

The Munich Hofbräuhaus:

Where the Whole World Meets Up

Munich, beer and the Hofbräuhaus – they've all belonged together for the past 400 years. Since the early 19th century, the famous beer cellar at the heart of the city has been a magnet for the people of Munich and travelers from every corner of the globe.

Its delicious beer, traditional specialties, legendary *Gemütlichkeit* and fascinating history have made the Hofbrauhaus into the most famous beer cellar in the world.

The Hofbräuhaus – open every day of the week

For the hundred waiters and waitresses, the working day here begins at 7 a.m. The doors open to the public from 9 a.m. onward. The Hofbräuhaus is open every day of the week; even at Christmas time its doors are always open. On peak days it can cater for up to 30,000 visitors.

Half the visitors are regulars

Over 100 years ago the so-called *Schwemme* or "taproom" at the heart of the Hofbräuhaus still used to contain brewing equipment. Today it provides room for over 1000 people. Half of the people who come here daily are regulars.

Even angels visit the Hofbräuhaus

And one of the guests is actually an angel – if the old legend about the "Münchner im Himmel" is to be believed:

Alois Hingerl, the main figure in the story, was a regular at the Hofbräuhaus all his life. When he died and arrived in heaven he irritated a lot of people there by being so homesick for Munich. He moaned so much that eventually God decided to have mercy on him, and sent him back to his old home on a mission for the Bavarian government. But the moment angel Aloisius smelt the air of Munich again, he forgot all about his divine mission and flew straight off to the Hofbräuhaus. There he finally found peace of mind, and has been enjoying one

beer after the other ever since. And to this day, so ends the tale, the Bavarian government has been waiting in vain for divine inspiration.

The first food laws in the world were in Munich

In the old days, beer here in Bavaria was not only considered to be a beverage but also as a basic foodstuff, such as bread. But beer brewers at that time experimented with all kinds of nasty ingredients. Some people actually died after drinking beer. This was why, in 1516, the authorities issued special brewing regulations for the whole of Bavaria:

It was the first foodstuff legislation in the world – and it still applies today. We now call it the *Reinheitsgebot*, or "Beer Purity Law".

How the Hofbräuhaus first started:

On September 27, 1589, Duke Wilhelm V founded a brewery on the site of the Munich royal residence of that time. This first Hofbräuhaus lasted till the year 1808 and was only a few steps away from today's one. All that remains of it today is its certificate of foundation.

Soon afterwards, there were plans to build a second Hofbräuhaus opposite the old Orlandohaus in the small square called the Platzl. Maximilian I, Bavaria's new ruler, built his ducal Weissbier brewery in 1607, thus laying the historical foundations of today's Hofbräuhaus.

In 1828, to the disappointment of the publicans and private brewers who were worried about their custom, King Ludwig I decreed that the court alehouse was henceforth to be a people's alehouse.

Today's regulars in the Hofbräuhaus still commemorate that great day with a celebratory toast.

At the end of the 19th century, a lot more space was needed for guests. In 1882, the brewery was shifted to the banks of the River Isar. With a final swig of beer on May 22, 1896, the people of Munich bade farewell to their old Hofbräuhaus on the Platzl.

On a site measuring 11,000 square metres, the plan was to build a new beer temple, based on all the latest findings in the mass catering trade.

On September 22, 1897, the beer palace on the Platzl was opened: the Hofbräuhaus as we know it today.

Visitors from all over the world even in the early 1900s

Despite its three and a half thousand seats, the Hofbräuhaus had lost none of its former charm. At the turn of the century the place already had 5000 regular customers. Not only people from Munich, either: travelers came here in droves from all over the world. The pub became a sight of the city, and a meeting place for people of all nations, of all ages and from every social class.

The Hofbräuhaus today

Whether in the taproom, the saloon or under the shady chestnut trees in the beer-garden, the Hofbräuhaus is a great place to be whatever the season, whatever the weather and whatever the time of day. These days, Bavarian specialties are served from dawn till late at night, and early in the morning a very special Munich specialty is freshly produced here. So special, in fact, that a lot of connoisseurs come here as early as breakfast time.

