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By Katie Wells



ONION MARKET FESTIVAL

GERMANY

Wine Tasting in the Nostalgic Tram | Mainz | March 23–Oct. 12

Berlin Beer Week | Berlin | Aug. 30–Sept. 8

Dürkheim Sausages Fair | Bad Dürkheim | Sept. 6–16

Ludwigsburg Pumpkin Festival | Aug. 23–Nov. 3

Onion Market Festival | Weimar | Oct. 11–13

A 365-year tradition, the Zwiebelmarkt or Onion Market Festival, takes place every year. Over 500 stalls display colorful onions, flowers and handicrafts. If you love to eat onions, this is a great festival to attend as you can try specialty foods like onion cake and onion meat. Decorative onion and garlic braids are available to stave off diseases from the home and don't miss your chance to see the crowned Onion Queen.

Oktoberfest | Munich | Sept. 21–Oct. 6

Eat&style Stuttgart | Stuttgart | Nov. 21–24

FRANCE

Omnivore Paris | Paris | Sept. 8–10

Picnic in Paris | Paris | March–Oct.

Vimoutiers Apple Fair | Normandy | Oct. 19–20

Cider Festival: Beuvron-en-Auge | Normandy | Oct. 20

Normandy is known for its sparkling apple cider. Celebrate the end of apple harvesting season by participating in workshops such as apple pressing and floral art. A smaller press is available for children to use and take home their own homemade apple juice. There are also other regional foods and dairy products you can try.

Sial Paris 60 Years | Paris Nord Villepinte | Oct. 19–23

The Imperial Chocolate Fair at Château Fontainebleau | Fontainebleau | Nov. 10–12

ITALY

Pizza Village | Milan | Sept. 4–8

L Primi d'Italia | Foligno | Sept. 26–29

This "first courses" festival has been held annually since 1999 and celebrates tasty Italian starters such as pasta, polenta, gnocchi and more. Star chefs present tasting menus and each taverna and main square becomes a tasting village like Risotto village, Gluten-free village or Truffle village.

Fiera Del Riso (Rice Festival) | Veneto | Sept. 20–Oct. 13

Alba White Truffle Fair | Alba | Oct. 12–Dec. 8

National Chestnut Fair | Piedmont | Oct. 18–20

Milan Coffee Festival | Milan | Nov. 23–25

BELGIUM

World Confectionery Conference | Brussels | Sept. 12

Eat Brussels, Drink! Bordeaux | Brussels | Sept. 26–29

Boullion Castle- Fete du Fromage | Boullion | Sept. 21–22

Namur Wine and Gastronomy Fair | Namur | Dec. 8–10

Liège's Village de Noël | Liège | Nov. 29–Dec. 30

Taste of Antwerp | Antwerp | April–May 2025

SCANDANAVIA

Umea Taste Festival | Umea | Sept. 5–8

Aarhus Food Festival | Aarhus | Sept. 6–8

Matstreif Food Festival | Oslo | Early Sept. 20–21

Harvest Festival of Värmlandsnäs | Säffle | Sept. 7–8

A Taste of Värmland | Karlstad | Sept. 30–Oct. 1

Baltic Herring Market | Helsinki | Oct. 6–12

This celebration has been held since 1743 and is the oldest traditional event in Helsinki. Fish vendors gather at the market square to sell their catch directly from their boats. The selection of herring includes salt herring and fish marinated with flavors like rowanberry, red pepper and more. You can also try black archipelago bread, other local foods and buy lambswool and handmade crafts.

Gladmat (Happy Food) Festival | Stavanger | July 2025

IRELAND AND THE U.K.

