

## TAG DES DEUTSCHEN BIERES / GERMAN BEER DAY DEUTSCHER REINHEITSGEBOT / GERMAN PURITY LAW der 23. April 1516

### German Brewers Push for UNESCO Status on German Day of Beer



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The German Day of Beer is celebrated on April 23.

For 498 years, German culture, cuisines and stereotypes have revolved around one simple, malty beverage: beer. On April 23, 1516, the Reinheitsgebot, or Bavarian Purity Law was agreed upon by two dukes in Bavaria, regulating the production, ingredients, and even the price of a mug of beer. Originally, the law was implemented to combat competition for grain, yeast, and hops between the bakers and the brewers, two of the largest trade guilds of Germany. Soon, however, the signature combination of water, barley, and hops became synonymous with German, and especially with Bavarian, culture.

A cultural landmark

The Bavarian Purity Law is no longer an actual part of German law. In 1993 the Provisional German Beer Law went into effect, making the old law obsolete. However, it is akin to sacred text for some purity-crazy brewers in southern Germany. In 2013, the German Brewers Association began the process of making the original text of the Reinheitsgebot into a UNESCO World Cultural Treasure. By 2016, the 500th anniversary of the law, the brewer's union hopes to be celebrating its UNESCO status as well. Some may scoff at the attempt, saying it promotes stereotypes of German beer drinkers, but the president of the brewer's union, Hans-George Eils, sees it differently. "If Germany today enjoys a reputation of beer drinkers, it is thanks to the purity law," he said of their campaign. "It guarantees purity, quality and salubriousness."

The next meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee takes place from June 15 to 25. The brewers are hoping that the Reinheitsgebot will be nominated then.

- North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria are the biggest consumers of beer within Germany. In 2013, these two states consumed a mind-boggling 9.7 million hectoliters, which is enough to fill nearly 400 Olympic-sized swimming pools.
- In 2013, Germany was also home to over 1,300 different breweries, which produce over 5,000 different types of beer to provide for their thirty patrons.
- The Rheinheitsgebot specified that the price of a glass of beer would not exceed 2 pfennige (pennies).