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Warm and cozy with ***GERMAN SLIPPERS***

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

Although September can lean more towards summer weather, there are usually a few chilly nights that offer a preview of the colder weather to come with autumn. And with those dropping temperatures, I pull out my German wool slippers and welcome them like an old friend.

Living in Germany, many of us quickly realized that carpet flooring was less common than what we are used to in the States. Instead, German houses have lots of tile and wood floors—great for cleaning, less great for being on your feet all day. For warmer summer months, I invested in a pair of Birkenstock sandals to wear around the house—my summer slippers. But in the fall, winter and early spring, my German wool slippers have become an essential.

My favorite slippers come from Haflinger. While I bought my first pair at a specialty shoe store in the States, I recently learned about their German background. Named after the Haflinger mountain horse, this company is based in the German city of Goslar in the Harz Mountains, about 3 hours and 30 minutes from Frankfurt and 2 hours from Leipzig. Although the family has been making high-quality socks and slippers since 1898, their brand Haflinger wasn't created until 1988 and word quickly spread. The slipper company is now well-known around the world.





The story goes that Emil Otto, the original textile master of the company, was wearing a pair of their popular socks when he stepped outside the door of a ski lodge in Austria after a snack during a ski holiday. Quickly, the socks soaked through from the wet snow and the moment inspired the creation of their slipper, which would keep anyone's feet dry and warm.

I can attest that my feet are both dry and warm. Not only that, but my feet feel supported when I'm on them all day in the tile-floored kitchen. Although I mourn the end of summer and my sandal-wearing days, I can't help but anticipate putting on some cozy socks and slipping my feet into my German slippers for the day when colder temperatures arrive. ■

***"I love the Grizzly Franzl
slippers from Haflinger and
I plan on stocking up before
I leave Germany!"***

The easiest, healthiest APPLE-PEAR CRISP you'll ever love



By Karen Bradbury

Just a short bike ride away from my house, there's a sweet little public garden where children can learn all about herbs and growing things. There's also an old orchard, and all of the fruit that grows there is free for the taking.

Upon returning home from a recent forage with three juicy apples and two rather bland and hard pears in hand, I began my internet search for a healthy, sugar-free dessert. All the pear and apple crisp recipes I found called for what I would consider exotic ingredients. I have no almond flour in my pantry, and I can't

recall having ever even seen spelt flour sold in any of our local supermarkets. So I pared down a mash-up of the recipes I found online to a bare minimum of ingredients that I happened to have at home, and to my surprise, the results were delicious. If fast, inexpensive and easy—and pretty healthy too—describes the way you like to bake, you should appreciate this one.

The following recipe results in a dessert that makes generous servings for two, but could also feed three at a stretch.



APPLE-PEAR CRISP

Start to finish: 45 minutes (10 minutes active)

Servings: 2 to 3

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium-sized apples
- 2 medium-sized pears
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup oats ("Haferflocken," either "zart" (delicate) or "kernig" (hearty) will do if you're shopping at a German supermarket)
- ½ cup applesauce ("Apfelmus"), preferably sugar-free. I used a type that contained pureed mango as well.
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon of honey

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 180° Celsius /350° Fahrenheit.

Into a slightly greased baking dish or pie plate, place fruit that you have peeled, cored and sliced. I used an oval baking dish that was roughly 6 inches by 9 inches. If you have all apples or all pears on hand, that's fine as well. Other fruits could work in this recipe too.

Mix fruit slices with half of the salt and half of the cinnamon.

In a bowl, mix together the oats, applesauce and coconut oil. Add the remaining salt and cinnamon. Once mixed thoroughly, spread the mixture evenly atop the fruit.

Bake for 20 minutes, checking every five minutes or so thereafter to ensure the topping doesn't get overdone.

Once the top is nicely brown, remove from oven and sample the fruit to see if your crumble requires any additional sweetness. If so, melt the honey in the microwave. Move the topping aside as best you can, pour over the fruits, and patch the topping back over the top. I found my apple-pear mix crisp required that extra bit of sweetness provided by the honey,

whereas my apples-only crisp was perfect without it.

Return to oven to finish baking, approximately 10 to 15 additional minutes depending on the hardness of your fruit and your oven. Check frequently, poking fruit slices with a fork to check for softness and making sure the top doesn't burn.

