



# Bavarian Beer Tradition



## The first sip of beer

(Excerpt of "The small pleasures of life" written by Philippe Delerm)

The only one that counts. Everything that follows is bland by comparison, a tepid coating of your tongue. The harder you swallow, the more meaningless the excess. Perhaps, within the tragedy of the final sip, you can begin to recapture...

The first gulp! Its journey is already well advanced by the time it reaches your throat.

With a frothy trail of foaming gold around your lips, bitter happiness slowly permeates your palate. It seems to last a small eternity, that first sip. You drink without hesitation, gulled by your own instinct. The ritual is familiar enough: the right quantity to ensure a perfect prelude; the instant rush of well-being, punctuated by a contented sigh, a smack of the lips, or silence; the giddy sensation of pleasure teetering on the brink of infinity... And yet you know that the best is already over.

You put your glass down on the beer mat and push both slightly away. Time to relish the colour – ersatz honey, cold sun. If only you were patient and wise enough to grasp the miracle behind this disappearing act. You notice with satisfaction that the brewer's name on the side of the glass correspond with the beer you ordered. But whatever the relation of the vessel, to its contents, nothing can bridge the gap between them, or conjure liquid out of thin air.

What wouldn't you give to capture and encode the secret of pure gold? Instead, you sit at your sun-splashed white table, like a frustrated alchemist intent on keeping up appearances – each mouthful is a falling away from pleasure. Happiness has a bitter taste when you have to drink in order to forget the first sip.



### Comments:

After having read the text learners were asked to reflect about the role of beer in Bavaria and about the impact on the way of life of Bavarian people. Bavaria is famous for the "Oktoberfest" and the large variety of beers brewed in that part of Germany. Learners decided to collect information about beer in everyday life and in relation to cultural festivities in Bavaria. Memories related to this beverage are very present in the learners 'life as it is part of their culture, of their past and their traditions.

Exceptional beer because of the “Reinheitsgebot”

**„Purity Law“ of Bavarian Beer**  
***the oldest prescription for food of the world***  
**(„Reinheitsgebot“)**

History tells that Albrecht IV, Duke of Bavaria, enacted this law on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1487 and ordered - at first only for Munich, later on for Southern Bavaria - that only three ingredients have to be used for brewing beer: **water, malt of barley** and **hops**. **Yeast**, absolutely necessary for brewing, isn't mentioned in the original text, but they must have used it.

On 23<sup>th</sup> April 1516, a new prescription for the country („Landesordnung“) was brought into force by Duke Wilhem IV and Duke Ludwig X, which regulated the ingredients of beer as well as the price. This happened on a big convent in the city of Ingolstadt, where representatives of nobles, knights, trade unions and churches came together.

Reasons for the brewing prescription were numerous complaints about bad quality of beer which was at that time not only a drink, but also a nourish foodstuff. In order to secure themselves their profit, many brewers produced beer of low quality; they added for example plants with an intoxicating effect, like belladonna, wormwood or nutmeg. Therefore the sovereigns were forced to stop these actions, because the health of people could not be ensured. That's why food chemists nowadays even took the view, that the *Purity Law* was also an early law against drugs.

Another reason was to guarantee the providing of people with food. More precious cereals than barley, like wheat or rye, should be reserved for bakers only.

2016 the *Purity Law* exists 500 years and that birthday will be celebrated in Ingolstadt and many other cities and villages. Bavarian breweries have defended the law all the years against complaints and judgments of the former EWG and later EU. 1987 Bavaria opened the market for beer products from everywhere so that you can buy a lot of different sorts of beer - produced according the *Purity Law* or not. But Bavarian breweries have committed themselves to brew their beer in the old, traditional way.

The earliest documented mention of beer by a German nobleman is the granting of a brewing license by Emperor Otto II to the church at Liege (now Belgium), awarded in 974.





## Stein history

“stein” is a shortened form of “Steinzeugkrug” which is the German word for stoneware jug or tankard.

By common usage, however, stein has come to mean any beer container with a hinged lid and a handle, regardless of the material or size.

