

“Bei uns ist immer was los!” Feste im Herbst

SOMMER- und HERBSTWEINFESTE und IHRE GEBRÄUCHE / SUMMER and FALL WINE FESTIVALS and THEIR CUSTOMS

Wine festivals abound in Germany

Over 1,000 wine festivals take place in Germany's 13 wine regions each summer and fall, offering visitors a chance to sit back and sip the fruits of the countryside.

You might just find yourself shouting "Rah Rah Riesling!" or learning first-hand the subtle differences between the Spätlese and Auslese varieties at one of Germany's thousands of wineries, the majority of which are family-owned small businesses.

Many of these festivals will take place in the river valleys of the Moselle, the Saar, and Ruwer Rivers, as well as the Rheingau and Baden regions, all popular with summer tourists to Germany.

For many of the smaller German towns, wine festivals extend across the entire wine-growing season. Thus it is no surprise to see events such as "Sekt Fest" or "Riesling Fest," special celebrations honoring what Germany's long and varied tradition of world-class wine-growing.

The future looks golden — with a delightful nose — for Germany's winegrowers. The year 2004 marked the first time in Germany's recorded history that wine sales surpassed those of beer.

Visit the German Wine Institute to keep abuzz of upcoming wine festivals and visit the German National Tourist Office to cover all of your travel needs.



Wine Festivals

In the late summer and in autumn, wine festivals are celebrated in all wine growing regions: on the Rhine, in the Palatinate, on the Moselle, Nahe, Ruwer and Saar rivers, in the Eifel area, along the "Mountain Road" between Heidelberg and Darmstadt, in Baden, Württemberg, at Lake Constance and in Franconia. The first wine festivals take place as early as June, but the season really begins in September, with the wine harvesting season.

Attending a wine festival, especially in a small place, can be a rewarding experience. Here one meets the people whose daily work and life are centered around the cultivation of wine. One feels how it determines the rhythm of their lives, how diligently and carefully they work for it, and how happily they celebrate the fruit of their labor.



The largest German wine festival, which dates back to the year 1442, is held annually in Bad Dürkheim in the Palatinate, which is Germany's largest wine growing community. The festival is called "Wurstmarkt" (Sausage Fair) and attracts more than 500,000 visitors from West Germany and the neighboring countries of Western Europe. In a recent year, for instance, a total of 50,000 gallons of wine, 783 pigs, 60 calves, 105 head of cattle and 50,000 roast chickens were consumed during the seven days and nights in September. It is hard to say what makes the "Sausage Fair" so attractive. It must have

something to do with the wine which gets people into a happy, sociable mood. As a local poet put it: "The Sausage Fair is a festival where you meet lots of friends you have never seen before in all your life."

Other big wine festivals among the hundreds held every year are in Koblenz, Heppenheim, Mainz, Rudesheim, Assmannshausen, Bacharach, Trier and Bingen. In Neustadt in the Palatinate every year the German and Palatinate "Wine Queens" are chosen and the new wine is given its name.