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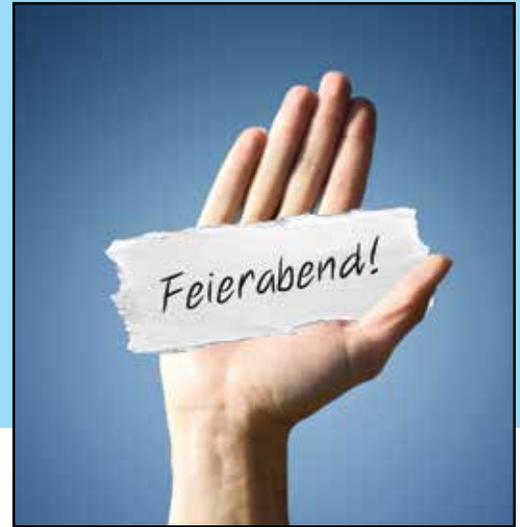
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Embracing GERMANY

Feierabend

By Stacy Roman

We've all been there — a really long day at work. A micromanaging boss, a co-worker who snuck into the fridge and ate your lunch, hours spent in meetings which could have (and should have) been conducted via email. As you watch the clock tick by, it's almost the end of the day and sweet freedom is just on the other side of the door. Your German friend calls out, "Schönen Feierabend!" — happy end of the workday! Before you ask, this is definitely a real thing.

"Feierabend" refers to the pure, unadulterated joy you feel as you finish work for the day. It also marks the act of reveling in the non-work part of the day. Before it was used as a celebratory phrase, it was commonly used in describing the evening of festivities before the start of a vacation or a holiday. Very loosely translated, "Feier" means "celebration" and "Abend" equates to "eve."

IS THERE AN AMERICAN EQUIVALENT?

Sometimes there is no real translation for something — "Feierabend" is one of those things. The closest American cultural similarity is happy hour. During happy hour, friends and co-workers gather together and commiserate about their day over drinks and appetizers. It is also often used to try and lure in prospective clients to business deals. However, "Feierabend" is more of a celebration of the end of the workday and there is usually no business conducted during the revelry.

WHY IS "FEIERABEND" A BIG DEAL?

In German culture, the workplace or office tends to be more formal than their American counterparts. Our host nation prides itself on a strong work ethic, with employees having almost laser-like focus on the job. Water cooler gossip, coffee talk and other office shenanigans we're used to are frowned upon in Germany. The notion of "Feierabend" helps foster a better work-life balance and keep it on a more even keel.

HOW TO PARTAKE IN "FEIERABEND"

In some of the larger cities such as Frankfurt and Berlin, some locals are so happy to celebrate the end of the workday, they don't wait until they get home. Don't be surprised if you're on the U-bahn or train and see someone crack open a nice cold "Feierabendbier" to enjoy on the ride. Not a drinker? Not a problem! "Feierabend" isn't just about imbibing in adult beverages. Grab a friend or two and head downtown for delicious gelato in the park. It's more about celebrating being off the clock for the rest of the day and having the freedom to play and do what you like.

Even though sometimes things tend to get lost in translation, the feeling of sheer happiness and joy of cutting loose after a long productive day at the office is universal. Although there's no direct English word, "Feierabend" is a fantastic German tradition we can all get behind. Schönen Feierabend, freunde! ■



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GERMANY'S HIGHLIGHT

Best Hiking Trails



By Amanda Palumbo

Good to Know:

Download the hiking app, "Komoot", to help you pick out new trails, guide you along the way and even has tips and pictures from other hikers on the trail.



There is nothing like a stroll or a brisk hike in the woods to clear the mind and recharge the soul. The word 'hiking' might bring up visions of overly stuffed backpacks, walking for hours on end and fighting every bug imaginable. That is partly true, but you don't have to be the die-hard expert to enjoy some of Germany's beautiful trails. Here are some of our favorites.

Easy & Family Friendly

Trail: Eibsee-Brücke Loop
Location: Eibsee
Length: 2.27 miles
Elevation: 75 feet

The Garmisch area is home to breathtaking hikes with alluring backdrops. Lake Eibsee is no different. This is a really great trail for little ones since it's fairly flat and most of the path is either paved or gravel. This trail starts at the Eibsee bus station and winds around the northeastern side of the lake which gives you views of emerald green waters and Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain. In the summer, take a pit stop by hitting the water for a swim or a boat ride.

