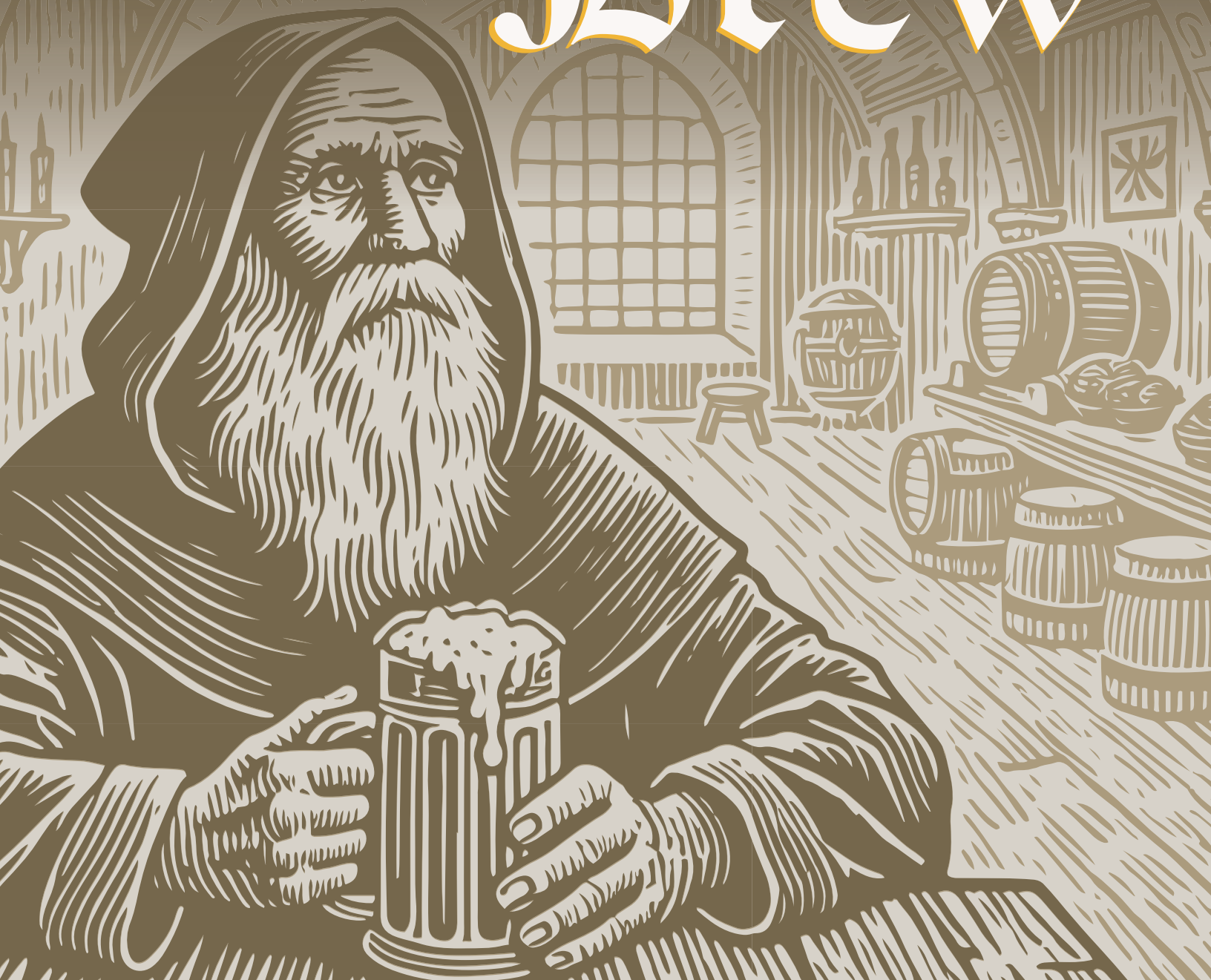


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COMMANDER

Dan "DQ" Quinlan, Lt Col, USAF

BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER

John Rodriguez

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, MANAGER

Carrie Farrell

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, LEAD EDITOR

Kat Nickola

WRITER-EDITORS

Tamala Malerk, Katie Wells

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Daniela Gammon, Ryyan Joye, Mandy Mills

ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Kay Moncada

MARKETING COORDINATOR

Kristen Thoennes

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Al Green

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, MANAGER

Doug Dougherty

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, CONSULTANTS

Sean Adams, Heidi Bayfield, Kandace Blevin,

Nate Jamison, Jeff Teeselink

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Danny Padro

ADVERTISING OFFICE

Unit 29480, APO, AE 09211

Postfach 1980, 67607

Kaiserslautern, Germany

+49 (0) 152-5672-5020

COVER DESIGN BY

Daniela Gammon

Washington Office

PUBLISHER

Max D. Lederer, Jr.

