

OKTOBERFEST FROM A TO Z

Oktoberfest Kultur / Oktoberfest Culture

Munich without Oktoberfest is still a lot of fun!

This is also what the innkeepers are hoping for. Because they too have a plan to save their season: In the period in which the Oktoberfest was originally supposed to take place — from September 19 to October 4 — this year the "Wirtshaus-Wiesn" (Wiesn Tavern) will be held. "The Wiesn is not a place, but an attitude to life," Gregor Lemke, spokesman for Munich's city-center innkeepers, told DW:

The 'Wiesn' in 2020: Returning to the roots of Oktoberfest

Therefore, it is not a replacement but rather a return to its origins: The first Oktoberfest, in 1810, for the royal wedding of Ludwig of Bavaria with Therese, was a late summer festival held throughout the city. In the evening people met in the taverns to dance and celebrate. And this is how it should be again now. "It's all about demonstrating: Have fun in life, have fun together — the coronavirus can't take that away," says Lemke.

There are 54 establishments taking part — the taverns in the city center and those that usually serve drinks at the Oktoberfest. On offer will be the traditional "Wiesnbier" from respective breweries, chicken, knuckle of pork and Steckerlfisch, grilled fish on a stick.

Oktoberfest bands will perform and guests are expected to appear in traditional attire. The festival weeks will also open with the traditional tapping of the first beer barrel with the exclamation: "O'zapft is". This will mark the start a citywide beer-based party.



Swaying to the music is ok, but no dancing

Everybody is invited. "The festival is open to the whole world," says Lemke — but he and his colleagues assume that because of the coronavirus it will mainly attract guests from Munich or Bavaria. So, it will be less international and probably less exuberant than in the Oktoberfest tents with their up to 10,000 seats.

The taverns must adhere to the current distancing and hygiene rules. Swaying to the music will be allowed, but not dancing on the tables. And after all, it is not about crazy partying but rather tradition, Lemke emphasizes. "The Oktoberfest is unique in itself and should remain so."

Everyone is hoping for the return of the Oktoberfest next year

Should the "Wirtshaus-Wiesn" be a success, there could be a repeat in 2021, alongside the real Oktoberfest or Wiesn. This also applies to the "Summer in the City" program, economic expert Baumgärtner announced. Because, everyone is hoping that by then there should be some medication or a vaccination for the coronavirus.

Only one thing will be taken out of the picture: the palm beach on the Theresienwiese. Because that's where there'll first be a major construction site in preparation of the big Oktoberfest party.