Clarenbridge Oyster Festival | Clarenbridge | Sept. 6–14

Abergavenny Food Festival | Wales | Sept. 21–22

York Food and Drink Festival | York | Sept. 20–29

Savour Kilkenny | Kilkenny | Oct. 26–28

Edinburgh Castle Afternoon Tea Experience | Edinburgh
Year Round

Up Helly Aa: Viking Traditional Festival | Shetland |
Jan 30, 2025

HUNGARY

Budapest Wine Festival | Budapest | Sept. 12–15

Bull's Blood Festival | Eger | Oct. 18–28

LUXEMBOURG

Wine and Dine Gourmet Trip | Grevenmacher Jetty |
Sept. 14

Whiskey and Rum on the River | Grevenmacher Jetty |
Oct. 26

SPAIN

Rioja Wine Harvest Festival | Logroño | Sept. 20–26

O Grove Seafood Festival | Galicia | Oct. 3–13

Martos Olive Festival | Martos Jaén | Dec. 8

SWITZERLAND

PerBacco! Grape Harvest Festival | Bellinzona | Sept. 5–8

Horu Güet Culinary Hike | Zermatt | Sept. 14

Autunno Gastronomico | Locarno | Sept. 12–Oct. 22

Extra



Scan for more foodie events
across Europe. ■



CIDER FESTIVAL: BEUVRON-EN-AUGE



L PRIMI D'ITALIA



BALTIC HERRING MARKET

Spotlight On



Bologna, Italy

By Kat Nickola

Considered by many to be the culinary capital of Italy, Bologna is a food-lover's destination. Visit a salumeria, or Italian deli, along the Via Pescherie Vecchia where the medieval market vibe is still strong. Many delis offer small seating areas and plates for sampling meats and cheeses. Later, be sure to try some of the local Tagliatella a Ragú, whose meat-filled tomato sauce is known around the world as the eponymous Bolognese sauce.

Bologna also offers many pastry shops perfect for an afternoon break, or aperitivo, to sample the sweets and sip a glass of local Pignoletto wine. Our spotlight photo was submitted by a reader after enjoying an "aurora nel bosco" at Caffé Zonarini in the Piazza Galvini. This incredible dessert is primarily a rich dark chocolate bavaris custard with a tangy, fruity jelly center made from forest berries. ■



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Eat • Stay • Love

Ludwigsburg

By Katie Wells



LOVE

Start growing your own humongous pumpkin in April so it's ready by September to race in the **Pumpkin Regatta** at the festival. Okay, maybe gardening isn't for everyone, but watching the spectacle of rowers trying to navigate a giant hollowed-out pumpkin through the water is great fun. If you are interested, you can even contact the race organizer to get your own seeds.

Aside from this fun event, the **Ludwigsburg Pumpkin Festival** has so much to love. The region itself is beautiful and each year the Residenzschloss (Ludwigsburg Palace) hosts the festival. Visitors from all over the world gather around to see the expansive gardens overtaken by themed sculptures made from approximately 450,000 colorful pumpkins and gourds. Previous themes have been, "fairytale," "under the sea" and "fire." This year, the **25th anniversary** theme will be "**famous personalities**." It is rumored Pippi Longstocking, Sophie Scholl, and Frida Kahlo will be amongst the icons sculpted. Other events include the pumpkin weighing championship, pumpkin carving competition, Thanksgiving celebration and pumpkin regatta. One of the pumpkin carvers who attends annually is Ray Villafane, who is famous for his expressive carvings of a pumpkin family he calls "the Hubbards." The festivities end with a two-day slaughtering and smashing of pumpkins so growers can get their valuable seeds and prepare for the next year.

For entry tickets and information about festival events you can visit travel.ludwigsburg.de or juckerfarm.ch.

Tips for visiting the festival:

- Bring plenty of euro as not all vendors take cards.
- Purchase tickets in advance to save on time.
- Check the main website for the dates of any special events you don't want to miss. ■



EAT

If you are a foodie and love all things fall, the annual **Ludwigsburg Pumpkin Festival (Kürbisausstellung)**, might be a dream come true for you. This celebration from Aug. 23 – Nov. 3, 2024, is full of unique gastronomy featuring 600 different varieties of pumpkin. From sweet to savory, and even beverages, you can taste pumpkin in a wide range of dishes. Locals favor Maultaschen, which is a dish similar to ravioli. Other pumpkin crowd-pleasers include soup, bread, flammkuchen, waffles, pie, beer and prosecco. Vendors create new foods every year, and you can even buy specialty items like pumpkin-infused oils and liquors. With a celebration so largely revolved around pumpkin, there are always new dishes and infusions to try. The orange gourd is truly highlighted here as everything at the festival is made with actual pumpkin, not just spice or flavoring.

