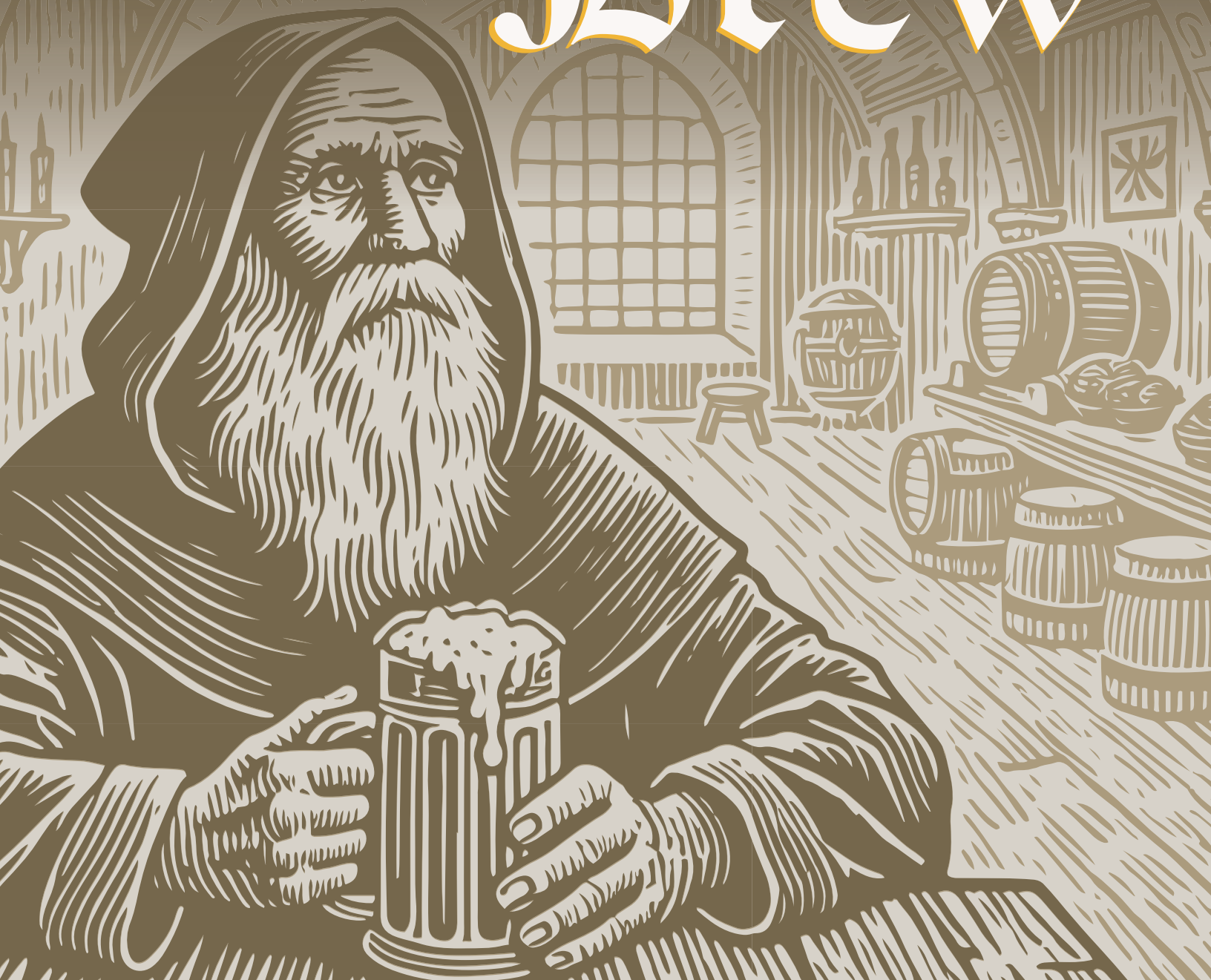


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# PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



## BAVARIA

### Leonhardi Ride, Kreuth

NOV. 6, 2025

In Bavaria and Austria, November 6th is St. Leonhard's Feast Day. Saint Leonhard is the patron saint of horses and farmers, and many towns and villages celebrate with a horse procession to honor him. The most famous Leonhardi ride dates back to 1442 and occurs in Kreuth. The festivities begin at 6 a.m. when the *Winkl* (small alpine village) is awakened with gunfire. A church procession with music starts at 9 a.m., then at 9:30 a.m. a Holy Mass begins, after which the Leonhardi Ride gets underway. People dress in traditional costumes and horses are decorated beautifully, often with ribbons and flowers woven into their braided manes and tails. They wear lively bells that can be heard as they parade through the street. Wooden wagons are adorned with garlands, carvings and paintings. As participants loop through the village, they receive a blessing with holy water, incense and the relic of St. Leonard each time they pass the church. A special Leonhardi dance ends the evening.



