfenland-hallertau.de).
- [www.hopfenmuseum.de](http://www.hopfenmuseum.de).
- [www.tourismusverband-hallertau.de](http://www.tourismusverband-hallertau.de).
- [www.brauereikarte.de](http://www.brauereikarte.de).
- [www.wolnzach.de](http://www.wolnzach.de).
- [www.kehlheim.de](http://www.kehlheim.de).



Hops cones nearly ready for harvesting.



Nice shot of growing hops.



A really nice hop



Historical drawing of hops cultivation in the 1700s (at the German Hops Museum in Wolnzach).



A couple drinking up the result of some really fine hops.