

■ BARRIO { Berlin }

Beer's the deal

Berlin may not be in Bavaria, but that doesn't stop it from raising a glass to the world's biggest beer festival

It's time to dust off the *dirndl* dresses and *lederhosen*, as the beer extravaganza that is Oktoberfest rears its frothy head. But while the festival, which runs until 7 October, attracts six million revellers to its spiritual home in Munich, Berlin also embraces its Bavarian side. From family-friendly funfairs to marquees overflowing with enormous beer glasses, there's a party for everyone. Here, then, are seven ways to celebrate the marriage of King Ludwig I and Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen in the German capital.

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1. For those who'd rather go hard than go home

The Citadel Spandau forms a spectacular backdrop to Spandau Oktoberfest, a knees-up taking place until 27 October. In the marquee set in the grounds of the Renaissance fortress, revellers drink Löwenbräu and rock out to band, Die Gaudi Buam. oktoberfest-berlin.de

2. For family fairground fun

'Berliner Oktoberfest', Berlin's biggest Oktoberfest event, takes place at Kurt-Schumacher Damm until 14 October. Take the kids in the day for the carnival atmosphere and then ship them home before the celebrations get a bit wilder in the Paulaner Marquee. schaustellerverband-berlin.de

3. For a lighter option

If the litres of beer and chunks of meat get too much, take a cultural detour to the Festival of Lights. Running alongside Oktoberfest from 5-14 October, it gives Berlin's landmarks a new lease of life with light projections, 3D video mappings and installations across the city. festival-of-lights.de

7. For the true beer lover

Proper connoisseurs of the amber stuff can head down to Brauhaus Lemke am Alex, Berlin's first craft beer world offering guided brewery tours and tasting experiences. Try a wide variety of beer on site, from Bohemian Pilsner (intense, bitter, herbal) to Imperial Stout (woody, spicy). lemke.berlin/am_alex

6. For an LGBT twist

The riotous Gaywiesn takes place every Monday from 6pm until 22 October. Easily accessed from Ostbahnhof train station, it's a welcome LGBT party, with drag queen hosts, outrageous costumes, resident live band Die Banausen, and, of course, lots of authentic beer and food. gaywiesn.de

5. For (almost) the real deal

A year-round ode to everything Oktoberfest, the Hofbräu Wirtshaus Berlin is as close as you can get to Bavaria in the capital. From blue-and-white checkered tablecloths to the Hofbräu Weisse (wheat beer) and *schweinshaxe* (pig shank), authentic is the byword here. hofbraeu-wirtshaus.de

4. For a merry taster

Alexanderplatz is always lined with brauhauses and packed with people. Super central and with great food stalls, indoor and outdoor seating and a marquee, it's a great place to dip a toe in the Oktoberfestivities without committing to an all-day party. Don't miss the nightly *dirndl* competition, which is always a blast.



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