

## WAS ESSEN DIE DEUTSCHEN?

**sausage: die Wurst, die Würste**  
**small, thin sausage: das Würstchen, die Würstchen**

### BEST OF THE WURST

#### WHAT'S THE "WURST" THAT COULD HAPPEN?

Every German has his or her own favorite kind of sausage. However, the best of the *Wurst* stand out from the meaty crowd, gaining followers far beyond the borders of where those sausages were originally stuffed. Still, they somehow taste better when eaten on their home turf. So the next time you travel to Germany, be sure to try these classics, preferably fresh from the kitchen in their own home town:

**Nürnberger Rostbratwürstchen or Schweinewürstel:** Small, thin sausages no longer than your finger, made from good quality pork, pork fat, and sometimes ham, seasoned with nutmeg, marjoram, and caraway seeds, browned on a grill, and served in portions of six, twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four, on pewter plates with sauerkraut or potato salad on the side. These delicious little sausages are one of the two most famous foods from Nuremberg (the other is *Lebkuchen*, gingerbread).

**Thüringer Rostbratwurst:** Longer and a bit thicker than Nuremberg's little sausages, these tasty specialties from next-door Thuringia are made with pork that is more finely ground, flavored with salt, pepper, nutmeg, and caraway (sometimes also with garlic, marjoram, and lemon zest), then grilled over a wood fire, served in a bread roll, and garnished with a dash of mustard.

**Regensburger Bratwürstl:** The historic *Wurstküche* in Regensburg claims to be "the oldest *Bratwurststube* in the world," originally built to sell sausages to the workers constructing the great stone bridge over the Danube between 1135 and 1146. Today, this atmospheric little sausage restaurant at the base of the bridge still serves delicious house-made pork sausages (similar to Nuremberg's, but slightly larger and longer), grilled over wood coals, and accompanied by the restaurant's own brown mustard and sauerkraut, with slices of fresh rye bread.

**Münchner Weisswurst:** Invented by a Munich butcher in 1857, *Weisswurst* is a plump, mild-tasting, fresh white sausage, about five inches long, made of finely chopped veal, pork fat, and onion, combined with a little fresh parsley and other seasonings that remain the secret of each butcher—salt, white pepper, nutmeg, cardamom, cloves, mace, ginger, sugar, lemon zest—and stuffed into pigs' casings. In Munich, *Weisswurst* is always eaten in the morning, before the clock strikes noon, accompanied by a dab of sweet, grainy, brown mustard; soft, yeasty pretzels about six inches across; and a half liter of Bavarian *Weizenbier* (wheat beer).

**Franconian "Blaue Zipfel":** Thick *Bratwurst* marinated in a mixture of Franconian white wine, vinegar, onion rings, sliced carrot rounds, juniper berries, black peppercorns, bay leaves, yellow mustard seeds, cloves, and sugar, then simmered in that sweet-sour marinade and served hot, with some of the liquid spooned over the top, garnished with the onion rings and some chopped chives. The "Blue Tip" name supposedly refers to the sourness of the marinade (*blaue*) and the tip or point of a sausage (*Zipfel*, which also has a phallic connotation). In the nineteenth century, the personal chef of Maximilian II, King of Bavaria, supposedly prepared a royal version of this country-style dish by simmering the sausage in champagne with black truffles and serving it in a silver tureen.

And finally, don't forget the classic accompaniments to sausages all across Germany—from soft pretzels, crusty bread rolls, and rye bread slices to mustard, horseradish, and ketchupy *Currywurst* sauce, from radishes and pickled gherkins to sauerkraut and potato salad—all washed down with plenty of good German beer. *Guten Appetit!*