

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

“CANNSTÄTTER VOLKSFEST” / “WASEN STUTT GART FOLK FESTIVAL

www.cannstatter-volksfest.de

The first festival in 1818 lasted one day and had more than 30,000 visitors. At the time the village of Canstatt had a population of 3000. The Royal Couple donated cash prizes and honorary awards for outstanding agricultural accomplishment. The festival was designed to encourage the farmers.

At the same time the popular monarch couple established an agricultural school in castle Hohenheim. This set the foundation for today's agricultural university. Due to this and other outstanding efforts the young monarch was titled “King of the farmers” and “Farmer amongst kings”. In the German Agricultural Museum many of the developments, e.g. the double bladed plow, can still be seen.

From agricultural festival to people festival

The most important activities of the festival had been the award for breeding performance and the display of agricultural efficiency of the Wurttemberg farmers. The first food shops and carnies showed up with the first festival. The vendors attracted the people with sauerkraut, sausage and a lot of sweet fancy foods. A market completed the culinary choices. The carnies presented the strongest men, the fattest women and a lot of other curiosities. Through the years the festival grew larger and larger and transformed from the “Agricultural festival of Kannstadt” to the “Cannstatter Volksfest”.

During the 19th century the first festival lasted one day, by 1920 it was extended to five days and since 1972 the Volksfest has been celebrated for 16 days.

In the beginning, there had only been a few Volksfest-carnies and beer counters. They were moved to the edge of the festival in favour of the royal lounge and the tribune for the dignitaries. In 1860 the layout of the festival was three main streets and numerous side streets to handle the yearly increasing crowd. Today with around 350 companies, the Cannstatter Volksfest is the biggest carnival-festival worldwide. 4 to 5 million visitors are attracted to it.

King Wilhelm assigned his royal builder Nikolaus Thouret to create an emblem next to the royal lounge in the middle of the festival areal. He created the fruit pillar as a symbol for thanksgiving which is still the emblem of the Volksfest. Placed on top of the 23 m high pillar sits a bowl with fruits. Only the highest mobile Ferris wheels of the world is towering above it.

Today, the parade on the first festival Sunday is one of the most popular events of the Canstatter Volksfest. Nearly one hundred historical groups of town militia, Shepard-dancing-groups, festival wagons representing different crafts, groups dressed in traditional clothing and groups of musicians, create this colorful “Lindworm”. There are still groups in traditional clothes and professional period groups, which have taken part in the festival since 1841.

Dates

The festival is opened by a ceremony in which the incumbent Lord Mayor of Stuttgart tries to tap the first barrel of beer with as few hits as possible. This takes place on a Friday in late September, so that the duration of the festival is actually 17 days.

Trivia

In Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) a Cannstatter Volkfest is celebrated each year on Labor Day, including German beer and food ([1] (<http://www.cvvphilly.com/fest.html>)).