I've never seen a recipe that called for this, but before I finish baking my crisps, I like to take them out of the oven, stir the fruits and topping together, and then bake them a little longer. I like the mixture of oats and fruit within and the texture of the fruit that has been exposed. But this is simply a matter of preference.

Fruit crisp desserts taste great with add-ins such as walnuts, raisins or dried cranberries, so if you have those on hand, you can mix them in as well. To make a bigger or smaller batch, adjust accordingly while adhering to the 4 parts oatmeal, 2 parts applesauce and 1 part coconut oil ratio.

Enjoy while still warm from the oven, perhaps with a cup of milky Chai tea, or if you're entertaining, a glass of chilled Gewürztraminer or Chardonnay alongside it is sure to impress. ■

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GERMANY'S HIGHLIGHT

Orchards and Farms

By Stacy Roman



When the autumn air feels crisper, the days begin to shorten and the leaves turn brilliant shades of gold before fluttering to the ground, I'm always reminded of the harvest season. Growing up in an agricultural town in northern California, fall was a time when the almond trees were picked clean, and rows of sugar beets were planted. In Germany, the harvest time in Rhein-Main and the Rheinland-Pfalz is typically marked with boisterous festivals and celebrations. Although this year may look a little different from years past, there are still plenty of ways to help usher in and welcome the change of season.

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Appel Happel Mainz

In a region known for its world-famous “Apfelwein,” it’s no surprise there is an abundance of apple orchards along the Rhein-Main-Rheinland-Pfalz border. On the southwestern outskirts of Mainz sits Appel Happel, a large family-owned farm. The vast orchards produce more than 15 types of delicious fruit. Visitors can taste samples of the different apples to help determine which ones are best suited for baking and which ones to throw in the lunch bag for a quick snack.

Beginning in late August through the end of October, the farm encourages you to roam through the orchards with your friends and family and pick your own fruit. Even if apples aren’t your favorite, they also grow pears, plums and other sumptuous fruits. Children can exert their energy at the pop-up playground and pet barn animals at the small petting zoo. Appel Happel has become a popular mainstay at the Mainz Apple Festival, usually held the last weekend in September (Sept. 25-26 this year). Visitors flock to the street fest to purchase all things apple: cake, strudel, wine, juice, cider and more. Live entertainment and non-apple-based savory foods will tempt your tastebuds.

Hitscherhof Pumpkin Farm Maßweiler

If capturing a holiday photo at a local pumpkin patch is a tradition in your family, don’t worry about trying to find one in Germany — they’re all over the place. While many will trek over to Ludwigsburg to check out their impeccable pumpkin art and see how much the largest pumpkin of the season weighs, there are many “Kürbisfarmen” right in your own backyard — including a place you can escape to for a quick, local staycation.

Complete with cozy bed and breakfast lodgings, Hitscherhof Pumpkin Farm in Maßweiler (between Kaiserslautern and Pirmasens) lets visitors cut their own orange-hued gourds from the vine. They also set up a corn maze and cut-your-own flowers for the perfect table arrangement. Be sure to pop by the store for farm-fresh produce, including more than 30 different pumpkin varieties or a batch of homemade roasted pumpkin soup.

As summer begins to fade and autumn shows off its spectacular colors, take a stroll through the orchards and farms of the Rheinland-Pfalz and Rhein-Main. Stop in and pick a perfectly plump pumpkin, or sort through bushels of apples to use in your favorite “Apfelkuchen” or family pie recipe. ■



*During harvest time
in Germany, there
are plenty of ways to
celebrate and usher
in the season.*





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the allure of *Austria*

By Stacy Roman

Austria invokes images of sophisticated elegance and quiet refinement. Often seen as an extension of Germany, Austria is more like a genteel cousin with its history, culture and identity. Borders lined with jagged alpine peaks and crystal-clear lakes make for fantastic hiking in the warm summer months and world-class snow sport options in the icy winter. However, one of the best seasons to visit this jewel is in the fall — during the cooler and colorful autumnal months. From vibrant cities to small, rural villages and rugged mountain towns, there is no better time to discover Austria than now.



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TOP
For urban travelers, a visit to the capital city of Vienna is a must. This magnificent metropolis is nothing short of spectacular.