Trail: Blautopf - Historic Schmiede Loop
Location: Blaubeuren
Length: 3.11 miles
Elevation: 125 feet

About an hour southeast of Stuttgart, Blaubeuren is a small picturesque town that seems to fly under most tourist's radars. The trail starts at the city's train station, quickly leading you to what the city is most known for, The Blautopf which translates to "Blue Pool." Thanks to light scattering on lime particles, this karst spring is a gorgeous turquoise color, similar to what you would see off the coast of Capri and no, that's not an exaggeration. The trail ends with stunning rock formations and castle ruins.

Intermediate

Trail: Olympiastadion Garmisch Loop from Kainzbad
Location: Garmisch
Length: 6.32 miles
Elevation: 1,625 feet

Another Garmisch gem, this steep trail takes you through Partnachklamm or Partnach Gorge. There's a reason this site brings in hundreds of thousands of visitors, as you walk through pathways of rock more than 250 feet high. This gorge is magical no matter the season but, in the winter, you can gaze upon bizarre and stunning ice formations. Before the gorge, the trail brings you along Kaiserschmarnalm, an adorable restaurant where the "Kaiserschmarrn," a chopped up Austrian pancake, is highly recommended.

Trail: Massendorfer Schlucht Loop
Location: Wernfels
Length: 10.7 miles
Elevation: 1,100 feet

This trail starts at the castle-turned-hostel Jugendherberge Burg Wernfels, 40 minutes southeast of Nuremberg. The main event is Massendorfer Gorge, a narrow path that surrounds you with moss-covered rock formations. Just before you loop back to the hostel, stop at Biergarten Pflugsmühle, a great spot for a beer and even minigolf.

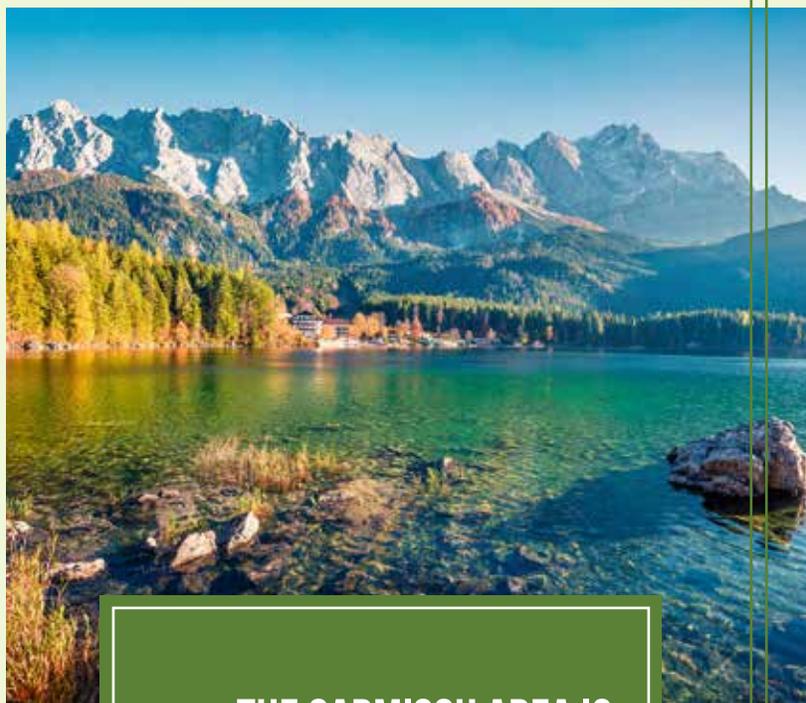
Hard

Trail: Edelfrauengrab-Wasserfälle-Herrenschrofen Loop
Location: Ottenhöfen
Length: 7.81 miles
Elevation: 2,075 feet

Skip leg day this week and hit this trail known for waterfalls and ridges in the northern Black Forest. With a 2,075 foot climb, this trail is not for the faint of heart. Oddly enough, there's a drink station that sells alcohol right before one of the steepest parts of the trail. Definitely drink responsibly because you're about to climb the Karlsruhe Ridge, which is a hike that will take all your strength but worth it for the stunning views.

