



# Press Release

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## A business perspective: The economic impact of the Oktoberfest

### **I. Market research into the Munich Oktoberfest**

During the 2014 Oktoberfest, the Department of Labor and Economic Development, in its capacity as the organizer of this major event, commissioned a representative survey to determine the economic value, visitor profile and image of the festival. The results constitute an update to the surveys conducted in 1999/2000 and 2008.

### **Economic value of the Oktoberfest**

According to the organizer's current calculations based on the above-mentioned survey, last year's Oktoberfest was worth 1.23 billion euros in terms of economic value.

- The surveys and calculations show that the roughly 6.3 million visitors spent around EUR 442 million on the grounds of the Oktoberfest (at an average of EUR 70.22 per person) over the 16 days of the festival.
- Visitors from outside Munich spent a further EUR 285 million on food and drink, shopping, taxi rides and the use of public transport elsewhere in Munich.
- Oktoberfest visitors from outside Munich spent about EUR 505 million on accommodation alone.





- 65 percent of visitors from outside Munich stayed overnight in Munich during the festival. These overnight stays break down as follows:
  - 30 chose to stay with friends or relatives
  - 70 percent stayed in commercial accommodation (hotels, B&Bs, campsites and youth hostels).

#### **Where do the visitors come from?**

The Oktoberfest is and remains a distinctly “Bavarian” festival. The vast majority of visitors to the Oktoberfest – some 71 percent – come from the state of Bavaria. This figure splits into 58 percent from Munich itself and 13 percent from the rest of Bavaria.

A further 15 percent of Oktoberfest visitors come from the other federal states of Germany.

The remaining 14 percent of festival visitors come from abroad, in particular from:

USA	12%	Australia	7%
Switzerland	12%	France	4%
Italy	12%	Brazil	3%
GB	10%	Canada	2%
Austria	8%	Netherlands	2%



### **How old are the visitors?**


The Oktoberfest is clearly still attractive to all generations. Young and old come here to celebrate together. In line with the general demographic trend, the average age of Oktoberfest visitors is increasing. The age group “30 years and older” thus recorded a 57 percent share in 2014, compared to 53 percent in the 2008 survey and only 40 percent in 1999/2000. Accordingly, the share of visitors under 30 years of age declined from 47 percent in 2008 to 43 percent in 2014. In 1999/2000, the under 30s age group still accounted for 60 percent of all visitors. The 45-59 year-olds’ share rose to 18 percent in 2014, a modest increase compared to 15 percent in 2008 and a significant gain compared to 9 percent in the 1999/2000 survey. The age group “60 years and older” increased their share from 9 percent in 2008 to 12 percent in 2014.

The gender mix is balanced, with 51 percent female and 49 percent male visitors. In 1999/2000, men still accounted for 62 percent of visitors and women for only 38 percent. Near-equality was already reached in 2008, however, when 49 percent of visitors were female and 51 percent male.

### **Visit once and you’ll keep coming back!**

In response to the question “Is this your first visit to the Oktoberfest?”, only 20 percent of respondents answered “yes”. Fully 80 percent said they were repeat visitors, having attended the Oktoberfest either once before or on several occasions.

For the majority of visitors, “going to the Oktoberfest” is not a one-off event during the 16 days of festivities. A good two thirds of all visitors turn up on



the festival grounds more than once, with more than half attending between three and five times.

### **Who comes with whom?**

A visit to the Oktoberfest is enjoyed very much as a communal experience. Most visitors – more than 96 percent – share the event with friends, their partner or other family members. Only 4 percent of visitors attend on their own.

### **Visiting the Oktoberfest with children**


Compared to 2008, the share of all Oktoberfest visitors who attended with children up to the age of 14 rose from 6 to 10 percent. 87 percent of respondents said they liked what was on offer for younger visitors.

### **Guest satisfaction ratings**

A total of 96 percent of all respondents are happy with the array of funfair attractions, merchandise and catering on offer. 95 percent appreciate the variety of rides. 62 percent feel that the music in the beer tents fits the mood, and 77 percent do not perceive it as too loud. On the other hand, 15 percent of respondents would prefer more folk music, while only 10 percent would like to hear more popular hits.

### **Visits to beer tents**

For most visitors, stopping by at one of the 16 beer tents is quite simply the done thing at the Oktoberfest. 78 percent of all respondents visited a beer tent, while the remaining 22 percent had no plans to do so.



Visiting a beer tent appears to be more attractive to visitors from abroad than to their German counterparts. 91 percent of all respondents from abroad indicated their desire to visit a beer tent, compared to 73 percent of German nationals.


A visit to a beer tent is a particularly attractive proposition to visitors under the age of 30, of whom 87 were keen to do so. By comparison, three quarters of visitors over the age of 30 intended to visit a beer tent.

Men find the prospect of visiting a beer tent somewhat more attractive than women do. 83 percent of male respondents planned to visit a beer tent, compared to 74 percent of females.

80 percent of beer tent visitors indicated that they had not made advance reservations. 18 percent of respondents said they had booked in advance. 10 percent of respondents without reservations claimed that they had unsuccessfully attempted to obtain advance bookings.