ABOVE
In mid-late September, visitors can often witness the annual spectacle of the "Almabtrieb."

The Great Outdoors

Austria's outdoor spaces are teeming with hikers, backpackers, mountaineers, skiers, snowboarders and other thrill-seeking adventurers during the summer and winter. As fall begins to announce its arrival, tourists start to head home, which leaves the well-maintained trails and parks significantly less crowded. Sandwiched between the German and Italian borders, the Tyrolean Alps boast breathtaking panoramas, sheer cliffs with cascading waterfalls and rolling emerald-green pastures. In mid-late September, visitors can often witness the annual spectacle of the "Almabtrieb." After spending the summer moseying through the high-altitude meadows at their leisure, thousands of cattle, sheep, goats and other livestock make their way down the mountains back to their rightful owners and farms. Decked out in brightly colored ribbons and wreaths, once the animals have paraded through the village streets, it's time to celebrate with a fest!

If you travel further east, approximately 75 kilometers south of Salzburg, you'll discover the charming Austrian town of Hallstatt. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the area is famous for what lies beneath. A complex tunnel of caves at Dachstein Cave World dates back millions of years and was once part of an ocean, as evidenced by the fossils and shells that remain. Jagged mineral deposits known as stalactites and stalagmites jut ominously through the cave floor and dangle precariously from the ceiling. Hallstatt is also home to the world's oldest salt mine. Visitors can walk through the mine or stay aboveground and view the cityscape from the Skywalk. Or head to one of the nearby trails circling the lake for a trek through the changing leaves.



ABOVE
With a vast amount of palatial homes and castles, Salzburg has the feel of a fairy tale.

Although Austria is often compared and equated to its neighbor, this serene, yet sophisticated country holds its own allure.



RIGHT
A complex tunnel of caves at Dachstein Cave World dates back millions of years and was once part of an ocean, as evidenced by the fossils and shells that remain.



The impressive
Schönbrunn Palace
is an easy U-Bahn
ride from the middle
of town.

The Cultural Icons

For urban travelers, a visit to the capital city of Vienna is a must. This magnificent metropolis is nothing short of spectacular. A cultural powerhouse, intellectual and artistic greats such as Sigmund Freud, Beethoven and Mozart once called Vienna home. If the brisk autumn winds chase you indoors, there are a plethora of museums near the city center in the MuseumsQuartier. Once home to Austrian royalty, visitors can see how the other half lived at one of the many palaces. The impressive Schönbrunn Palace is an easy U-Bahn ride from the middle of town. Likewise, the Hofburg, Vienna Opera House, Karlskirche, Palais Schwarzenberg and Belvedere Palace are all within walking distance and worth a stop.

Sitting on the German border is the enchanting city of Salzburg. Immortalized in the beloved film "The Sound of Music," its history is very much entwined with music and the arts. With a vast amount of palatial homes and castles, Salzburg has the feel of a fairy tale. As the birthplace of Mozart, visitors can walk through his childhood home and glide through the ornate ballrooms of Mirabell Palace and the Robinhof, imagining his dramatic musical stylings filling the grand spaces. If the outdoors is calling to you, head to the riverfront and walk beneath the beautiful foliage lining the Salzach River. For a little more adventure, head to one of the many hiking spots in the Alps east of the city.

Another cultural gem hiding in the Tyrolean Alps tends to see more visitors during the winter. Host to the Winter Olympics in 1964, 1976 and the Youth Olympic Games in 2012, Innsbruck should be on your travel bucket list. Although it's best known as a winter sports mecca, visiting during the fall allows visitors to see the spectacular colors as the leaves change against the backdrop of pastel-colored buildings and towering snow-capped peaks in the distance. If the weather takes a turn, head indoors to the Swarovski Kristallwelten. With brilliant displays of glittering crystals, visitors can peek inside the world-famous crystal house.

Although Austria is often compared and equated to its neighbor, this serene, yet sophisticated country holds its own allure. During the autumn months, you'll find you have more breathing room and the opportunity to discover all it has to offer. ■



Up Close and Personal *with* Glockenbachviertel

by Jessica Zen

Large, bustling cities can be overwhelming if you are trying to see the entire thing in one trip, or even one day. Munich, the capital of Bavaria and Germany's most populous city, is a lot to process all at once. Take the guesswork out of your trip to the city by breaking it down into neighborhoods. One of Munich's prettiest neighborhoods is Glockenbachviertel. It is located just south of the city center by the Isar River and has undergone many changes over the years.



