

OKTOBERFEST FROM A TO Z

Sitten und Gebräuche / Customs and Traditions

pecting general public interest to be even stronger than usual,” states Mayor Ude,” although it’s hard to imagine how the already huge numbers of television crews and photographers who visit us each year can be increased.”

Six large Munich breweries—Augustiner, Hacker-Pschorr, Löwenbräu, Paulaner, Spaten, and Staatliches Hofbräuhaus—will serve beer with an original wort (water and barley combination) of thirteen percent, which goes down with such well-known Bavarian specialties as pork sausages, radishes, Obatzta (cheese prepared with spices), and grilled fish called Steckerlfisch, which is prepared on fifty-foot-long skewers right at the tents.

A new caterer is the Wildstuben, which offers venison meals and typical Bavarian foods. And, yes, if you do not appreciate the taste of beer, fifteen selections of wine are served in the Weinzelt tent. In the Kafers Wiesn Schanke, the smallest tent on the grounds, you can often spot celebrities, and the atmosphere is a bit more reserved on the inside. The tent is known for its good food, but reservations can be hard to obtain.

More than one hundred fifty fairground attractions and amusements will tempt visitors to get into the merry-making. From high-tech rides such as The Tower, the world’s tallest amusement ride, to the Flip Fly, which loops and swings seventy-nine feet above the ground, to the Silberturm free-fall adventure, there is something for every stomach.

“This year,” says Dr. Gabriele Weishaeupl, head of the event, visitors to the “historical Oktoberfest will be charmed by nostalgic amusements and attractions, presented with the flair of a by-gone era.”

Nostalgia, especially at this year’s milestone Fest, will be notable. Among the old-time favorite rides will be the Flea Circus, belonging to the Mathes family and started more than fifty years ago; the Crinoline, a merry-go-round with its origins from the 1890s; and the Devil’s Wheel, a test of skill for riders, which first made its appearance around 1910. Up to ninety percent of the showmen’s businesses have their roots from the 1800s, when many of them were passed down from father to son.

Already this July, as the last of the final details had been locked into place by the Munich Tourist Office, which is in charge of the Oktoberfest, the Munich Stadt Museum opened an historic Oktoberfest exhibition which runs through October 31. The exhibits include rarely-displayed Oktoberfest paintings, graphics, photographs, and even films from the past. Some of the items featured are Princess Therese’s wedding dress, prize pennants given for horse racing and shooting, old beer mugs, Oktoberfest

Colorful decorated carriages were paraded in a procession in Munich in 1835 as part of Oktoberfest, shown by Gustav Krauss in this color lithograph. Today, two different parades follow in the tradition: the impressive Costume and Marksmen’s Parade and the Grand Entry of the Landlords, Showmen, and Brewers Parade.



When Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen and Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria were married in 1810, they invited all of Munich to a five-day festival with a parade, music, food and beverage, kettle drums, and trumpets. Today, six million visitors from all over the world celebrate Oktoberfest, which is the largest popular festival of its kind anywhere.

postcards, decorations, celebrity dirndls, brewery horse accessories, agricultural show medals, and more.

Since 1980, the same grounds have packed in approximately one hundred eighty-five million people, but in 1810 with the Crown Princess’ marriage, the crowds – and planned events and attractions – were much different.

The royal wedding took place on the Munich fields (Therese’s Fields), named to honor the Crown Prince. Horse races during the wedding festivities were a big attraction then, as the royal family looked on. In fact, the decision to repeat the horse races in subsequent years gave rise to the tradition of Oktoberfest itself, and the festival