STAY

To soak in the Baroque city's views, stay at **Nestor Hotel Ludwigsburg** which is located at the castle park. Formerly a garrison bakery dating back to 1874, you can enjoy a blend of elements kept from the historical building with updated, modern rooms to stay in. It is an excellent location with an 11-minute walk to the Ludwigsburg S-Bahn station and a 12-minute walk to Ludwigsburg Palace. There are a wide variety of rooms from single to executive suits. Amenities include air conditioning, a hotel bar, sauna and steam bath, fitness room and an onsite restaurant. For an additional fee, breakfast is served in the style of the old garrison bakery with homemade muesli, crispy rolls, fresh fruit and specialty coffee. Furry friends are also welcome for a small additional fee.

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GERMANY'S TOP-RATED *Michelin* RESTAURANTS

By Kat Nickola

DID YOU KNOW THAT GERMANY BOASTS 10 MICHELIN 3-STAR-RATED RESTAURANTS?

That is one more than in the U.K. and only three fewer than culinary giant, Italy. Many of these top-notch dining establishments are near enough to U.S. military installations that a reservation may just be the cherry on top for your next special occasion.

MICHELIN STARS

Michelin restaurant ratings were first published by Andre and Edouard Michelin to boost sales for their famous tire company. The ratings were included in a small, free French guide that had maps, hotels and, of course, recommended upscale restaurants for the discerning (wealthy) car owner of the early 1900s. Eventually, the guide was rating restaurants extensively across Europe, and it has developed into a highly esteemed system.

Restaurant inspectors from the Michelin team anonymously visit, review and rate each establishment multiple times. The company inspectors evaluate their meals based on quality, techniques, the chef's personal representation, flavor harmony and consistency between visits. Inspectors do not rate the restaurant facility or décor.

Getting a Michelin star is an honor. Here is the rating system from guide.michelin.com:

- 🌟 - High-quality cooking, worth a stop!
- 🌟🌟 - Excellent cooking, worth a detour!
- 🌟🌟🌟 - Exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey!

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THREE-STAR RESTAURANTS IN GERMANY ❁❁❁

There are two three-star restaurants roughly an hour and a half from Stuttgart.

Both are near the village of Baiersbronn, deep in the heart of Germany's Black Forest (Schwarzwald). This area has numerous hiking huts (Wanderhütten) open year-round that are known for their eateries. The region prides itself in producing high-quality local foods such as a regional trout, forest honey, lamb specialties and goat cheeses.

The Michelin guide raves about chef Claus-Peter Lumppp at **Restaurant Bareiss**, whose classic French cuisine earns this restaurant three stars. Set menus offer diners multi-course experiences that include plates such as local roe deer, veal, vegetarian options and choices from the cheese and dessert trolleys. The unpretentious, but chic dining room is situated inside a 5-star hotel of the same name that offers gastronomic packages.

For modern cuisine in a historical setting, the **Schwarzwaldstube's** chef Torsten Michel takes pride in re-inventing local and seasonal classics. Three menus offer a wide variety of plates, from Wagyu beef with lotus to braised lamb or forest mushrooms for vegetarian palates. As a bonus, the restaurant has a beautiful view of the valley, and is situated in the upscale Traube Tonbach hotel.

Within two hours of the Kaiserslautern Military Community or Wiesbaden, and even nearer to Baumholder or Spangdahlem are three restaurants with top Michelin ratings.

All are in close proximity to the Mosel River as it courses through German vineyards past castles and quaint towns. This area is known for its incredible rieslings; winery tours and vinotheks with tastings abound.

The **Schanz** restaurant is modestly tucked behind the associated small family-run hotel in the town of Piesport along the middle Mosel. Offering four- to seven-course menus and à la carte selections, chef Thomas Schanz's modern cuisine features unique offerings like merluza fish with papaya and mint, local venison and a signature truffle egg.

If you prefer a restaurant with a more traditional approach, the **Sonnora** in Dreis offers classic French cuisine in an elegant forest hotel with a country-estate feel. Here, chef Clemens Rambichler prepares ageless plates with a modern twist like the langoustines with mango sauce or a beef fillet tartare with caviar.