Trail: Aussichtspunkt am Josefsplatz Loop
Location: Walchensee Lake
Length: 12.9 miles
Elevation: 4,225 feet

This hike's steepest moments are at the start of the trail, which I prefer. Given the elevation level and terrain, this is definitely for more experienced hikers. The trail includes climbing part of Herzogstand, a mountain in the Bavarian foothills. The final part of the trail takes you along the lake which is a magnificent shade of blue. It's a great spot to relax after that insane hike you just conquered.



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LUXURIOUS BUDAPEST



By Elizabeth Jones

Situated on opposite sides of the Danube River, the once-separate cities of Buda and Pest make up what the world now knows as Budapest, the capital of Hungary. The city is known for being a relatively cheap destination allowing travelers the chance for a splurgy vacation filled with lavish experiences from dipping into mineral waters, touring exquisite landmarks, immersing in the city's high-end cafe culture and much, much more!

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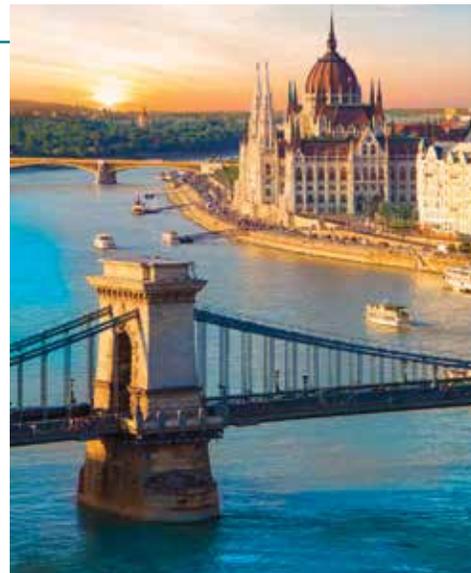
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UNWIND IN BUDAPEST'S BEST THERMAL BATHS

People from all over the world flock to Budapest for a chance to immerse in the city's famous thermal baths for their apparent healing waters. For a top-of-the-line experience, make a stop at the popular Széchenyi baths that hold the title of the first hot spring palace on the Pest side of the city.

The Tuscan-sun-colored palace boasts 18 various pools filled with mineral waters that provide medicinal relief to various types of problems associated with the body and mind. The Széchenyi baths also offer many spa services and a drinking well to enrich your body with the best mineral waters. www.szechenyispabaths.com

Go underground and find the thermal springs of Gellért Bath Spa, an Art Nouveau masterpiece with splashes of colorful, mosaic tiles. Relax in their 12 different bath units found inside and outside of the spa. Choose services ranging from Swedish massages to mud baths for a self-indulgent experience. www.gellertspa.com



CRUISE THE DANUBE RIVER

To relish in the most romantic display of Budapest, take a luxury river cruise along the Danube River. There are many high-end cruise companies in Budapest to reserve with that offer a fabulous dinner, Hungarian wine and live music. This experience also provides the opportunity to snap the best riverside photos of the impressive Parliament Building. Be sure to book your luxurious river cruise tickets in advance www.budapestrivercruise.com

TOUR THE INTRICATE PARLIAMENT BUILDING

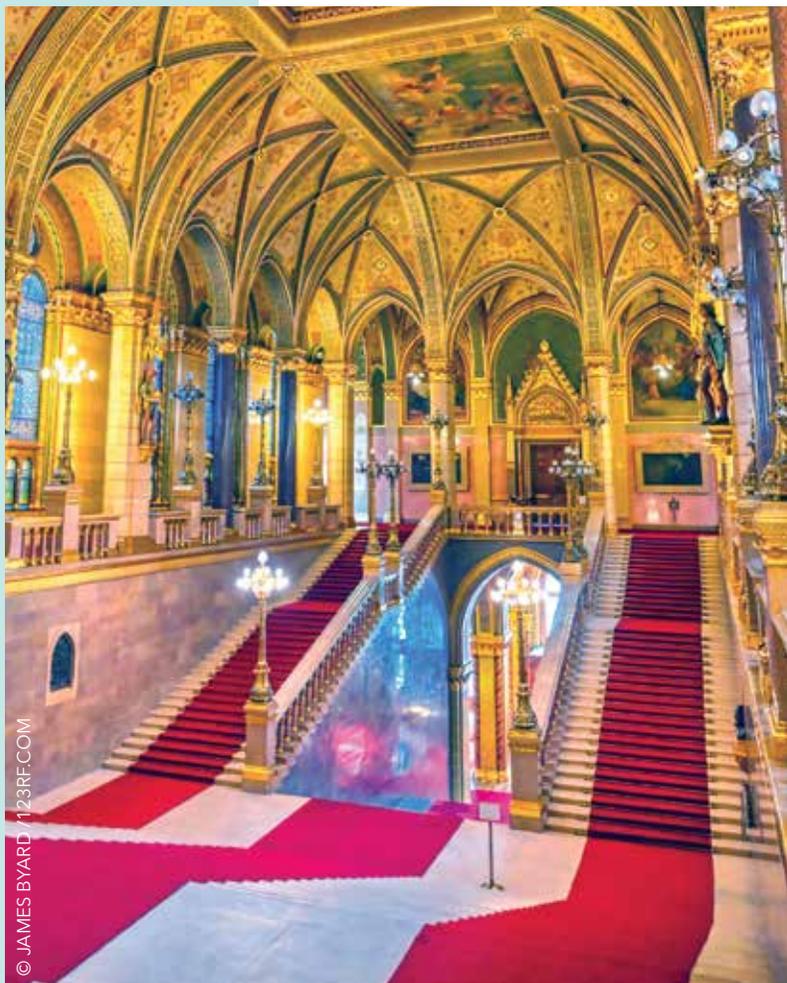
Speaking of the Parliament Building, this spectacular example of Neo-Gothic architecture should not be missed!