### Earliest steins 1525-1700

During the black death plague more than 25 million of Europeans were killed.

And this horrible event must have been the result of the tremendous progress for civilization but is responsible for the beginning of the beer stein, too.

The lid of the stein was originally conceived entirely as a sanitary measure.

Especially during the summers a lot of little flies invaded Central Europe. A law was passed in Germany that all food and beverage containers had to be covered. This is the reason for the hinged lid with the thumb lift. In that way all beverages could be drunk with one hand.

As a result of this regulation the beer consumption increased and the need for stein making did the same. Everybody needed his own drinking vessel. The wealthy ones asked for hard silver vessels but the most common material was porous earth ware and wood.

Then the stoneware was invented and the need for decorative ceramic was created (renaissance artists).

In 1600 a chocolate salt glaze was invented. About 1650 a manganese oxide purple glaze.



This was the beginning for the tankards on which you could find scenes of historical, biblical and allegorical scenes. Beer drinking was becoming a pleasure for the eyes, too! 1750 there were over 4000 breweries and the result was that the production of stoneware and faience increased strongly.

1709 the invention of porcelain began but it was still too expensive; only the wealthy ones were able to buy it.

It was also in that time that the beer, “the flowing bread”, got its qualities and strength. It was definitively regarded as healthy and suitable for relaxation.

A need for different shapes of drinking vessels, in various materials and with varied subjects run parallel to the growing of quality and differences in taste. The firm Villeroy and Boch for example which was founded about 1809, found a large market for relief beakers and steins from 1836.



Later on other in the Westerwald region, moulds were used to make the steins cheaper; they became mass-products (1900).

Forty years later **regimentals** were produced.

Under Kaiser Wilhelm II military service was obligatory for men from 17 to 45 and after their active duty they became reservists. It is the reservist who orders souvenirs such as steins, pipes, beakers, cups, swords and many other items. All reservists reported to their units in October and all -graduated- with the same -class- in September. They all wanted to have a personal stein. The price was very high, for example twice or three times higher than the cost of a Mettlach stein (Villeroy & Boch) and the amount was automatically subtracted from wages. But price was not important in their class and pride in their unit was enormous and nearly all the reservists ordered their own stein. In some of the steins you can see on the inner bottom pictures of couples saying goodbye or kissing or the picture of the king.



All kind of decoration subjects are to be seen on steins, even characters like animals, funny persons, towers and a lot of funny things. They can be made of wood, ivory, glass, pewter, silver, faience, porcelain or stoneware.

Nowadays there are many kinds of different types of beer glasses for nearly every beer. They have been created to underline the taste, the sensation to be hold in your hand and to enjoy the foaming gold around your lips.

Ute



## Strong-beer

In Bavaria, the monasteries play a special role in the development of the strong beer. “Drinking doesn’t break the fast!” said the monks and enjoyed drinks, also beer during the time of sparse food. Because of this monk’s philosophical attitude, more than 200 beer sorts ending with “-ator” were created and served in Bavaria. This ending was introduced as information for the customers; he could recognize that the beer had higher alcohol content- between 7, 6 and 8, 1 %.

The monks of the Order “Francis of Paula” – the short name was then “Paulaner” - came 1627 from Italy to Munich and named their beer “Holy Franz-Oil” or “Sankt-Fathers-beer”. And when you speak quickly, you say: “Salvator”beer. People called it “SALVATOR BIER”, that had nothing to do with the Lent. The beer was based on the recipe of the “Maibock beer” but the alcohol content was higher (stronger). It was brewed on the occasion of the celebration for the name and death day of its religion’s founder. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1751 the monks were allowed to brew this rich beer and serve the beer in public. 1780 Elector Karl-Theodor allowed the “Paulaner” to serve unlimited beer to other people (it is called Bierausschank) It became soon customary to greet the Bavarian Elector for beer tapping and to hand him the first pitcher.