### **Oide Wiesn (“Vintage Oktoberfest”)**

The Oide Wiesn is celebrated on the southern part of the Theresienwiese at the same time as the main Oktoberfest and has become something of a “place of pilgrimage” for locals: Fully 64 percent of visitors to the Oide Wiesn come from Munich and the surrounding region. 12 percent come from the rest of Bavaria, another 15 percent from elsewhere in Germany and 9 percent from abroad. 61 percent of respondents indicated that they intended to visit the Oide Wiesn.




71 percent of respondents see the Oide Wiesn as a valuable complement to the Oktoberfest. Visitors particularly enjoy the “less hectic” atmosphere here (62 percent). The nostalgic flair and historical rides and attractions give this part of the festival its special charm (according to 60 percent) and has a positive impact on the mood and atmosphere (53 percent). 39 percent of respondents were hoping to find seating available in the beer tents.

The Oide Wiesn is described as an authentic “piece of home” (31 percent) – a perception reflected in the open answers given to the question “What do you like about the Oide Wiesn?” Responses stressed the cozy and traditional feel of this nostalgic part of the festival, which “shows what things used to be like when beer was still served in steins and brass bands played their music”. This is also a place of encounter for locals, with the comparatively few visitors from abroad going relatively unnoticed. A positive view is taken of the opportunities to dance, the choice of music and the way culture is presented. The colorful diversity of the rides and other amusements is seen to enrich visits to the Oktoberfest. 27 percent of respondents – including both parents and grandparents – are particularly appreciative of the entertainment laid on for children at the Oide Wiesn. Despite the admission fee, the Oide Wiesn is considered inexpensive. A special mention also goes to the array of vegan dishes on offer. One open answer, expressed in a broad Bavarian dialect, aptly sums up the impression left by the Oide Wiesn: “Simply beautiful!”

### **Awareness of the Oktoberfest**

Famous throughout the world, the Oktoberfest generates and upholds its own momentum. There has been no paid advertising for the Oktoberfest




since 1985, the year in which the festival celebrated its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary with 7.1 million visitors. In February 1999, the agency Bates was commissioned by the German National Tourist Board (DZT) to conduct a worldwide survey regarding awareness and acceptance of German terms abroad. The survey found that 91 percent of respondents were familiar with the term “Oktoberfest”. When asked “How did you learn about the Oktoberfest?”, more than 57 percent of all first-time visitors to the festival in 2008 answered: “You just know the Oktoberfest. Everybody does!” Today, social media bring the Oktoberfest to the farthest reaches of the planet. If you enter the term “Oktoberfest”, for example, the Google search engine currently returns millions of entries, YouTube finds nearly a million entries and Twitter finds 3.5 million relevant tweets – not to mention the webcams that are installed at the festival grounds and that broadcast live images around the globe every day. This global popularity makes the Oktoberfest a tourist magnet and export product *par excellence*.

### **Oktoberfest image value**

More than 2,000 Munich-style “Oktoberfest” offshoots are organized around the world. The biggest such events take place in Blumenau (Brazil) and Kitchener (Canada), each of which attracts around a million visitors, followed by Frankenmuth in Michigan, USA (about 350,000 visitors). China lays on superlative beer festivals of its own: The festivals held in Beijing, Dalian and Qingdao in July and August each draw millions of people.

The “festival of festivals” has certainly left an indelible imprint on the blue-and-white-flagged Bavarian metropolis. Though the Oktoberfest's advertising value for Munich cannot be measured as such, the reputation



the city enjoys both nationally and internationally due to this festival is reflected in the number of visitors. Munich's stand-out position as one of Germany's leading tourist destination is thanks in no small part to this unique public festival.

## **II. The Oktoberfest as a business**

### **Jobs at the Oktoberfest**

During the beer festival season, the Oktoberfest gives work directly to about 13,000 people. Roughly 8,000 of these are employed on a permanent basis, while around another 5,000 engage in temporary employment.

### **Organization**

For more than 180 years, the City of Munich has been organizing the Oktoberfest and overseeing the development of this major public festival. **Clemens Baumgärtner**, head of the Department of Labor and Economic Development, is responsible for the organization and running of the festival. Based on his proposals, Munich City Council's Economic Affairs Committee makes all key decisions with regard to the Oktoberfest. Every year, something like 1,100 applications from funfair amusements and vendors are received and assessed. About 550 of these applicants are ultimately admitted.

### **Merchandising: The Oktoberfest poster and logo**

In its capacity as organizer of the Oktoberfest, the City of Munich has, since 1952, held an annual competition for the motif of the Oktoberfest poster. The winning motif appears on the Internet, on licensed





merchandise and on 10,000 posters. It also adorns the year's official commemorative beer mug, adding to this coveted series of collector's items which began in 1978. Starting in 2017, the motif of the Oktoberfest poster will be chosen based on an open online contest.

In 1995, British designer Alan Fletcher created two laughing beer mugs as the logo for the commercial marketing of the Oktoberfest. The aim of this “seal of approval” is to provide worldwide legal protection for the Oktoberfest as part of Munich's cultural heritage. The registered trademark “Oktoberfest München” vouches for the quality and authenticity of merchandise, most of which bears the official poster motif.

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The official website and addresses for all information about the Oktoberfest:

[www.oktoberfest.de](http://www.oktoberfest.de)



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/oktoberfest](http://www.facebook.com/oktoberfest)



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Offizielle Oktoberfest App: [www.oktoberfest.de/app](http://www.oktoberfest.de/app)

**Oktoberfest – the Festival of the City of Munich**