While the outside of this iconic landmark is easy on the eyes, the inside of the Parliament building is even more astonishing. Marvel at the grandeur of the building with its lush carpet, gold decor, high ceilings and stained glass windows. Since the building cannot be toured without a guide, splurge a little on booking a private tour well before your trip. www.latogatokozpont.parlament.hu/en/home

WANDER THROUGH CASTLE HILL

Peruse along the cobblestone streets passing Baroque houses, hole-in-the-wall cafés and historical monuments that can be found in the Castle Hill district that sits 170-meters above the Danube. A top attraction includes Fisherman's Bastion, a 19th-century fortification resembling a fairytale-like lookout tower. Enjoy panoramic views of the sparkling river below and the rest of historic Budapest from the tower's intricately-designed turrets.

Just a short walk from the Fisherman's Bastion is Buda Castle, also known as the Royal Palace. This





must-see attraction is waiting to share its vast amount of history from previous centuries. The palace is open daily for tours providing ample opportunity for you to bask in its perfection. www.budacastlebudapest.com/buda-castle-tour/

WITNESS A SHOW AT THE BUDAPEST OPERA HOUSE

Don't skip out on visiting Hungary's largest opera house that will surely captivate you — not only with its fascinating ballet and opera performances but also with its magnificent architecture. The inside of the opera house is filled with 1,200 red velvet seats, high balconies lined with golden accents and a high ceiling featuring Karoly Lotz's stunning art illustrating Olympus and the Greek gods. Treat yourself to a show or take a guided tour during the day, either way, you'll find yourself in awe of the Budapest Opera House. www.opera.hu/programme

ENJOY THE BEST OF BUDAPEST'S CAFE CULTURE

While Budapest has a lengthy list of extraordinary cafes, the New York Café takes the cake over them all.

Noted as the world's most beautiful cafe, a visit to this extravagant place is a must. No matter what you're in the mood for – a savory or sweet breakfast, rich coffee, hearty lunch, afternoon tea, delicious dinner or decadent dessert, New York Café has an impressive menu waiting for you. <http://www.newyorkcafe.hu/>



TRANSPORT TO THE WORLD OF RUIN BARS

While it may not be the most luxurious thing to do in Budapest, missing out on Budapest's unique ruin bars would be a shame.

From the outside, these bars are unrecognizable with no lines, booming music or crazy, bright lights. Once you step inside the bars, find mismatched, flea market furniture, graffiti from local artists and a very specific atmosphere catering to each of the bars' individual, quirky themes.

PERUSE THROUGH CHRISTMAS MARKETS

If you're visiting during the holidays, the world famous Christmas markets of Budapest are a must to partake in! Whether you go to the market in Vorosmarty Square or by the Basilica, you'll witness the city transform into a winter wonderland. Delight your taste buds with chimney cakes, potato dumplings, sausages, mulled wine and much more! The entertainment is endless at these markets with free concerts, ice skating rinks, light shows and folk dancing.

