

WAS ESSEN DIE DEUTSCHEN?

8 FOODS WHOSE NAMES GERMANS CAN'T AGREE ON

Even if dialects and accents don't betray them, there are telltale words that give away whether a German-speaker comes from Germany, Austria or Switzerland - and even roughly which part of Germany.

Words for toys, food and everyday items can differ depending on regions. They are nevertheless regarded as standard German and not regional dialect, as Ulrich Ammon, professor emeritus of linguistics and a specialist in Sociolinguistics at the University of Duisburg-Essen, told DW in an interview: "Standard language can be used in the public realm without objection."

In a nutshell: There's more than one way to say "Brötchen" (bread rolls). The question is, will the clerk at the bakery understand you?

Speaking of bread - which Germany is famous for around the world - there are not only different words for rolls and loaves, but many names for the part of a loaf that some unthinkingly throw away, and others covet: the heel.

In northern and western Germany, that would be "Kanten," or "Knust," to name just the most common terms. Bavarians and Austrians might call the crusty dry end of a loaf of bread "Scherzl;" elsewhere in southern Germany it's a "Rand." Jokingly, the heel is also known as "Hintern" (behind).

200 Kinds of Bread — and 1,500 Types of Sausage

The Germans — in spite of all the changes that have taken place in their way of living and way of eating in recent years — are still great bread eaters. They eat bread not only for breakfast but also for supper (called "Abendbrot" — evening bread) and for in-between meals. There are some 200 different kinds of bread in Germany, 30 kinds of rolls (Brötchen, Semmel), and no less than 1,200 different kinds of pastries! Although the North Germans are said to eat even more bread than the South Germans, there is general agreement that it is in the South of the country — the wheat-growing regions — where the art of bread baking really flourishes. The main types of German bread are described below:

Weissbrot and Toastbrot

similar to the standard bread in the U.S., Canada, and Britain — but not the standard bread of the Germans, which is:

Feinbrot or Mischbrot (Graubrot)

made from a mixture of wheat (Weizen) and rye (Roggen) flour, and

Vollkornbrot (Schwarzbrot)

made from whole rye or rye-and-wheat grains that are cracked or rough-ground.



Many varieties, from medium-brown to very dark-brown.

Pumpernickel

a very heavy type of bread, very dark and with a very special taste.

Not only are the varieties of bread, rolls, pretzels, cakes and cookies immense, there are also large differences from town to town. Therefore, the best advice we can give is to go to the nearest German baker's shop and to try out what they have there — make your own discoveries in the aromatic realm of German bread.

Naturally, Germans do not like their bread plain — and here is where the sausages come into play. There are more than 1,500 different kinds of German sausage — raw, boiled, and smoked, seasoned in all sorts of ways, shaped in all kinds of forms.

Regional and local variety is immense, not only in recipes but also in names, so that here again the best advice is to make your own discoveries (don't hesitate to ask for a small quantity, such as "hundert Gramm" or "ein Viertelpfund" only). Here are the most important kinds of sausage:

Mettwurst (ground pork sausage)

coarse, medium and fine

Leberwurst (liverwurst)

pork or veal, coarse and fine

Blutwurst (blood sausage)

meat (pork) and blood

Fleischwurst (bologna)

beef, pork and veal, to be fried or grilled

Bratwurst

pork sausage for frying, normal size or very small

Wiener Würstchen — wieners