



# Press release

## *Wiesn* business – the Oktoberfest as an economic factor

(4.8.2022) As the organiser of the Oktoberfest, the City of Munich's Department of Labour and Economic Affairs (RAW) commissioned a representative survey at the 2019 Oktoberfest to provide information on the economic value of the fair as well as its visitor structure and image. This was an update of the result of the 2014 survey.

### **Economic value of the *Wiesn***

According to the latest calculations by the organisers based on the above survey, the economic value of the Oktoberfest 2019 was 1.25 billion euros.

- According to the survey and calculations, the approximately 6.3 million visitors to the fair spent a total of some 448 million euros (71.12 euros per person on average) at the Oktoberfest itself during the 16-day period.
- Non-resident visitors spent another 289 million euros in the city on food, shopping, taxi rides and public transport.
- In terms of overnight stays and gastronomy, non-resident fair visitors spent a total of around 513 million euros.
- 71% (2014: 65%) of non-resident guests stayed overnight in Munich during the Oktoberfest. These overnight stays break down as follows:
  - 31% (2014: 30%) chose accommodation with friends, relatives and acquaintances
  - 40% (2014: 70%) stayed in commercial accommodation (hotels, guesthouses, campsites, privately rented accommodation, youth hostels).

### **Where the guests come from**

The Oktoberfest is still a Bavarian fair: the overwhelming majority of Oktoberfest visitors come from Bavaria, at 70% (2014: 71%), specifically 62%





directly from Munich and the surrounding area (2014: 58%) and 8% from the rest of Bavaria (2014: 13%). 9% of *Wiesn* guests (2014:15%) travel from the other German states.

The remaining 21% of guests at the fair (2014: 14%) come from abroad, of which 3.9% are from Italy (2014: 1.7%) 1.3% from Switzerland (2014: 1.7%) 3.7% from the USA (2014: 1.7%) 0.9% from Australia (2014: 1.0%) 2.9% from Austria (2014: 1.1%) 0.9% from Canada (2014: 0.3%) 1.4% from the UK (2014: 1.4%) 0.9% from the Netherlands (2014: 0.3%) 0.7% from Ireland (2014: 1.2%) 0.3% from France (2014: 0.6%) 0.4% from India (2014: 0,7%) 0.3% from Brazil (2014: 0.4%) other countries: 3.4% (2014: 3.8%)

Statistically speaking, a table at the *Wiesn* with ten seats is therefore occupied by six guests from Munich or the surrounding area, one other Bavarian, one person from elsewhere in Germany and two foreigners. The foreigners are most likely to come from Italy, the USA or Austria.

### **Visitors' age**

The *Wiesn* is still a fair for all generations. Young and old go there to party together. In line with the general demographic shift, the average age of Oktoberfest visitors is rising.

The 30+ group accounted for a share of 64% in 2019 (2014: 57%).

Accordingly, the share of under-30s dropped from 43% in 2014 to 34% in 2019.


The largest group of visitors was that of the 30 to 39-year-olds at 25%, followed by the 25 to 29-year-olds at 17%. The 18 to 24-year-olds and guests aged 40 to 49 had a share of 15% each. Visitors aged 60 and over accounted for 13% in 2019, compared to 12% in 2014. The smallest groups were the 50 to 59-year-olds at 11% and the under-18s at 2%.

The gender ratio is balanced at 50% (2014: 51%) female and 49% (2014: 49%) male visitors. 1% of visitors chose the designation 'diverse'.

In 1999/2000, 62% of the guests were men and only 38% women. In 2008, women and men already accounted for the same share of visitors as in 2019.

### **Once a *Wiesn* visitor – always a *Wiesn* visitor**

In answer to the question "Is this your first time at Oktoberfest?", 22% (2014: 20%) of respondents said "yes". In both 2014 and 2019, one in five visitors said it was



their first time at the *Wiesn*. In 2019, only 5% of guests from Munich were first-time visitors to the Oktoberfest, though this applied to 28% of guests from the rest of Germany and 60% of guests from abroad  
78% (2014: 80%) of those surveyed were repeat visitors and had been to the *Wiesn* once or several times before.

For the majority of *Wiesn* visitors, a visit to the fairground over the 16-day period was not a one-off event: almost 80% of the guests went to Oktoberfest more than once in 2019, while more than half (57%) went more than three times. This means that the frequency of visits has increased significantly compared to 2014. The majority of guests spent between three and nine hours at the fair.

#### **Guest satisfaction**

The vast majority of guests were satisfied with what the Oktoberfest had to offer. The range of rides and attractions, products and catering appealed to a total of 98% (2014: 96%) of all respondents.

95% of the respondents liked the food and drink that was served. In response to the question “What do you believe is lacking in the range of food and beverages?”, over 36% of respondents answered “cheaper options”. 9% of respondents wanted “healthier food”, while 5% would have preferred “more vegetarian food”.

85% of respondents were largely only satisfied with the variety of rides. 11% of the guests would have preferred lower prices, however.

Activities for children in general at the *Wiesn* were rated positively by 64% of the guests surveyed, but such activities were also considered to be too expensive. Minus points in terms of child-friendliness were reflected in the answer “too crowded” (7.6%), a call for more areas dedicated specifically to children (1.1%) and the fact that there were “too many drunks” (0.6%).

The majority of guests feel safe on the fairground: the figure here was 94%. In terms of accessibility, the Oktoberfest is the leader among traditional German fairs. 60% of those surveyed believe the *Wiesn* is accessible for the disabled. There was a marked desire for cashless payment options among more than half (58%) of the respondents.



