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PLAN AHEAD

By Katie Wells



BAVARIA

Maidult Fair | April 25–May 3, 2026

Maidult is the first *Auer Dult* of the year, a city fair in the district of AU Munich that takes place three times per year on the Mariahilfplatz (main square) in front of the church, a tradition dating back to 1310. There is a large flea market, handmade dolls clothes and furniture, live music and plenty of German food to try, especially steamed noodles. For kids, there are puppet shows and Tuesdays are children's days with reduced prices on entertainment.



KAISERSLAUTERN

Heidelberger Frühling: USA Day | March 28, 2026

During the Heidelberg Spring Music Festival which will occur from March 14–April 19, 2026. A special "USA Day" event will occur put on in collaboration with the German-American Institute Heidelberg. The event intends to bridge cultures and celebrate America's 250 years of independence. There will be four events included in the USA Pass and the theme is "the other 50%." Music, readings and conversations will reflect on the meaning of freedom.



SPANGDAHLEM

Moselle Peach Blossom Market, Cochem | April 11–12, 2026

Annually, the Blossom Market in Cochem takes place on Endertplatz Square. The blossoming of the Moselle vineyard peach is celebrated and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., market stalls offer a variety of products made from them, including tea, liquors, chocolates and much more. Visitors can also stroll through the area and find nearby hikes to admire the pretty pink blossoms.



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STUTTGART

Stuttgarter Frühlingsfest | April 18–May 10, 2026

The biggest Spring Fest in all of Europe is back. This festival welcomes the return of warmer days and Wasenhasi, a friendly rabbit and the official mascot, who regularly walks around the site ready to take pictures and encourage guests to ride the rides. A variety of stalls sell drinks and favorite fest-foods like schnitzel. The Trader's Market has more than 50 traders offering textiles, handicrafts, jewelry, teas, spices and more. Every Wednesday is family day which offers reduced prices.



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WIESBADEN

Frankfurt Dippemess | March 27–April 19, 2026

Only 40 minutes from Wiesbaden, Dippemess has a history dating back to the 14th century where it was known as the *maamess* (a medieval market for household goods). Frankfurt's oldest folkfest, has plenty of vendors selling crafts and wares, thrilling rides, carnival games, live entertainers like jugglers and, of course, yummy festival food. Apple wine is a specialty offered along with traditional fest food. Every Tuesday is children's day and ticket prices are reduced. ■



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SPOT
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ON...

Toastbrot



By Kat Nickola

In America, you likely bought your bread off a grocery store shelf where it was sold sliced and in a plastic bag. Here in Germany, the equivalent product is called *Toastbrot* or just *toast*. Because of German regulations, it will not contain the additives and preservatives common in U.S. breads. To be clear, however, it is not real German *Brot* (bread).

Toastbrot is an American invention that was brought to Germany after World War II. It was never fully accepted, though, since it simply didn't stand a chance competing against the local fresh-baked German *Brot*. The word *toast* was adapted from English into German because the bagged loaves were, in the German mind, designed for the novelty of being used in a toaster. In fact, some *Toast* is marketed as "American Style" when it is 50 percent larger than the regular varieties.

Brot is a different thing entirely, intricately entwined in the centuries-old German bread culture. Also, *Brot* comes from a bakery. You will not find *Toastbrot* at a bakery since the lower-quality product is only used for toasting or making snack sandwiches. It is, essentially, seen as the fast-food of baked goods and certainly not equivalent to healthy, fresh German bakery *Brot*. ■

GERMAN WORD OF THE MONTH

Abendbrot (noun) *Ah-bend-brote*

Literal translation: Evening bread

Meaning: A cold supper-time meal of various breads, meats, cheeses and spreads, especially popular when a hot meal was eaten at lunch time in a restaurant or worksite canteen.



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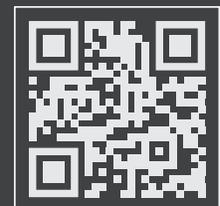
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A CAKE FOR A PRINCE: THE PRINZREGENTENTORTE

By Katie Wells



As you wander through Bavaria and perhaps pop into a bakery, a chocolatey seven-layer cake may catch your eye. Good choice. You also have noble taste as this delicacy was created to honor royalty. In 1866, Luitpold became Prince Regent of Bavaria; thus, *Prinzregententorte* (Prince Regent Cake) was created, or so the story goes. While it's unknown who actually invented the cake (supposedly the evidence was lost during WWII), some say it was Anton Seidl, a baker, who gained permission to name it for the prince after his majesty tasted a slice.