## KAISERSLAUTERN

### Gartenschau Kaiserslautern Pumpkin Exhibition

SEPT. 1–OCT. 31, 2025

At the Gartenschau in Kaiserslautern, you can stroll through the beautiful park and spot dinosaurs or admire the Lego® exhibition "All Bricks." In the fall, the park celebrates pumpkins! This year, 2025, the Pumpkin Exhibition will have the theme of "Fire." There will be over 450,000 pumpkins of various kinds and colors to create unique sculpture art. Previous themes include "Jungle" and "Underwater." This is a fun, easy family outing and you can buy tickets once there or online. On September 21st, the **17th Open-Rhineland-Palatinate Pumpkin Weighing Championships** will occur. The goal for this year is to beat a pumpkin weighing 834.9 kg, which is nearly 1,839 lbs.! Pumpkin farmers and amateur gardeners can participate in the competition. Participants compete not only for the title of the heaviest pumpkin, but also the "most beautiful."



## STUTTGART

### Filderkrautfest, Leinfelden-Echterdingen

OCT. 17–19, 2025

Have you heard of pointed cabbage? It's a large, cone-shaped bright green species of cabbage. In Stuttgart, the Pointed Cabbage Festival celebrates the leafy green plant by serving cabbage-based dishes like sauerkraut, cabbage rolls and *Krautkuchen* (cabbage cake). Pointed cabbage has a softer, sweeter flavor than other cabbages. Visitors get together at this quirky festival and enjoy painting faces on cabbage heads along with other cabbage-based activities. There are cabbage slicing competitions and there are even loaves of bread shaped into pointed cabbages served with meals. Larger cabbages are weighed and measured to compete for the title of "World Champion Cabbage." Don't miss the festival kick-off where you can see the Royal Cabbage King and Queen overseeing the opening of the festival by the mayor.



## WIESBADEN

### Halloween Frankenstein at Burg Königstein

OCT. 17–NOV. 11, 2025

If you wish to be truly terrified this spooky season, see how long you can last at "Germany's Most Legendary Horror Show." This year the motto for the event is "The Nightmare Returns." Zombies, werewolves, vampires and other ghoulish creatures gather at the Burg Königstein castle ruins to turn your nightmares into reality. Visitors can bravely walk through Werewolf Forest or the apocalyptic world of "The Purge" as well as get up-close with Murder Dolls, Witches, Horror Clowns and more in other "Scare Zones." Fear not, Sundays are Children's Day from 2 to 6 p.m. and feature spooks instead of scares. Purchase a VIP ticket for a welcome drink, four-course buffet and meet-and-greet with the monsters, or the standard ticket which includes access to parking and bus transfers to and from the castle. Don't miss dancing and the unmasking of the monsters at the finale. ■

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# The Seasons of German Beer



By Kat Nickola

**Summer** This is the time for Helles and Weiß beers that are pale, light and refreshing for hot days and the perfect choice for cooling off at a biergarten stopover while out on a bike ride or hike.

**Autumn** As the leaves fall, switch over to the amber Oktoberfest beers—a Festbier, Wiesenbier or Märzen—which are brewed in March and stored in cold cellars through the summer.

**Winter** Darker times call for the dark, strong Bock beers. Special Weihnachtsbier (Christmas beer) and Fastenbier or Lentenbier (Lent beer) are often extra strong Doppelbocks. They were originally brewed by monks so they could endure religious fasting.

**Spring** As the sky lightens, so does the beer with a hoppy, lighter Maibock (May bock beer). Or, on warm days, try a hybrid beer like a Kölsch. ■

German Beer 101







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# BENEDICTINE ABBEY *of* ST. HILDEGARD

By Tamala Malerk

## HISTORY

The abbey is dedicated to Saint Hildegard of Bingen and is also known as Eibingen Abbey. Hildegard (1098–1179) was 42 years old when, as she describes it, “a fiery light accompanied by lightning came down from heaven. It flowed through my brain and glowed in my chest. And suddenly the meaning of Scripture was revealed to me...” She wrote down what she saw in her vision and became known as a prophet and seer.