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One of Munich's prettiest neighborhoods is Glockenbachviertel. It is located just south of the city center by the Isar River and has undergone many changes over the years.

Glockenbachviertel was once home to the Jewish community and millworkers. It then made a fairly drastic change and turned into the edgy hub of Munich's gay and lesbian community in the 1980s. Queen's lead singer, Freddie Mercury, even had a second home here! The neighborhood recently turned into Munich's most luxurious area and is home to lovely residential buildings, bars, restaurants and shops. It has a booming nightlife and is a chic place to hang out, especially with the younger crowds. You could even label it a little eccentric and liberal.

Though the heydays for the LGBTQ community may seem like they were left in the 80s, that simply isn't true. There is still a thriving community there today. Müllerstrasse has numerous bars, clubs and stores that promote sexual equality in a judgement-free zone. This particular district within Munich chooses to let the city shine with all the colors of the rainbow!

If you are interested in shopping for unique, independent labels, look no further than Hans-Sachs-Straße. This street is lined with boutique stores, cafes and bistros with outdoor seating and is the perfect place for shopping. Visit 7te Himmel for unique fashion and jewelry or Artefakt, which sells hand-dyed and painted fabrics from up-and-coming designers.

To refuel while shopping, head to cafe SAXS. They have a sun terrace that is a lovely place to relax and unwind. Another great place to stop and eat or grab drinks is The Drunken Dragon Bar. They offer Chinese fusion-inspired foods in a trendy setting. The service is impeccable and the wait staff speaks English. Should you be out and about later at night, the kiosk on Reichenbachbrücke bridge serves drinks and small snacks. There is also a plethora of currywurst places that are still going strong between 2 to 3 a.m. if you just can't get enough of this traditional German snack.

If you've been searching for the perfect neighborhood in Germany with a younger crowd, more modern establishments and less of an uptight feel, Glockenbachviertel is the place for you. Support independent artists, sample some amazing food and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. Munich is overflowing with old world charm, but this particular place is headed for the future with its forward thinking and modern innovation. ■



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48 HOURS

PALMA, MALLORCA

By Mary Del Rosario

The Balearic Islands, an archipelago of islands in Spain, is a treasure trove of inviting beaches, warm weather, tapas and water activities. One treasure to uncover is Palma, the Balearic Island's capital and largest city. Whatever calls you to the sun-kissed island of Mallorca, some time in its capital is a must. For a vacation you won't soon forget, follow this itinerary.

WHAT TO DO

Palma is a stress-free and easy city to navigate. For a capital city, it's relatively small, so experiencing all the major highlights on your first day is possible. The Palma Cathedral, or La Seu, is one of those sites that is not only a must-see, but it's also one that you literally can't miss, as it commands the city. This Gothic-style cathedral sits on the top of Palma's Old Town and boasts a spectacular view of Parc de la Mar, where you can see the old port. Since you've spotted the port, saunter your way down there next. The Passeig Maritim, a palm tree-lined walkway by the harbor, is peppered with restaurants and bars that not only provide sumptuous eats but offer the best views of the port. Seeing the lucky souls docking off from their yachts is a memory I can still picture. Another can't-miss site is the Royal Palace of La Almudaina, a stunning fortified palace that was once used by Mallorca's monarchs.

For those who love to shop, be sure not to overlook Passeig del Born, a tree-lined street that's peppered with chic shops selling brands from Louis Vuitton to Hugo Boss. If you're hungry after, you'll be spoiled with the many restaurants to choose from.



WHERE TO EAT

Though fan-favorites while in any city in Spain, tapas, paella and sangria are not the only items to look for while eating out. Popular dishes belonging to Mallorca include "arrós brut," dirty rice filled with meat, vegetables and spices, "trumbet," a dish with fried eggplant and potatoes in tomato sauce and roasted suckling pig, which is typically served with potatoes. For an authentic Balearic dining experience, check out Adrian Quetglas. Located in Passeig de Mallorca, this restaurant mixes its native roots with an international twist. For a nautical ambiance, head to Canblanc Port at Passeig Maritim. The linguini with lobster and Galician clams still has my tastebuds drooling.