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Laura Law

REVENUE DIRECTOR

Scott Foley

ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Chris Verigan

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, DIRECTOR

Marie Woods

TO ADVERTISE CONTACT:



HEIDI BAYFIELD

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bayfield.heidi@stripes.com

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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."



STUTT GART

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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Beer, breweries and Benedictine monasteries have a long-standing tradition. I recently spent the day in Bamberg, Germany, or “Beer City,” where beer enthusiasts can experience a sort of pilgrimage. To start, I walked from the old town and up the rolling hills to the **Michaelsberg Monastery** and admired the views and peaceful grounds where monks brewed grand ideas for beer. Then, adjacent to the monastery, I toured the **Franconian Brewery Museum**. To end the loop, I walked back down into the city to have a meal and check out the famous Schlenkerla smoked beer at **Schlenkerla Brewery**.

BAMBERG, GERMANY

By Katie Wells

THE MICHAELSBERG MONASTERY

As I walked to the monastery through the city, stairs and paths were lined with trees in full bloom and tall grass swayed in the wind. It felt like a personal journey as only a few other people passed by on the trail. I couldn't resist uncapping my camera lens every few hundred steps to capture a new stunning view of the Bamberg Cathedral behind me or the tips of the spires of the monastery peeking through the trees ahead. As I began the ascent up the last steep set of stairs, all I could see was a blue sky, a white cross and the silhouette of a man. I could tell the monastery had been designed thoughtfully to inspire reflection.

Once I made the climb, I realized the path had taken me behind the monastery into its courtyard. To the right, a grove of trees lined a pathway to a restaurant and to the left, were garden-views and Bamberg's Old Town. Sadly, the monastery was under renovation. While I couldn't go in, I still enjoyed venturing up and walking the gorgeous grounds as the monks often did as a form of meditation.

THE FRANCONIAN BREWERY MUSEUM

The museum is right next door to the monastery. It offers an interactive tour with an audio guide (available in English) that teaches visitors all about the history of beer in Bamberg and the brewing process. The tour spans over five levels beginning in the brewhouse, where it's easy to imagine friendly gatherings of visitors clinking their pints with a boisterous “Prost!”

Moving through the museum, I saw a large display of Bamberg beer steins (my favorite was adorned with medieval cats), plenty of memorabilia, bottles, caps and equipment used to make and store beer. There was even an ice cellar you could step into. The ice cellar was built underground and used to keep beer cold during summertime. People in Bavaria still say they are “going onto the cellar.” This is because on top of the cellar shady trees were planted and tables were put out for people to gather and enjoy a cold beer. To tell the truth, I am not much of a beer drinker. However, I enjoyed learning about the extensive history, brewing process and cultural influence beer has had in Bamberg for centuries.

SCHLENKERLA BREWERY

Schlenkern is a Frankish expression for “walking not straight,” much like a drunk person does. A former brewer, Andreas Graser, working at what was formerly known as “House of the Blue Lion,” had a “funny” way of walking due to an accident, or perhaps due to being drunk. He was bestowed the nickname *Schlenkerla* meaning, “the little dangler.” The word eventually became synonymous with the brewery. Smoked beer originates at Schlenkerla Brewery; it is a dark, bottom fermented beer with a smoky flavor achieved by exposing the malt to the aromatic smoke of burning beech-wood logs.

At the entrance there is a little window where guests can order just a Schlenkerla beer and then step outside to drink it. A hallway leads to the courtyard where there is a stand set up for buying bottles of the brew along with other souvenirs like t-shirts and pint glasses. I opted to dine-in and ordered the oven-roasted pork shoulder and, instead of a beer, a Schlenkerla smoked-beer brandy. The service was quick, the food was some the best German cuisine I have had in my three-and-a-half-years living here, and the delightfully smokey schnapps was a perfect end to the beer-themed day. ■

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HOLY BREW

By Kat Nickola

Beer 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

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

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

Kloster Mallersdorf

FOUNDED 1107, RE-ESTABLISHED 1869

South of Regensburg, the Kloster Mallersdorf 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 mother-house 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

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

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.klosterschenke-weltenburg.de ■





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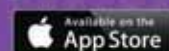
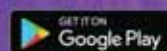
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It's All FUN GAMES ...or Not

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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. ■

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71034 Böblingen
Tel: (0)7031 205 6062
info@boeblingendental.com
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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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