The abbey itself only dates back to 1900; however, its history goes back to the medieval era. The abbey is directly linked to Saint Hildegard’s first abbey in Rupertsberg. Years of wars, plagues and famine led to the destruction of the original abbey and eventually led to the aforementioned construction of the modern building in Rudesheim am Rhein.

The abbey expanded during World War I; yet, like many religious institutions, faced issues in World War II when the building was confiscated and all 115 nuns were expelled by the Gestapo. Luckily, the building was not destroyed during the bombing of Rudesheim, and the abbey was returned to the nuns after the war.

*“The abbey produces  
wine, arts, crafts  
and more.”*







## AT THE ABBEY

Today, Sister Katharina Drouvé runs the abbey as Abbess and encourages visitors to come to this Upper Middle Rhine Valley **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. There are over 40 nuns working there, the youngest is 33 and the oldest is 94. While there, you can see art, shrines and gorgeous architecture.

The abbey produces wine, arts, crafts and more. Sister Drouvé only asks that you reach out beforehand to schedule talks with the nuns or to hear lectures about life at the abbey. Learn more about this at [abtei-st-hildegard.de](http://abtei-st-hildegard.de).

The onsite winery is run by Sister Thekla and Celler Master Arnulf Steinheimer. No matter whether you prefer red or white wine, the winery produces varieties of Riesling and Pinot Noir. Not sure what to try while you are visiting? Sister Thekla's favorite is the **2023 Pinot Noir Klostersecco**, a dry semi-sparkling wine. Sister Thekla and I have similar tastes.

There are also several hiking trails around the abbey that range in size and difficulty. The shortest trail is roughly seven km, and the longest is the 300 km **Rheinstag Trail** for true long-distance hiking enthusiasts. During the summer, the abbey also hosts concerts as part of the Rheingau Music Festival. You can reach the abbey by a cardio-fueled hike up the mountain upon which it sits; or take it easy and drive.



## WHAT TO DO AROUND TOWN

While in Rüdesheim am Rhein, you can do a variety of things. If you want a bird's eye view of Rüdesheim, consider taking one of their cable car rides; you'll see the castles, vineyards, landmarks and monuments from a unique point of view. If, like me, you aren't so crazy about heights, take a river cruise on the Rhein. My favorite are the **dinner cruises** where you can eat while watching the water and landscapes along the route.

I also recommend taking a stroll down the **Drosselgasse**. In the days of old, this street was used to haul boat equipment and goods to the old-town from the riverside. Today, you can marvel at the half-timbered houses hosting wine taverns, specialty stores and souvenir shops. ■



# HOLY BREW

By Kat Nickola

**B**eer has been around for thousands of years. It served as a way for our distant ancestors to both preserve grains and supply high calories outside of harvest season. Beer became the type of homemade food that every family had a version of, especially in northern Europe. As Christianity spread and led to communal living by monks and nuns, it was only natural that they, too, would need to brew this vital beverage. At first, religious orders only brewed beer for their own residents; much like the gardens and farms run by monasteries, breweries were a small part of what kept the community fed.

Unlike household beer, however, the monastery suds were high quality. As some of the few people during the Middle Ages who could read and write, these holy brewmasters had the opportunity to become niche experts. They kept records and recipes and continuously strived for high-quality draughts worthy of their religious calling. Religious orders were at the forefront of developing and defining the many beer varieties we have today.

Since monasteries and abbeys often served double duty as lodges and hospitals, the breweries became popular among travelers, bringing money into the local community. Today, you can still visit a Klosterbrauerei (monastery brewery) just to try the local brew.

Many Klosterbrauereien continue to brew beer with methods developed hundreds of years ago, even after most of the religious orders have dissipated and were replaced with privately owned companies. A Klosterbier (monastery beer) is still associated with high quality and tradition.

Here are the handful of Klosterbrauereien in Germany that still have monks and nuns overseeing the brewing operations.



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## Kloster Andechs

FOUNDED 1455

This Benedictine monastery perched on the Holy Mountain southwest of Munich is still a religious pilgrimage site. You can visit the ornately decorated church, see the monk's herb garden and old apothecary, and, of course, tour the brewery. There is a café, restaurant and brew pub with outdoor seating, so you can try their famous Doppelbock Dunkel or a tasty Helles in an angelic courtyard.