The secret of Weisswurst

Four o'clock in the morning is when production of home-made Weisswurst, or white sausage, begins at the Hofbräuhaus. This Munich delicacy was invented on a Sunday in 1857 during Carnival time by a local butcher, and is an essential item on the Hofbräuhaus menu. As far as the seasoning is concerned, each butcher has his own, very secret recipe. The ones at the Hofbräuhaus seem to be especially delicious: if you put all the Weisswurst sausages consumed here in one year end to end, they'd cover a distance of 20 kilometers.

Hofbräuhaus: Specialties to go with the beer

For lovers of filling Bavarian food, this place is *paradise on earth*.

The tasty crackling on the suckling pig and the joints and knuckles of pork are the pride of the chef, who bases his inspirations on ancient Bavarian recipes passed down over the years.

And of course there are the dumplings, which come in various delicious flavors. Each year, hungry guests consume 160,000 of them alone. And every single dumpling is still lovingly made by hand.

Vegetarians are happy here too: various meat-free dishes are offered daily.

And to round things off, the establishment's very own Patissier makes apfelstrudel and Bavarian Cream.

Hofbräuhaus: the Place for Beer

The main attraction, of course, is the delicious Hofbräu beer:

The classic "Hofbräu Original" lager beer epitomises the special atmosphere of the beer capital Munich like no other. Its refreshing tangy taste and its alcohol content of around 5.1 percent have made it world-famous.

There was dark beer in Bavaria long before light beer. In fact dark brown beer was the very first beer in the history of the brewery. The "Hofbräu Dunkel" – the earliest form of Bavarian beer – is still just as popular today as it was then. With an alcohol content of roughly 5.5 percent and its spicy flavor, it's a true Munich tradition.

Brewing Weissbier was once a ducal privilege. And for almost 200 years Hofbräu Munich had exclusive brewing rights in Bavaria – and thus a Weissbier monopoly.

But even without a monopoly, the "Münchner Weisse" is something very special. What better way to quench your thirst than to drink a delicious, fizzy, yeasty Weissbier? With an alcohol content of around 5.1 percent, it's pleasantly refreshing!

The last week in April is when the traditional "Maibock", or "May beer", is produced at the Hofbräuhaus. The successful story of the oldest Munich Bockbier began back in 1614. The "Hofbräu Maibock", with its powerful, aromatic taste and an alcohol content of roughly 7.2 percent is one of the highlights of the beer year!

The Oktoberfest is the ultimate high point – the biggest beer festival in the world, held in the beer metropolis of Munich! Millions of guests from all over the world enjoy the unique atmosphere every year – and in honour of the occasion, Hofbräu München brews a very special strong beer that tastes best when accompanied by Bavarian traditional food. With an alcohol content of 6.3 percent and a tangy taste, the "Hofbräu Oktoberfestbier" is as unique as the Oktoberfest itself.

Mugs under Lock and Key – the "Beer-Mug Safes"

Old-established regulars at the Hofbräuhaus have a very special privilege: their own beer-bug compartment in a special beer-mug safe! Anyone who wants one of these has to be very lucky indeed: they have to inherit a key from a dynasty of regulars. It's definitely a private party.

Old Traditions Live On at the Hofbräuhaus

In the Hofbräuhaus, traditions have been cherished for ages, and ancient rituals have sometimes been brought back to life. A recent tradition at the regulars' table, for instance, is to pay for your beer not with money but with beer tokens – just like the

old days when the duke ran the place. Any regular who buys ten tokens at once gets an eleventh for free.

The Hofbräuhaus after World War II

Wartime bombing raids destroyed sixty percent of the Hofbräuhaus.

The first dances took place at the Hofbräuhaus even before the Currency Reform of 1948. Watered-down beer, in exchange for bread tokens, kept people in good spirits. In 1950 the citizens of Munich began rebuilding their ancient institution.

The Hofbräuhaus – a Symbol of Bavarian *Joie de Vivre*

In its four centuries of history, the beer palace on the Platzl has given us all kinds of happy, exciting and also sad stories. Once a court brewery run by a duke, it has become synonymous with Bavarian beer culture. As an electoral, royal and later state-run inn, the Hofbräuhaus has become the international symbol of Bavarian *joie de vivre*.

Ever since the 19th century the Hofbräuhaus has been a magnet for international visitors, and the people of Munich are as happy as ever with it. Its proverbial *Gemütlichkeit* and down-to-earth image have made it the most famous beer hall in the world. But the Hofbräuhaus is far more than just a beer hall – it's a phenomenon that is typically Bavarian.