From architectural masterpieces, fancy river cruises, magnificent thermal baths, stylish cafés and fascinating, historical sites— there will be nothing but grand experiences awaiting you in Budapest! ■



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10 Reasons to Love == Budapest ==

By Mary Del Rosario

1. You'll feel rejuvenated after a day at Széchenyi Baths, one of Europe's largest spa baths.
2. The locals are very hospitable and kind-hearted.
3. A night of drinking in Budapest's famous ruin bars will be one to remember. Szimpla Kert is a popular one.
4. Traditional Goulash will make your taste buds happy.
5. Fisherman's Bastion is a sight to behold and offers the most gorgeous panoramic views of the city.
6. Between the Aquincum Museum, the House of Terror, the Danube Promenade, the Parliament building and Heroes' Square, you'll uncover Hungary's colorful history.
7. The New York Café, aptly named the "most beautiful café in the world," is one you'll always want to eat breakfast in.
8. Cruising along the Danube River in the evening is a must on your itinerary.
9. The Széchenyi Chain Bridge is unlike no other bridge as it connects Buda and Pest.
10. You can have many lavishing experiences on a budget.

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Poznań, Poland



WHY GO THERE

The colorful buildings in Old Market Square, delightfully inexpensive food and gorgeous architecture are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to reasons to visit this lovely Polish city. Both adults and children alike are sure to stare in wonder at the towering castle or the majestic animals at the zoo. This city should not be missed on any tour of Poland!

Poznań, Poland

ON YOUR RADAR

By Jessica Zen

If you've been searching for the perfect city to visit that won't break the bank, look no further. Poznań, Poland is full of colorful buildings, 16th-century houses and incredibly inexpensive food. The towering churches, stunning palace and modern zoo are sure to hold your attention. Take the whole family and explore everything this beautiful city has to offer, all while staying on a budget.

Start your adventure in Old Market Square. The plaza itself was planned in 1253 and features a row of colorful merchant's houses. You'll find purple, green and blue buildings, all melded together to create picturesque surroundings. The town hall is a stunning Renaissance building. Inside you'll find a museum, featuring a Grand Vestibule with a coffered ceiling. Entry into the museum is less than two euros.

On the corner of Market Square is the Church of St. Stanislaus, featuring a lovely Baroque facade. This structure was a former Jesuit college and features 18th-century frescoes and 13 altars. Work on the church started in 1649, but it wasn't finished for over 50 years. Entry is a contribution to the Poznań Fara, but guided tours start at less than one euro. Other beautiful religious structures can be found on Ostrów Tumski (Cathedral Island). The Poznań cathedral sits here and is Poland's oldest Gothic designed cathedral featuring medieval plans. Admission with crypt access is less than one euro.

For a look at Europe's youngest castle, head to the Imperial Castle. This Neo-Romanesque palace was built from 1905 - 1910 and has a colorful history. The castle once held Nazi soldiers and reflected the style of the Third Reich. Inside features a Byzantine-style throne room with statues of Holy Roman Emperors gracing the space. Admission is free without a tour.

Children will love the New Zoo. Spread out over almost 300 acres, here you will find owls, golden eagles, elephants, giraffes and more. There is a mini railway running around the perimeter, so you can hop on and off as you like. Admission is 5.33 euros on weekdays and 6.95 euros on weekends.

If you think the attractions in Poznań are inexpensive, wait until you see the food prices! For breakfast head to Bo Poznań. This

fusion restaurant slings traditional family recipes with a twist. The menu is constantly changing, but expect to eat for under 5 euros.

For lunch or dinner, consider Schaboszczak od Dziadka. You can get a plate-sized pork chop with potatoes and cabbage salad for under 4 euros. If you want a sweet treat, Lodziarnia Kolorowa ice cream shop is perhaps the best in the city. Expect to wait in line, but it's worth it. You can get two scoops for under 2 euros.



Last, but not least, is the Lech Beer Brewery. Established in 1629, this is the oldest brewery in Poland. Schedule a two-hour tour of the brewery itself, which is from the 1980s. Beginning at 10 a.m. tours start every two hours and are 3.94 euros.

