Customs and traditions – Part of the Bavarian way of life!

Lived traditions are as much a part of Bavaria as white sausage and beer. Be it summer or winter, the dance into May, Viehscheid transhumance or the Leonhardiritt horse procession – the cheerful festivals are loved by locals and tourists alike.

People in Bavaria are loathe to pass up on an opportunity to celebrate and make music – and where better to do this than at a traditional festival in the State. The events are often connected to traditional farming culture or Christian holidays, and represent real highlights in the Bavarian calendar year. They are an important part of Bavarian culture and help to make the unique attitude to life that reigns in the State what it is.

Making a racket: Blowing off the winter

The Twelfth Night is celebrated between the Thomas Festival on 21st December and 6th January in different places in the Alpine region and sees locals dress up in wooden masks, pelts and leather. Loud screams and drumming is said to ward away the winter demons so that spring can arrive. Copious amounts of noise are also the order of the day for the Aperschnalzen whip-cracking in Rupertiwinkel. The so-called Aperschnalzer drive out the winter with their long whips, which they crack rhythmically, between Boxing Day and Shrove Tuesday.

Welcoming in the spring: Strong beer and May Day

People have been drinking strong Starkbier in the weeks between Fasching and Easter since the 15th century. The accompanying festival is still celebrated each year to this day, taking place on Josephiday, 19th March. In the state capital of Munich, this period of drinking strong beer is also the time when special political satire takes place. The main political players are criticised with great humour, resulting in an incomparable spectacle.
One of the most popular traditions in Bavaria is putting up the Maypole. On 1st May each year, the tree, which is decorated and often adorned with decorative shields, is erected in the central squares of towns and villages. The Maypole Festival accompanies this event. Locals get together and are often joined by guests to the region to enjoy meat and drink, accompanied by tunes played by brass bands. Traditional bands and dances around the tree provide the entertainment, alongside the selection of a May Queen.

From the Tänzelfest to the Pfingstritt: Celebrating under the blue and white summer skies
The centuries-old Tänzelfest in Kaufbeuren or the "Landshut Wedding" – historic festivals complete with costumes and lavishly adorned floats are great experiences for the whole family. Festivals to celebrate religious holidays are also part of the parcel of lived tradition in Bavaria. These include the magnificent Corpus Christi processions, which are accompanied by musicians and the Gebirgsschützen or Böllerschützen marksmen groups, depending on the region.
Summer in Bavaria is also a time for wine and vintner festivals. A whole host of celebrations take place in the romantic vintner towns with views of the Franconian vineyards to welcome in the new vintage of wine.

The end of the farming year: Festivals in autumn
The Almabtrieb in late summer sees the farmers bring their cows, which are adorned with flowers and wreaths, back from the mountain meadows into the valleys. Loud bell-ringing, music, markets and other traditional events all take place as an expression of thanks for the good farming season that took place without incident. Another autumnal highlight is represented by the beer festivals, which take place in numerous Bavarian towns. Year after year, the drive of carnival rides, beer tents and stalls draws millions of visitors from around the world to Bavaria. The end of the farming year is celebrated on 6th November with the Leonhardiritt. This festival is a big event, especially in Bad Tölz. There, the Goaßlschnalzer competition is eagerly awaited: It sees men wielding whips who turned whip-cracking into an art form.
About BAVARIA TOURISM

BAVARIA TOURISM (by TM) is the official marketing company for the Bavarian tourism and leisure industry. Under the umbrella brand Bayern®, the company offers the entire range of tourism services in the State of Bavaria. All marketing activities run under the umbrella brand claim “Bavaria – traditionally different”. The main focus here is the communication of authentic stories about Bavarian personalities and their way of life. They show Bavaria in a traditional yet modern light, and embody the distinctiveness of Bavaria as a travel destination. All stories can be found on the main website www.bayern.by/traditionally-different in the style of a travel magazine, and are communicated through all other channels of by.TM. The sub-brands WellVital® in Bavaria, Kinderland® Bavaria and the hotel brand Sightsleeping® also guarantee target-group-specific offers for connoisseurs, families and culture lovers. Through its own initiatives such as “Time for Tranquility”, “Filmkulisse Bayern” (film set Bavaria) and “Aristocratic Bavaria”, it brings tourism together with other industries to create productive partnerships. In this way, the marketing company can work with all the Bavarian tourism partners, offering guests from all over the world a range of attractive and varied travel ideas. With 37.3 million guests and 94.4 million overnight stays in the year 2017, Bavaria was able to reinforce its leading position as the number one travel destination in Germany. More information about the variety of destinations in Bavaria and about BAVARIA TOURISM can be found at: www.bavaria.by.

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