Bakers make the cake with **genoise sponge** and layers of **chocolate buttercream**. They spread the topmost layer with a glaze of **apricot jam** and blanket the entire torte with a **dark chocolate ganache**. The seven layers represent the seven administrative districts of Bavaria. Originally, there were eight layers; however, Bavaria lost the Pfalz district after WWII and officials reduced it to seven in 1946.

Another speculated inventor of the Prinzregententorte, and one whose recipe you can still try today, is Heinrich Georg Erbshäuser. On Prince Regent Luitpold's 65th birthday, Erbshäuser made a special variation of Luitpold's favorite cake to honor him. A little café, **Konditorei Erbshäuser**, still exists in Munich where you can stop by and read the story while trying the treat.

In a 2021 interview by the "Oberbayerisches Volksblatt," the current owner and great-granddaughter of Erbshäuser, Karmann-Fleischmann, states that the cake takes three days. "On the first day, the bases are baked. The next day, the buttercream filling is added, and finally, the fondant chocolate icing is added. It's handmade, just like it was 100 years ago. But at the same time, it's a piece of Munich." The family has passed down the recipe through the generations and it's easy to see that it is precious to them.

The **Prinzregententorte** has a lot of finesse to it.

The Genoise sponge is a cake with Italian roots from Genoa. It is very light, and the airiness of the cake comes from an intense egg-whipping technique. Traditionally, to make the sponge lay-

ers, you are supposed to spread the batter thinly in each pan, almost like a crêpe, and each layer must rise to the same level. This sponge is light enough so that when it is cut, you can see the beautiful, even layers of cake and German chocolate buttercream. Nothing is getting smushed.

The German chocolate buttercream has a custard base, making it creamy, silky and chocolatey. The custard base is whipped with butter and sugar into a light and velvety frosting – a perfect complement to the airy Genoise sponge.

Finally, assembling the cake is a delicate procedure. There must be a balance when it comes to the thin sponge layers and piping an even amount of German chocolate buttercream between each layer. Once the layers are assembled and a spread of apricot jam coats the top, a baker expertly pours the chocolate ganache. It should be thin enough to easily coat the entire cake, but thick enough not to completely drip off. The ganache should also create a glamorous, bubble-free mirror glaze.

The time during Prince Regent Luitpold's reign was considered a "**Golden Age**" for Munich. It is said there had never been so much celebration of art and industrial progress. It's no wonder such a regal cake was created to match.

While you plan your trip to Munich, try your hand at making a Prinzregententorte. Prue Leith has a recipe on the "Great British Bake Off" website that contestants attempted to bake. ■



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IN DER
BÄCKEREI

A TASTE OF
GERMAN BREAD CULTURE

By Kat Nickola

As I walk through the door, a cozy smell of grain, yeast, coffee and warmth envelope me like a hug. I'm at my local **Bäckerei**, taking in the selection of daily breads behind the counter and eyeing the treats in the display case. I shake off the morning's winter cold and glance around at the bustling employees and tables of patrons – a few workmen in coveralls, a group of police in uniforms, older adults socializing and teens hurrying off to school.

The server behind the bakery counter looks at me expectantly. "Bitteschön?"

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WEIGH MY CHOICES AND DECIDE ON TWO
THINGS: WHAT I'M GOING TO EAT NOW, AND
WHAT I'LL TAKE HOME FOR THE FAMILY."**

I make eye contact with the server. "Einen Moment, bitte," I say and gesture for another patron to go ahead. That bought me about two minutes; time to decide what I'd like....



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BAKERY CULTURE

Bread holds a place of prominence on the German table. It has been a staple of the European diet since people began agriculturally settling the area during the Neolithic period, starting about 9,000 years ago. Ancient varieties of wheat and barley grew and developed, eventually forming the basis of a culture built on bread (and that other wheat product: beer).

Bread was made in the home while subsistence farming ruled the ancient world. However, as towns grew in the Middle Ages, local households shared communal ovens. Baking as a profession was first recognized in the 10th century when guilds ensured quality and training. Still, many peasants couldn't afford to purchase bread, so communal bakehouses were used into the early 1900s. They were places to share stories, chat and build community.