In fact PAULANER Monks were the inventor of the strong beer. They led the strong beer season in their monastery at the foot of Nockerberg (It is the name of the place where the monastery was standing). For over 100 years now, the first strong beer of the year is tested in the rooms of the Paulaner-Keller brewery; it opens the “Strong beer-time”. The development of this beer is mainly due to the monastery monks. Highest principle:

### **Liquid does not break the fast!**

According the legend, the monks needed a church special permit to brew strong beer. They had to bring a barrel to Rome so that the Pope could taste the monastery beer and then give his permission. During the transport through the Alps and till Rom, the beer was vigorously shaken and warmed up under the Italian sun. The result was that many weeks later the beer became sour. When it arrived in Rom, the Pope tried the beer and found it terrible. Such beer seemed to him more a punishment than a gift; it could hardly put the salvation of the monks living in the north of the Alps in danger. The Pope gave the desired brewing and dispensing permit.

Today NOCKERBERG is still a place of importance. Just say the name “Nockerberg” and everybody knows what you mean! There were other breweries that make strong-beer and the festival, but Nockerberg is the Rolls Royce under this attraction.



## Strong-beer (2)

Other MUNICH breweries who brew strong beer:

SPATENBRAUEREI /LÖWENBRÄU	à Triumphator
AUGUSTINER brewery	à Maximator
FORSCHUNGSBRAUEREI JAKOB	à St. Jakobus
HACKER-PSCHORR	à Animator

Traditionally strong beer is brewed especially before the end of the winter.

You drink this beer only from the Ash Wednesday and only for 17 days. It's called the 5th season of Munich. This beer-drinking is always opened with the traditional "Politicians Derbleck'n". The most important politicians are taken for a ride. Cabaret artists make fun of the politicians and recall what the latter have done or not throughout the year. But everything is said in a funny way so that nobody can really get angry. Every politician is flattered to be the object of talking and laughing in that performance.

We are glad to have such an old tradition and we enjoy it every year.

Heidi

"Politicians Derbleck'n" 2014 (Bavarian dialect)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xnnvxCWvFo#t=91>

During the strong beer time some funny competitions between young or strong men take place nearly everywhere in Bavaria.



Steinheben (stone lifting-250 kg)



Fingerhackeln (finger-wrestling)



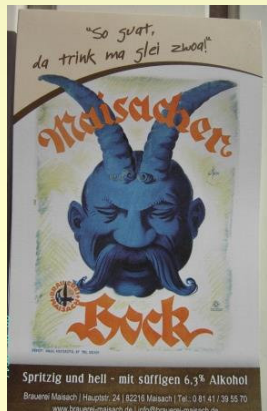
Schnalzergruppe (cracking the whip group)

## Bavarian Bock beers

The origin of brewing “Bockbier” is situated in the formerly hanseatic city of Einbeck in Niedersachsen.

As mentioned before, in Munich, the monks from the “Francis of Paula” order (Paulaner order) succeeded getting the privilege to brew and serve a special beer from prince-electoral (Kurfürst) Maximilian II.

From 1629 on the monks produced a beer with higher “Stammwürze” (original gravity), a strong and substantial beer, the so called “Ainpöcksch Bock” (from Einbeck). This name changed later to „Double-Bock”.



Traditionally strong beer is brewed in late days of the wintertime.

But all over the year special beers are brewed e.g. in spring the “Maibock” is brewed and one drinks it from May to July.

“Maibock” has 8% alcohol concentration; it is a blond beer, less sweet and flavoured with hops.

“Doppelbock” is a beer with an original gravity higher than 18 ° that has an alcohol concentration between 5 % and 12 %. The beers with a name ending with “-ator” belongs to that category of beer.

“Festbock” is brewed especially for Christmas time in blond and dark variations.

“Icebock” is produced in a special way. The beer gets frozen and then the frozen water will have removed. Thereby the beer grows stronger.

It is brewed according to the “Reinheitsgebot” (like all beers in Germany) because it is only the water content that is reduced, but all the important ingredients are included as requested by that law. The alcohol content is 12%. In comparison a normal beer has an alcohol concentration of 5% to 6.5%.