[www.andechs.de](http://www.andechs.de)



## Kloster Ettal

FOUNDED 1330

A visit to this major tourist site is on most itineraries to the Bavarian Alps. Near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the large Ettal Monastery complex is still an active abbey for Benedictine monks, even offering men the chance to stay in the cloister for personal retreats. There is also a hotel for casual visitors. Do not miss the impressive basilica and pop into the bookshop or traditional herbal liqueur factory before sipping a famous Weissbräu at the Bräustüberl (brew pub).

[www.kloster-ettal.de](http://www.kloster-ettal.de)



## Kloster Kreuzberg

FOUNDED 1677

In central Germany, this Franciscan monastery tucked up on a forested mountain still retains a small, local feel with only one beer brewed year-round. Once a month, a monk offers tours. There is also a petite hotel and restaurant to try their Dunkel, brewed using the monastery's spring water. Take home some of the specialty beer by visiting the brewery gate in the afternoons for draft pours by the liter (or just snag a party keg).

[www.kloster-kreuzberg.de](http://www.kloster-kreuzberg.de)







## Kloster Mellersdorf

FOUNDED 1107, RE-ESTABLISHED 1869

South of Regensburg, the Kloster Mellersdorf is home to Sister Englehard, brewmaster. She brews seasonal beers and typically only one will be bottled at a time. You'll find them available for purchase by nuns at the small brewery shop. There are no tourist facilities, but the monastery is open to visitors. As the motherhouse for the Poor Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Family Order, the monastery is primarily a religious complex for the over 500 nuns who live there.

[www.mallersdorfer-schwestern.de](http://www.mallersdorfer-schwestern.de)



## Kloster Scheyern

FOUNDED IN 1119

Visiting this active monastery is a glimpse into the lives of modern Benedictine monks who participate in spiritual activities while also working in the butcher shop, distillery, fish farm, goat dairy and other vocations like the brewery. The many kinds of beer you can taste at the monastery are fresh, not pasteurized or treated, and are made from local raw materials. They offer tours of the monastery and brewery, plus there is a restaurant and hotel on site.

[www.kloster-scheyern.de](http://www.kloster-scheyern.de)



ANNO 1050  
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## Kloster Weltenburg

FOUNDED 1050

Perched along a beachy curve in the Danube River, the Weltenburg Monastery claims the title of oldest Klosterbrauerei in the world. This destination for rest and relaxation has a hotel and is a great place for contemplative hikes, cycling or boating along the Danube. Although the brewery is known for its Dunkel beers, there are plenty of other selections brewed and served at the tavern.

[www.klosterschchenke-weltenburg.de](http://www.klosterschchenke-weltenburg.de) ■

# It's All FUN GAMES ...or Not

## The Purity Law and Official Breweries of Oktoberfest

By Tamala Malerk

Everyone is familiar with Germany's most popular annual event, Oktoberfest. It's food, fun, cheers and, well, a lot of beer.

If you plan on attending this year's event, prices for the beers have been released: A liter of beer will cost you between 14.50 and 15.80 euros. However, did you know that amongst the fun and frivolity, there are strict rules and laws in place that Oktoberfest has had to follow since its inception? (Some even long before that).

Only six official breweries are allowed to participate in Oktoberfest, and there is a Purity Law for the ingredients of beer that has been enforced since 1516. In fact, part of Bavaria's agreement to join with Germany was that Bavarian breweries still had to adhere to the Purity Law.

### The Purity Law of 1516

There are records of bad beer brewers being penalized since the 1100s and set regulations for brewing beer since the 1400s. Yet, the one that is still in place today in Bavaria is the Purity Law of 1516 which states that the only ingredients allowed to be used in the production of beer are barley, hops, water and yeast. Although bound by this law, breweries have managed to produce varied and delicious beers for consumers for centuries.