Becoming a baker in Germany requires a three-year apprenticeship after getting a standard high school diploma (10th grade). The training combines vocational coursework with paid practical training at a bakery. Once bakers have five years of experience, they can choose to begin the intensive two-year studies to become a *Meisterbäcker* (master baker).

Though production now occurs at centralized bakeries and throughout the day, bread is traditionally baked in the dark early morning hours. This means that the best selection is available when shops open, and shelves can be a bit picked over by the afternoon.



Apprentice



GERMAN BREADS

I'm at the bakery early, so there are plenty of loaves and small treats to choose from. Most bakeries have a good variety, but there are thousands of German breads available across the country. In fact, the *Deutsche Brotinstitut* maintains a register of German breads that currently has over 3,000 entries. Here are some that are good to know:

A *WEISEN-MISCHBROT* has more white flour while a *ROGGEN-MISCHBROT* has more rye.



Mischbrot – The most popular bread in Germany. A sourdough loaf of fine-ground wheat and rye flour baked into an oblong golden-brown loaf.



Weißbrot – These white-wheat breads can be baked in sandwich loaves, oblongs, rounds and baguettes.



Roggenvollkornbrot – A variety of breads that contain more than 90 percent whole grain rye flour. Some are rustic and crusty, others are soft, dense loaves for slicing.



Mehrkornbrot – A multi-grain loaf with at least three different grains, often baked with seeds and nuts.



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TYPES OF BAKERIES

Independent bakeries are now hard to find but will often be named for the *Meisterbäcker*. They are locally run with the baked goods being primarily made from scratch onsite.

baked fresh onsite, but all the products – from bread dough to cakes – are made at a central production kitchen and distributed daily to shops.

Bakery chains are the most common place to find good quality baked goods. The bread and rolls will be

Grocery store bakeries offer consistent products made and frozen at a central kitchen, then distributed to the store to bake fresh before selling.



Landbrot – A light, crusty round bread baked with white wheat flour and a small amount of rye.



Bauernbrot – A dark, rustic and crusty round bread made with more rye flour than wheat.



Vollkornbrot – A bread with more than 90 percent whole grain, often a dense wheat and rye flour blend baked into a small loaf.



Weizenvollkornbrot – A loaf or crusty oblong bread baked with more than 90 percent whole wheat.



Sonnenblumenbrot – A popular bread made with whole grain wheat and rye flour baked with sunflower seeds.



Hefezopf – A braided sweet bread that contains white wheat flour, eggs, sugar and yeast.



Semmeln – These small rolls come in numerous varieties, from white rounded buns to crusty, dark rolls baked with seeds and nuts.



Brötchen – A German staple, this crusty, oval white wheat roll is perfect for spreads at breakfast and sandwiches at snack time.

WHAT'S IN A LOAF?

At the bakery, I decide on *Sonnenblumenbrot* and a round *Weißbrot*. They are freshly baked, so whatever we don't eat with this evening's meal will make good toast tomorrow morning at breakfast, but beyond that it will soon be stale and on its way to my compost bin.

While that may seem wasteful, I doubt there will be more than a small crust leftover. Bakery breads in Germany do not contain the same additives and preservatives that exist in the US;

they are simply flour, yeast, salt and water, plus any herbs, seeds, nuts, spices or sweeteners needed to make specialty loaves. There is a natural tastiness to this fresh bread that sets it apart from shelf-stable bread. Even the pickiest of my teenagers devour it.

I also grab a coffee and my favorite treat: a buttered pretzel with chives.

As I sit down, a neighbor wanders in, and I am reminded of the old communal bakehouses. A German bakery is still a vibrant place that brings people together. In 2014, German bread culture was even recognized as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, and as I bite into my pretzel I'm happy to be part of it. ■

“EINEN KAFFEE UND SCHNITTLAUCH BREZEL, BITTE.”





Käsekuchen

Germany's Delicious Cheesecake

By Julia Cahill

German bakeries are a blessing.

They're plentiful, and nearly all of them have shelves stocked with freshly made staples like *Käsekuchen*.

Käsekuchen is a delicious, airy German version of cheesecake. Instead of using the heavy cream cheese that weighs down American-style cheesecake, Käsekuchen is full of *Quark*.