For something completely different, head south to the town of Perl where chef Christian Bau blends French and Japanese cuisine at **Victor's Fine Dining**. His set menu "Paris – Tokio" has twelve plates with creative dishes like a Portuguese bonito fish with Japanese rice and Korean kimchi or the coconut yuzu ice cream. The restaurant's modern décor contrasts with its location inside an old castle on the grounds of the Victor's Hotel.

Bavaria boasts two restaurants with Michelin three-star ratings. Both are about two to three hours from most USAG Bavaria or USAG Ansbach installations.

The first restaurant, called **JAN** (pronounced yawn), offers modern, creative cuisine in the heart of Munich. Set in the middle of the Kunstareal (art district), JAN is near some of Munich's most well-known museums and historic architecture. Chef Jan Hartwig works in a 'laboratory of love' instead of a kitchen and produces a set tasting menu with regionally-sourced, unique seasonal plates like a foie gras wonton or caviar with mushroom flan.

If you find yourself further south, the **Essenz** restaurant in Grassau also offers modern cuisine. Chef Edip Sigl presents two set menus; one is focused on the produce from the local Chiemgau region while the other has international fare. Both menus have dishes that blend strong flavors, such as the wagyu with paprika and sour cream or the blue cheese with rhubarb. The restaurant has an upscale rustic charm and is set in Das Achenal resort where special dine-and-stay packages are offered.

You will have to travel to the north of Germany, for the final three top-rated Michelin restaurants.

The Aqua, in the Ritz-Carlton hotel adjacent to Volkswagen's Autostadt in Wolfsburg, turns car factory visits into modern gourmet experiences. In Berlin, the modern moody **Rutz** has a 'Berlin-Size-Menu' for those new to gourmet eating. Lastly, **The Table** in Hamburg plays to the city's port history with an eclectic international menu and a unique open kitchen and group seating concept.

Whether you are a die-hard foodie, new to the gourmet scene or looking for the perfect spot for an extraordinary evening out, Germany has a three-star Michelin restaurant waiting for your reservation. ■



©SCHANZ RESTAURANT



WHAT TO EXPECT

Visiting a three-star restaurant may seem a little intimidating. Here are some tips to help you feel a bit more prepared.

- Visiting a fine dining establishment is not just about having a meal. It is very much a place where food is created as an experience or performance art, with the chef being the star of the show.
- Make a reservation well in advance; this may be from one week to two months, depending on the popularity. Many offer web bookings. Some will require a deposit. Specify dietary needs or allergies at the time of booking.
- Dress respectfully, as you are there to appreciate the chef's artistry. Semi-formal or smart casual attire is expected.
- Menus are small. There will be one to three 'tasting' menus of select dishes that are presented in a particular order established by the chef. They can be from five to twelve courses made of small servings.
- It is possible to book single dishes à la carte, but that is not the typical experience.
- Expect attentive service. Staff will likely describe each dish to you as they are brought out, one at a time. New plates and silverware will be set for each course.
- There may be a cheese or dessert trolley. A specialist will describe the options and you may make your selections.
- Questions are welcome! They don't expect you to know what all the foods are.
- Take your time! The experience may take three to four hours.
- Estimate costs between €275 and €400 per person for a tasting menu at one of the German restaurants listed.
- A drink pairing of alcoholic beverages is typically an additional cost around €100–€150. Specific wine, cocktails or beers will be selected by a trained sommelier for each course.



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©VICTOR'S FINE DINING



©THE TABLE



©PIETER D'HOOP/ RESTAURANT JAN



Explore the Ahr Valley along the Red Wine Trail

By Karen Bradbury

In a sea of world-renowned white wines, Germany's reds often get swallowed up in the mix. That's a shame because many of these varietals are unique and tasty: call to mind Trollingers and Lembergers from Württemberg and Frühburgunders from Franconia.



Another place in Germany where red wine reigns supreme is in the Ahr River Valley, a sun-kissed corner of the Rhineland-Palatinate's northern reaches. The 55-mile long Ahr is a left-hand tributary of the Rhine, into which it flows some 16 miles south of Bonn. Downstream from the village of Altenahr, steep vineyards yielding predominantly Spätburgunder grapes, known better outside Germany as Pinot Noirs, dot the rugged, slate-hilled landscape.