### Augustiner Brewery

This brewery got its start in the late 13th century, but it was not until 1328 that it was referred to by name. It supplied the noble dukes of the area until they founded their own brewery (Hofbräu). In the 1800s, secularization brought about the end of the monastery that created the beer; however, the brewery lived on. Since 1987, Augustiner is the only brewery at Oktoberfest to tap its beer from wooden barrels. [augustiner-braeu.de](http://augustiner-braeu.de)

### Hacker-Pschorr

In 1417, the first Hacker brewery is mentioned. In the early 1790s, Joseph Pschorr married Theresa Hacker, and over the next 15 years, the brewery rose to the top of the 50 operating breweries in Munich. In 2007, Hacker-Pschorr became the first Munich brewery to switch all of its beers to traditional swing tops. [hacker-pschorr.com](http://hacker-pschorr.com)

### Hofbräu

Duke Wilhelm V founded his own brewery in 1589. By 1610, you would have seen innkeepers across Munich serving Hofbräu beer. In 1823, barrels of Hofbräu beer combated the fire which engulfed the Munich National Theatre in flames. Unfortunately, the theatre still burned to the ground, but the beer was able to contain the fire. Today, there are Hofbräu restaurants all over the world, including several in the U.S., and you can tour the Bavarian brewery. [hofbraeu-muenchen.de](http://hofbraeu-muenchen.de)

### Löwenbräu

As early as 1524, there are beer brewers mentioned at the Löwengrube 17 address, yet it was not until the mid-1740s that "Löwenbräu" appears in the Munich beer directory. In 1864, Löwenbräu became the biggest brewery in Munich and just over 100 years later in 1971, it was brewing close to 150,000,000 liters of beer a year. Today, you can tour the brewery. [loewenbraeu.de](http://loewenbraeu.de)

### Paulaner

The first documented mention of the Paulaner brewery occurred in 1634. In 1881, one of the first ice machines were added to the brewery which was allowed to brew year-round. In 2014, Paulaner brewed the world's first "non-alcoholic wheat beer." Today, you can drink Paulaner in over 70 countries. [paulaner.de](http://paulaner.de)

### Spatenbräu

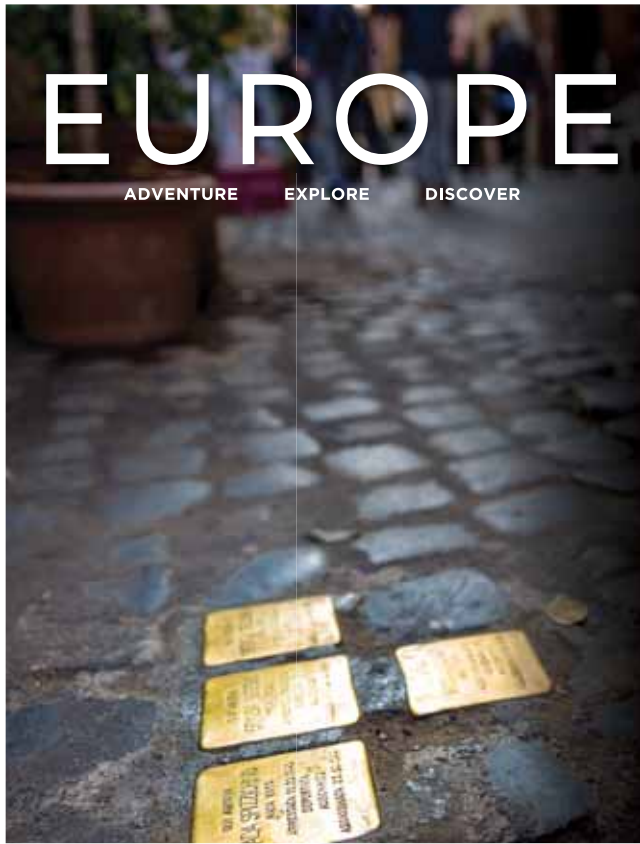
In 1894, in a world (well, Munich) filled with only "sweet, dark malty beer," Spaten brewed the first Munich Hell. Today, you can tour the brewery in person, or, if you cannot make the drive out to the brewery you can also take a virtual tour on their website: [spatenbraeu.de](http://spatenbraeu.de).

Hopefully, all this new information allows you to enjoy your beers at Oktoberfest just a little bit more. For more information on Oktoberfest such as dates, prices, tents and other activities go to [oktoberfest.de](http://oktoberfest.de). ■



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## Photo by CPT Zach Robinson



In Namibia's Namib-Naukluft National Park, the **Deadvlei** is a region that is, according to photographer CPT Zach Robinson, "a surreal landscape of dead camel thorn trees, scorched black by the sun and preserved by the arid climate, standing on cracked white clay, surrounded by some of the tallest red sand dunes in the world." The landscape changed drastically around 600–700 years ago when shifting sand dunes cut off the water supply to a marsh, fed by the **Tsauchab River** and dried up. ■



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