

Munich may seem the quintessential German city to the rest of the world, but its people, looking to their glorious past as part of an independent kingdom, consider themselves a race apart. This Bavarian city is defined by its Catholic faith, as celebrated in its baroque churches and traditional Alpine festivals and fetes.

If you've arrived during Oktoberfest, which takes place from 20 September to 5 October, you're in for a treat. Whatever your age, you're sure to enjoy the *joie de vivre* of it all. Make sure you have your camera ready for the colourful 7km parade on 21 September, during

which horse-drawn carts, troops and floats reconstruct events from Bavarian history, with women wearing traditional *dirndl* (a bodice, blouse, skirt and apron) and men in *tracht* (lederhosen, shirt, calf-socks and feather hat) [1].

Oktoberfest is an exaltation of all things Bavarian, with food stalls, brass bands and street performers on every corner. Just the funfair section in Theresienwiese park with all its merry-go-rounds and rollercoasters is enough to keep you entertained for hours.

stopover

# MUNICH

*This proud Bavarian city boasts an opulent palace and luxury shopping, plus one of the world's most famous football grounds. And not forgetting, of course, Oktoberfest*

## Day 1

**You cannot begin to understand Munich** unless you visit two places: Marienplatz, its present-day centre, and about ten minutes north of that the Residenz [3], a baroque palace that was the beating heart of the old Bavarian kingdom. The Residenz (near Odeonsplatz underground station) housed the Wittelsbach ruling dynasty until their reign ended in 1918, and today has about 80 rooms that are open to the public, as well as a rococo theatre, treasury, court church and architecturally striking courtyards – so start early!

After all that history, a bout of window-shopping should bring you back into the present. Turn left below the Residenz into Maximilianstrasse, dubbed 'the most expensive mile in Germany', overflowing with luxury boutiques and jewellery stores. Once you've done the shops, grab a bite to eat in the open-air Viktualienmarkt a few minutes from Marienplatz, which has more than 100 stands selling produce from all over Bavaria. After that, you can complete your sightseeing in the Deutsches Museum, whose hands-on technology section showcases Germany's industrial brilliance.

In the evening, book ahead for a Bavarian experience at the Spatenhaus an der Oper restaurant, which specialises in traditional veal and game dishes.





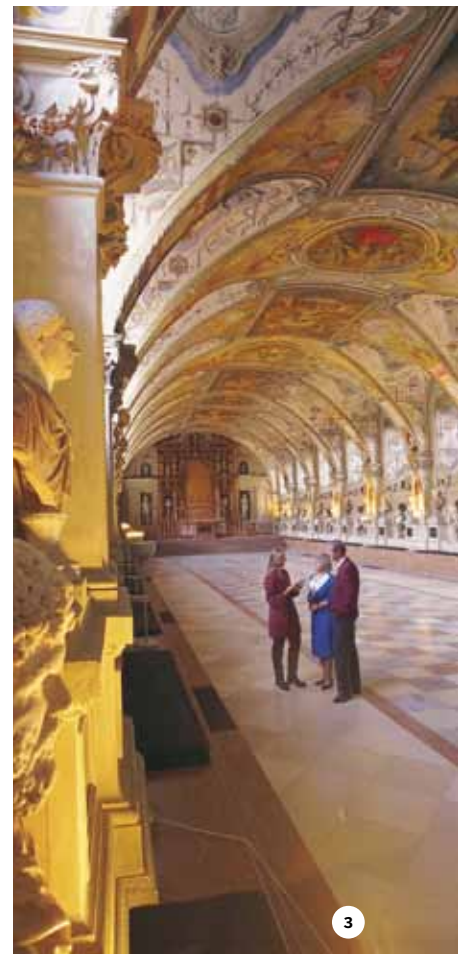
## Day 2

**Escape high culture and delve deep** into the Bavarian soul by taking the metro to Fröttmaning for the Allianz Arena [4], which is Bayern Munich's stadium and the spiritual home of German football. The associated museum, with almost as much silverware on show as the Residenz, details the history of one of the most successful football clubs in Europe and the engine that's turned Germany into the sport's superpower and the current holders of the Fifa World Cup.

Alternatively, check out Munich's other worldwide success story at BMW World [2], located close to the Olympiazentrum station. From the company's airplane engine origins to its 1923 motorcycles and Formula One success, this gigantic complex outlines the dazzling accomplishments of Bavaria's most iconic brand.

For lunch, rest your legs at Cafe Mozart on Pettenkoferstrasse, a hangout for artists and musicians. Located near Sendlinger Tor station, the cafe is now Iranian-owned with an international menu – its apple iced tea is a Tehran staple. Afterwards, chill out in the English Garden [5], Germany's biggest park, and entertain yourself with the antics of the Munich surfers at its southern border, where the river Eisbach forms a metre-high permanent wave.

No visit to Munich would be complete without dinner at the Ratskeller, near Marienplatz station, one of the city's most revered restaurants. Carnivores can expect a feast, but other tastes are well catered for too: try for instance its inventive chanterelle mushroom casseroles or range of herring platters. **JOHN MALATHRONAS**



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