While many of the Ahr wines are truly impressive, adventurers might find themselves even more bowled over by the scenery than the grape juice.

Those with time on their hands could opt for the AhrSteig, a 67-mile, long-distance trail that runs between Blankenheim, the river's source in the Eifel hills, and Sinzig, by the Rhine. For those with just two days to devote to hiking, the Rotweinwanderweg, or Red Wine Hiking Trail, will deliver the most punch per mile. The stretch between Altenahr and Dernau is considered the prettiest part of the trail.

The trail marked by signposts of red grapes on a white background runs for 22 miles through the Ahr valley's most important wine-growing areas. The vibrant colors of autumn make the trail a popular destination in September and October, but any time of year, it's never short on charm. The many wine taverns found directly along the route or by means of a quick detour add to its appeal. For practical purposes, the trail is divided into five stages, each starting and ending at interconnected train stations. Each stage can be done as its own individual hike. Upon return, a cycle trail running alongside the river offers a change of scenery without all those steep ups and downs—just hopping the train back is another option. The trail is graded as easy to medium difficulty, and proper hiking shoes are a must.

Altenahr – Mayschoss (2.5 miles, 1.5 hours walking)

From the Altenahr train station, cross the river and carry along the highway until a left hand turn leads to a road named Rossberg and begin the ascent. Soon after, the trailhead juts from the right, between two houses. Already, there's a detour here worth taking. A slate-strewn path leads to what remains of Burg Are. The castle, in ruins since 1714, once served as a state prison of the archbishops of Cologne. From here, the trail winds through steep vineyards and mixed forest. The Ümerich viewpoint offers an impressive panorama of Mayschoss and the river valley below.

Mayschoss – Rech (2.5 miles, 1.5 hours walking)

From Mayschoss train station, cross over and cut between the two buildings belonging to the winegrower's cooperative and follow the markers indicating the direction of Ahrweiler. Consider a break at the Michaelishof, a wine tavern with a spacious garden. Back on the trail, the ruins of the Saffenburg, the oldest fortification along the Ahr, come into view. A path through the vineyard leads down to the Rech train station.

Rech – Dernau (2 miles, 1 hour walking)

Behind the station, cross the small railway bridge and begin your ascent to a small woods, where you'll find the "Mosesquelle," a small spring. According to legend, knock your walking stick upon it, and red wine shall flow. A bit further on, a row of benches makes the ideal spot to break into that bottle of wine weighing down your backpack. Cross through another vineyard and you'll find yourself in Dernau, a town with many "Straußwirtschaften," a special type of wine tavern that's only open at certain times of the year. If there's one serving on the day of your visit, don't miss it.

Dernau – Ahrweiler (4.5 miles, 2 hours walking)

The path picks up again by the church and leads up a steep slope to the Marienthal, home to Augustinian nuns for nearly 800 years and nowadays a modern wine estate. The next diversions are an observation tower and a pair of wine terraces. Above the town of Walporzheim, at the "Bunte Kuh" cliff, is a rock formation resembling the head of a cow. Another curiosity around these parts is a government-owned bunker that was meant to be used in the event of a nuclear war. Pass a hotel and the high ropes course before entering Ahrweiler through the impressive stone Adenbach gate.

Ahrweiler - Bad Bodendorf (8 miles, 3 - 4 hours walking)

Pass the high ropes course again and make way to a staircase next to the remains of an old bridge and past the "Ahrweiler Rosenthal" vineyards, reputed to produce some of the Ahr's best wines. The previously narrow valley opens up as the large town of Bad Neuenahr draws near. Between Heppingen and Heimersheim, the massive bridge of the A61 highway cuts through by the Apollinaris spring. The last highlight on this stretch are the ruins of the Landskrone, a 12th century castle. Medieval villages, castle ruins, stunning nature and world-class wines: the Red Wine Hiking Trail delivers everything that makes Germany such a hiker's paradise. Care to explore virtually before the big day arrives? The Der-rotweinwanderweg website features videos sure to spark your wanderlust. ■



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