From the amazing sights to the delicious food, Poznań is certainly a place that will steal your heart. Spend a few days visiting the sites and eating too much food, all while staying within a reasonable budget. The Polish zloty is equivalent to approximately .23 euros, making your money go even further. Here's to reasonably priced vacations! ■



A German-Italian Hybrid:

SPAGHETTIEIS

By Karen Bradbury

One of the best experiences on a warm summer's day in Germany is to meander through a city's Altstadt and drop by one of its many "Eis-café," ice cream places. One can either hope to snag a table outdoors and feast on a fancy gelato dessert served in a bowl the size of a baby's head, or just grab a cone with a scoop or two and eat it on the run.

When opting for the former, there's a very special dessert with a unique appearance that may suggest Italy, but is, in fact, a German innovation: "Spaghettieis." What resembles a heaping plate of pasta is entirely concocted of sweet treats. What gives?

This optical illusion is created in a few simple steps. First, a heap of deeply chilled whipped cream is placed upon a plate to serve as the base. Next, vanilla ice cream is pressed through a special kind of sieve to create the appearance of spaghetti and heaped around the cream. A strawberry sauce poured over the top stands in for tomatoes. The finishing touch is white chocolate shavings, a look-alike for the parmesan cheese. (Some places will substitute coconut flakes in place of the white chocolate, to which we can only say "nein!")

Of course, variations exist and nowadays you can order a carbonara version featuring nuts or one with ice cream noodles that are made of chocolate.

The backstory of Spaghettieis reflects recent German history. The creamy dessert was the brainchild of one Dario Fontanella, whose dad had migrated to Germany to open up an ice café. He founded his new business in Mannheim. Dario, inspired by a labor-intensive dessert he'd once eaten back in Italy, created his Spaghettieis prototype out of pistachio, lemon and strawberry ice cream—colors that reminded him of the Italian flag. His dad was not impressed, remarking he'd never before encountered colorful spaghetti. So with a few quick tweaks and substitutions, Germany's classic summertime treat was conjured into being. This creation dating back to 1969 remains as beloved as ever. Lucky for us!

You can enjoy a Spaghettieis virtually anywhere in Germany. To sample one made by the ice cream shop that pioneered it, a pilgrimage to Die Eis Fontanella Café in Mannheim, is in order. ■

Guten Appetit!

Buon appetito!

YUM!

4 Top with chocolate shavings and sprinkles!

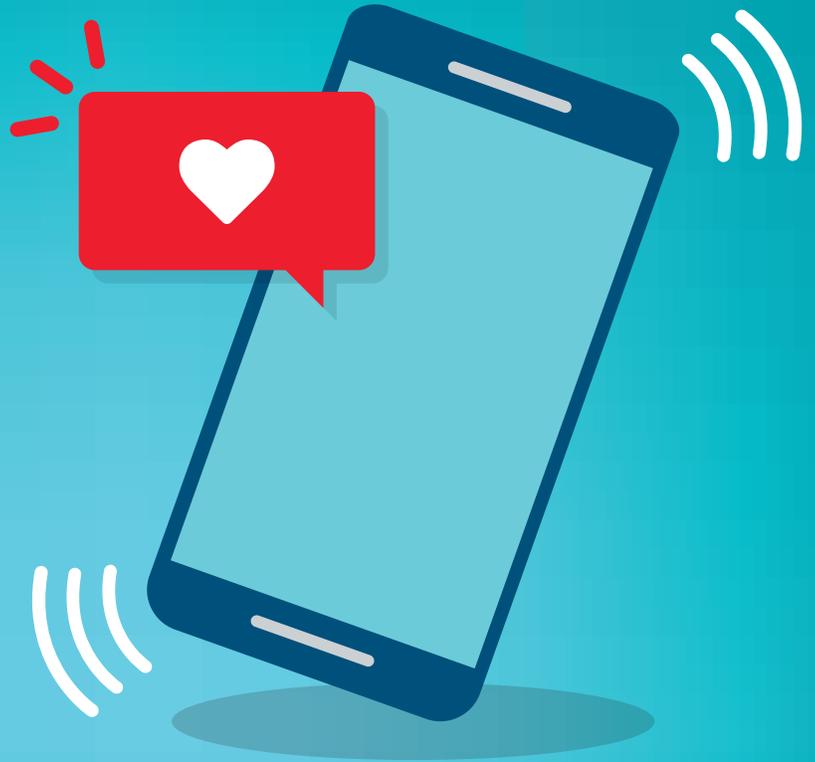
3 Drizzle on strawberry sauce!

2 Add vanilla ice cream "noodles"!

1 Start with a whipped cream base!



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