Quark is an unsalted, fresh, cheese curd product that is common in Germany. It is likened to a creamy cottage cheese and sometimes compared to a light Ricotta or cream cheese, plus a variety of other interesting German-to-English translations that don't quite do it justice. I have yet to find it in America, but Germany is full of Quark—just like Käsekuchen.

You can find Käsekuchen covered in strawberries or cherries during the summer months, just like the American-style cheesecakes, but texturally it is different since the Quark gives the cake a cloud-like bounce.

If you like cheesecake, give Käsekuchen a taste. You may never go back.

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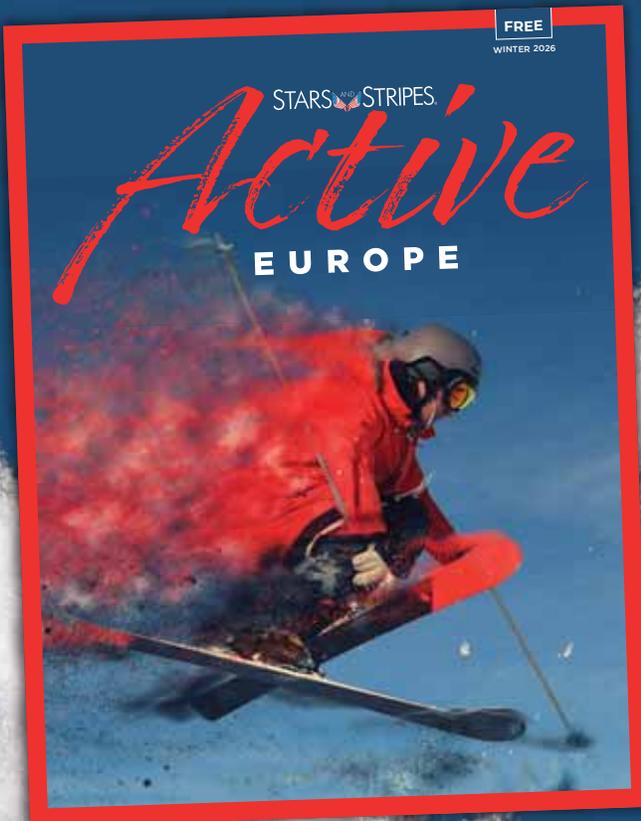
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Käsekuchen

Germany's Delicious Cheesecake

Prepare Pastry Crust

1 2/3 cups (200g) flour

2/3 cup (75g) sugar

5 tablespoons (75g) butter

1 egg

Make the crust by combining all pastry crust ingredients with a spoon until combined into a crumbly dough. Press in the bottom of a greased 9" springform pan.

Prepare Filling

3 eggs

1 cup (240ml) heavy cream

6 tablespoons (85g) butter

3/4 cup (150g) sugar

1 packet (9g) Vanillezucker (this German product is vanilla sugar and comes in a small packet)

1 packet (1.5oz or 37g) vanilla pudding powder

2 cups (500g) Quark

Zest of 1 lemon

1. Separate the eggs. Beat whites until soft peaks form.
2. Whip heavy cream until soft peaks form.
3. In a large bowl, mix egg yolks, butter, sugar, Vanillezucker, pudding powder, quark and lemon zest until smooth.
4. Gently fold in the egg whites and whipped cream.
5. Pour filling over crust in the pan.

Bake

Bake at 350° F (180°C) for 1 hour. Turn off the oven, crack the door and let the cheesecake stand inside the cooling oven for another 10 minutes. Allow it to come to room temperature before placing it in a refrigerator to chill before serving. ■

“
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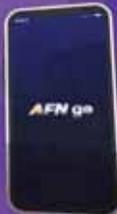

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PHOTO BY
Jeffrey “Woody” Torres



Peacocks in Mallorca, Spain

While peacocks are not a native species to **Mallorca, Spain**, they can be seen in gardens of large estates on the Balearic Island and at Sa Cova, an old cave house. Photographer Jeffrey “Woody” Torres was lucky enough to spot these two love birds at Alcanada Golf Course. He perfectly captures the photo with the caption, “Alcanada Peacocks Posed in Love.”

Keep an eye out on your next trip to Mallorca, you never know where you might spot a peacock. ■



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