The temperature to serve and drink beer depends on the beer type and should not be higher than 8° - 14° C.

Characteristic for Bock beers is a light taste of caramel.

And now cheers or as we say in Bavaria : oans-zwoa-gsuffa

1 2 drink

Harry

*Stillleben mit Bockbierglas*, [Johann Wilhelm Preyer](#), 1839



Link for information in German: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bockbier>



## About „Weißbier“, „Ruß“ and „Radler“

„Weißbier“ – a wheat beer- (German – "white beer") is based on the German tradition of mixing at least 50% wheat to barley malt to make a light coloured top-fermenting beer. German wheat beers are called "Weissbier" or "Weisse" (white beer or white) in Bavaria. „Hefeweizen“ (the prefix "Hefe" is German for yeast) is the name for unfiltered wheat beers, while „Kristallweizen“ ("Kristall" being German for crystal) is the same beer filtered.

„Weissbier“ is so called because it was, at the time of its inception, paler in colour than Munich brown beer.

„Weissbier“ is available in a number of other forms including „Dunkelweizen“ (dark wheat) and „Weizenstarkbier“ (strong wheat beer), commonly referred to as „Weizenbock“. The dark wheat varieties are made with darker, more highly-kilned malts (both wheat and barley). The „Weizenbocks“ typically have much higher alcohol content than

To pour a „Weißbier“ in the right way you need artistic skills! First, clean your glasses. It will improve beer's flavour and taste. Second, hold the glass on an angle, and pour the wheat beer slowly. Third, with about 10% or 15% of beer left in the bottle, swirl it smoothly to mix the yeast and beer together. Finally, pour the remaining beer in your glass. This process will help to improve the flavor, scent and appearance of your wheat beer.



„Ruß“ and „Radler“ are special drinks served in Bavaria.

„Ruß“ is made of ½ a white beer and ½ lemonade.

„Radler“ is nearly the same but the white beer is replaced by a regular light or dark beer. The taste is very different. Both drinks are very refreshing and popular on hot summer days. They are mostly served in 1 litre jug called „Maßkrug“.

**Tip for your health:** The yellow of an egg scrambled in a glass of dark beer is a good medicine after an illness. It helps recovering ones power and bodily strength.

Hanni

with the support of [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheat\\_beer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheat_beer)

Coasters / beer mats give information about breweries but intend also to draw the attention of the customers on „traditions“, „quality“, etc...



## The most famous beer festival in the world: Oktoberfest

Munich is a beautiful city but its worldwide celebrity is probably due more to the “Oktoberfest” than to its cultural and historical richness. Anyway it was because of an historical event that the “Oktoberfest” exists: the wedding of King Ludwig I of Bavaria and Therese of Sachsen-Hilburghausen on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1810! The feast lasted for five days with music and a lot of eating and drinking. The feast finished with a horse-race on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1810 which took place on a meadow (German “Wiese”) a bit outside Munich centre. People liked the race so much that it was repeated in the following years. The place got the name of “Theresienwiese” (Theresa’s meadow). In the course of years new activities were added to the race e.g. a swing, a merry-go-round, lottery, eating places,...

Nowadays the “Oktoberfest” lasts for 2 weeks and ends on the first Sunday of October.

A special beer – “Oktoberfestbier”- is brewed for the fair. It has at least 13, 5 ° original gravity, that leads to an alcohol content of 5,8 % to 6,4 %. It is only sold in 1 litre mug!

There are 14 main tents where **Munich** breweries sell beer and Bavarian specialities. Every year over 6 million visitors coming from all over the world enjoy that unique fair with its fairground attractions and sideshows. In 2013 6, 7 million litres beer were sold within 2 weeks.

On the first day of the “Oktoberfest” landlords of the breweries, waiters, musicians and societies for traditional costumes form a huge parade and walk through Munich centre to the “Theresienwiese”. At noon the mayor of the city tapes the first beer cask/barrel and declares the opening of the beer festival.



Dress code: “Dirndl” for women and girls and “Lederhosen” for men and boys!

Helga



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