### **Beer tent visits**

A visit to one of the beer tents is a must for most visitors to the *Wiesn*: 79% (2014: 78%) of all respondents went to a beer tent, 15% (2014: 22%) did not plan to do so, and 6% were still unsure.

The main reasons for not visiting a beer tent were “not interested” (62%), “unable to get a seat” (19%) and “too expensive” (11%).

For the group of international guests, a visit to the beer tent is more attractive than for guests from within Germany. 92% (2014: 91%) of respondents from abroad said they would like to visit a beer tent, compared to 76% (2014: 73%) of Germans. A visit to a beer tent is particularly attractive to the under-30s: up to 87% of 18 to 24 year-olds are drawn to a beer tent, while 85% of 25 to 29 year-olds are likewise keen on this aspect of the Oktoberfest. At 82%, the best age group in the 50 to 59 age bracket is also particularly attracted to the beer tents. A visit to a beer tent is an integral part of the Oktoberfest for the 30 to 39-year-olds at 77% and for the 40 to 49-year-olds at 72%, And the 60+ generation is almost at the same level with 76%.

For men – at a rate of 81% (2014: 83%) – visiting a beer tent is still more attractive than for women at 78% (2014: 74%). The trend indicates a convergence of the two sexes on this issue.


### **The fun of the fair**

More than half of respondents (59%) said they visited the rides and attractions at the *Wiesn*. When asked why they did not visit the fairground attractions, respondents said it was partly due to a lack of interest (61%), partly because it was too expensive (20%), or else because the fairground areas were too crowded (6.4%).

### **Oide Wiesn**

51% of those surveyed like the fact that the *Oide Wiesn* was more tranquil. The nostalgic flair created by the historic rides and attractions were what made this part of the *Wiesn* particularly appealing to 27% of those surveyed, while the distinctive atmosphere and positive mood motivated 45% to visit this area and 22% said they regarded the *Oide Wiesn* as a part of their cultural identity.

The dancing, choice of music and presentation of cultural aspects were perceived as positive. Of the tents at the *Oide Wiesn*, *Festzelt Tradition* with its traditional Bavarian culture was cited as being the most popular (21%). There was also praise for the children's activities (18%). 17% of those surveyed felt there was a good chance of finding a seat in a beer tent when visiting the *Oide Wiesn*.



38% of respondents expressed an intention to visit the nostalgic section of the fair. In 2019, around 557,000 (2014: 610,000) paying guests visited the *Oide Wiesn*.

#### **Media use by *Wiesn* visitors**

When asked “Which media did you use to get information about the Oktoberfest?”, most guests referred to word-of-mouth (62%), followed by television and the internet (46% each). The official Oktoberfest website [www.oktoberfest.de](http://www.oktoberfest.de) was accessed by 72% of users, while 47% went to the official city portal [www.muenchen.de](http://www.muenchen.de) to obtain information. 20% of respondents from Germany and 40% from abroad used Instagram for their research. The Oktoberfest app was used by just under 40% of those surveyed as an additional source of information. Foreign visitors (47%) did more to obtain information in advance than visitors from Germany as a whole (20%) and Munich residents (15%). In terms of age, it was increasingly the younger people aged between 18 and 29 who sought out information before visiting, mainly via television (50%), Instagram (39%), the internet (37%) and Facebook (32%).

#### **How well-known is the *Wiesn*?**

The Oktoberfest is known all over the world and a sure-fire success. Since 1985 – the year of the 175th anniversary of the Oktoberfest with 7.1 million visitors – the *Wiesn* has no longer been advertised. A survey on the acceptance and awareness of German words abroad conducted worldwide by the Bates agency on behalf of the German National Tourist Board in February 1999 showed that even then, 91% of respondents were familiar with the word “Oktoberfest”. Today, social media carry the Oktoberfest to all corners of the earth: currently, for example, Google shows millions of hits for the term “Oktoberfest” (May 2020: 56,300,000 entries), YouTube has 21,800,000 entries (2014: just under one million) Instagram 24,300,000 entries and Twitter 41,700,000 tweets (2014: 3.5 million). Then there are the webcams that are installed at the *Wiesn* and provide live images of the festivities around the globe on a daily basis. Due to its worldwide fame, the Oktoberfest is a tourist magnet and export article par excellence.

#### **Image value of the *Wiesn***

More than 2,000 Munich-style “Oktoberfests” are held around the globe. Of these, the largest take place in Blumenau (Brazil) and in Kitchener (Canada) with around one million visitors each, followed by Frankenmuth/Michigan (USA) with around 350,000 visitors. China hosts huge “beer festivals”: those held in Beijing, Dalian and Qingdao take place in July and August and attract millions of visitors.



The Oktoberfest has an unmistakable impact on the image of Munich. The advertising value of the *Wiesn* for Munich is not measurable, but the reputation that Munich enjoys nationally and internationally through the Oktoberfest is reflected in the number of visitors. Not least thanks to this unique fair, Munich is one of Germany's most attractive cities for tourists.

#### **The *Wiesn* as a workplace**

Some 13,000 people are employed at the Oktoberfest during the "*Wiesn* season". 8,000 of them work on a permanent basis, while a further 5,000 people find temporary jobs at the *Wiesn*.

#### **Organisation**

For over 180 years, the Oktoberfest has been organised by the City of Munich and the development of the fair has been under the control of the municipal authorities. The Department of Labour and Economic Affairs is responsible for organising and implementing the fair. All important decisions concerning the *Wiesn* are made at the suggestion of this department by the Economic Committee of Munich City Council. Each year, some 1,100 applications are received from providers of fairground rides and attractions as well as market traders. These are assessed and some 550 applicants are admitted.

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