If your sweet tooth is looking for a treat, be sure to order an Ensaimada, a sweet yeasted loaf heavily dusted in powdered sugar that's best paired with a piping hot cup of coffee. You can find these sweetened delights at almost any bakery.

Of course, if you feel like you've taken all of Palma's charm in during your first 24 hours here, a simple car ride will take you to easy day trips in other regions of the island. ■





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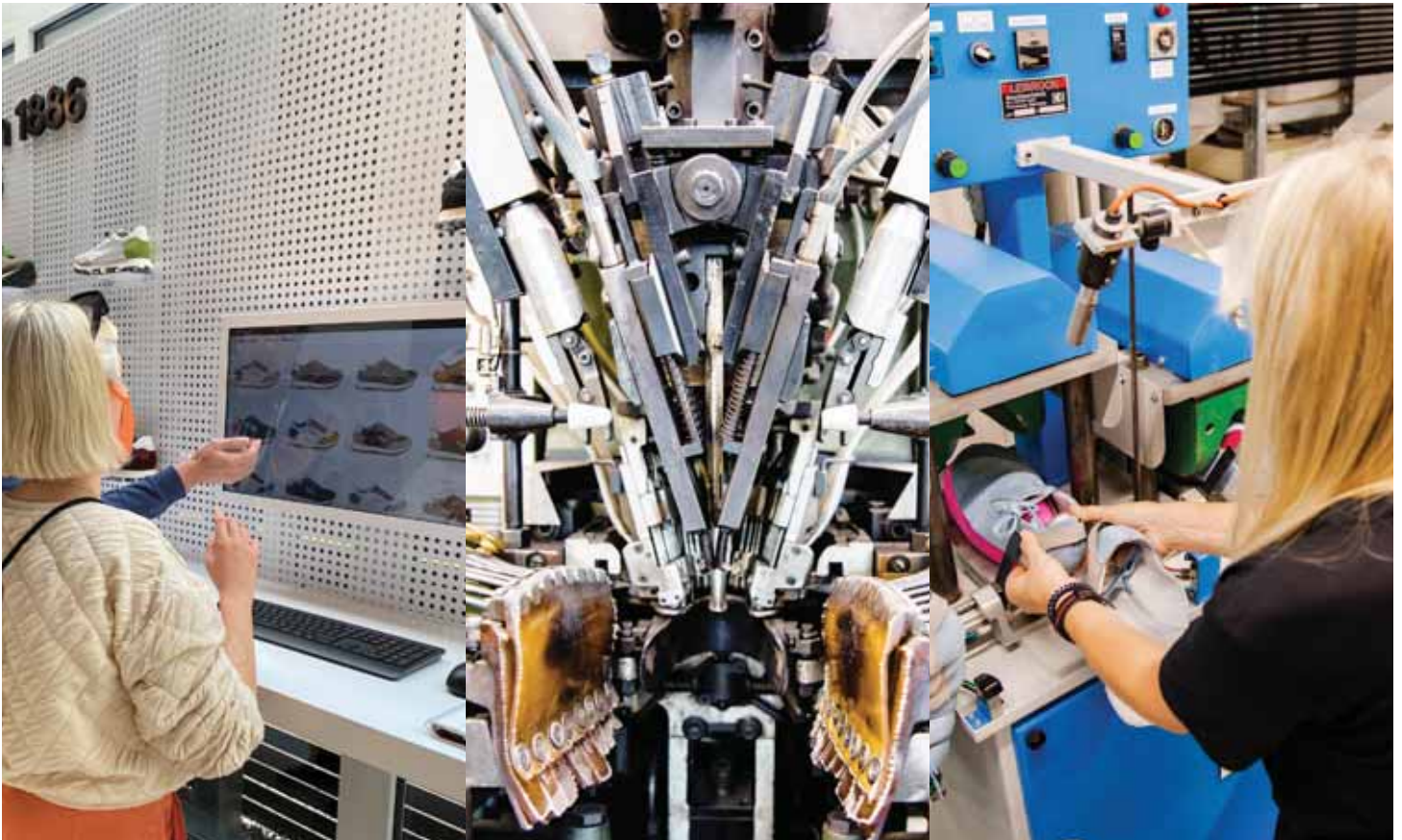


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