

KPM in Berlin – ageless style in porcelain: The Royal Prussian Porcelain Manufacture in Berlin (KPM) stands for peerless porcelain and style defining design at the highest stage. Up to today the artistic craft of creative porcelain manufacturing is cultivated in the centre of the historic Prussian kingdom. In 1763, Frederick the Great provided the world famous trademark: the royal–blue scepter as the seal of quality can be find at every single master piece of the KPM’s porcelain culture. The design was always and still is influenced by the historic era and latest fashion. As a reminiscence of those various epochs, KPM brings out design lines such as Royal splendor, Classic Elegance, Floral fantasy, Form and performance and New fascination. “Royal splendor” refers to the style of the Rococo era in the 18th century, which was dominated by asymmetric forms, shell and tendril craft. Frederick the Great ordered 21 dinner service sets for his castles, each with up to 450 pieces. “Form and Performance” is a basic rule of the “Bauhaus” design of the 1920s and part of the “New Practicality”. “New fascination” on the other side stands for modern design according to the “Zeitgeist” (spirit of age). A creative and ludic handling of forms, art and technology is playing a more important role now. The KPM successfully accomplished to involve prestigious artists in design projects. In the 1990s, together with the italian designer Enzo Mari, a new collection of vases was created. The KPM porcelain products are almost completely handmade according to the traditional values of a quality production of the so called “white gold”. A permanent exhibition tells you the story of the excellent Prussian procelain. Visitors can also watch KPM employees at work – making unique master pieces or hand–painting vases or porcelain figures. The sales exhibition offers a wide range of KPM products, which can be shipped to the U.S. on request. <http://www.kpm-berlin.de/default.aspx> (only in German available)

BBQ like the Germans do – the “Grillparty”: As the grilling season kicks into high gear, it’s time to reveal the German origins of some “all–American” barbecue foods such as two of the favorites, hamburger and hot dog. While the history of the hamburger is somewhat shrouded in mystery, a popular version goes that Otto Kuasw, a cook in Hamburg (hence the name), created

a sandwich in 1891 with a thin, fried patty of mild beef sausage. He topped it with a fried egg and placed it all between two slices of buttered bread. This sandwich became popular among the soldiers who visited the port city. And when the soldiers traveled to the New York ports, they told the restaurant owners about their favorite "Deutsches Beefsteak" sandwich. This eventually came to be known as the hamburger. The German forefather to the American hot dog, the Frankfurter, looks back on a long history. It was created in 1487, five years before Christopher Columbus set sail to discover the new world. The name of this mild, finely ground sausage link is attributed to yet another German city, Frankfurt, where it first gained popularity. In the 1860s, German immigrants began selling "franks" with rolls and sauerkraut from pushcarts in New York City. And in 1871, Charles Feltman, a German-American butcher, opened the first Coney Island hot dog stand, putting the links in a long bun. Since that time, hot dogs have become standard fare at summer barbecues and baseball parks across the country. More popular in Germany are marinated barbecue steaks, grill sausages (Bratwurst), meat & vegetable skewers and hamburgers, commonly accompanied by potato or other salads, bread, mustard and pickles. Germany is one of the leading producers of high quality pickles, with a wide variety of pickled vegetables, from sauerkraut and gherkins to lesser known products like pickled red beets and celery root. Many German pickling companies are still family owned and have been producing pickles according to well-kept proprietary recipes with secret combinations of herbs and spices. The best known German region for gherkins is the scenic "Spreewald" just south of Berlin.

BBQ recipes:

<http://www.germanfoods.org/consumer/recipes/bbq.cfm>

Off the beaten tourist tracks – castle Molsdorf in Thuringia: Near to the Thuringian capital Erfurt but remote and hidden in a small village you can find one of the many hidden cultural treasures of Germany. The castle Molsdorf set on a lake with its scenic park was built in the 16th century. But the heyday was in the 18th century, when Duke Gustav Adolf von Gotter established a Baroque castle. The castle Molsdorf is not only a monument of art, it is also telling entertaining stories of the Duke's amorous life. Von Gotter was a well respected diplomat and a bon vivant, who was hosting his famous festivities here. At his time, the Molsdorf french baroque garden was well known for its bounteous sculpture decoration. Due to his luxurious life style he run out of money after 15 years and was forced to sell the property.

The following owners remodeled the baroque garden into an English style park. After intense reconstruction, the castle was opened to the public in 1996. It also hosts a museum, exhibitions and a restaurant / café. Especially during summer romantic classic concerts are taking place in the castle or in the park. <http://www.molsdorf.de/schloss-molsdorf/schloss-molsdorf.html> (only in German available)

When German beer went on a world trip: Beer is the people's beverage #1 in Germany. Not only that Germans export plenty of beer worldwide, they also took the German brew craft along wherever they immigrated to. Many breweries in North and South America, but also in Africa or China, are having their roots in Germany. In 1823, like many other Germans, the brew master David G. Jüngling decided to emigrate and to start a new life in the United States. By reason of a better perceivability he changed the spelling of his name into Yuengling. Already in 1829, he founded his own brewery – the “Eagle Brewery” in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Today the still family run “Eagle Brewery” is one of the oldest breweries in the U.S., producing about 37 million gallons beer each year. Until 1994 they were brewing a “Old German” beer, a light sweet Lager, as a reminiscence to the German heritage. Many new beer brands were invented since then and the traditional beer festival, the Oktoberfest, is celebrated with many various imaginative faces all over the world. Due to tradition and environmental protection unthinkable at the original Oktoberfest in Munich, the beer can has friends and enemies. It might not be very surprising, that in 1933 the beer can was put on the market in the U.S. by the “Gottfried Krueger Brewing Company – founded by the German Gottfried Krueger. It was the special situation at the end of the Prohibition, which created a huge demand for beer. A long-term storage in beer barrels and bottles was wasted material and room, the simple shining beer cans immediately became a sales hit. By the way, Germany had to wait a long time for this invention. Not until 1951 the beer can was brought to the German market. For a trip to the roots of German beer brew craft, have a look at our “German Beer Crawl” tours: http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German_Beer_Crawl

Visiting restaurants, cafes and bars in Germany: No doubt that you will figure out how it works by yourself – it even might be amusing, but a few tips can be helpful to enjoy a relaxed time visiting Germany. First of all, Germany offers a great variety of restaurants regarding style and cuisine, many cafes, bars and pubs. Especially during summer time many places have outdoor seating, sometimes hidden in the backyards. With the exception of high-class restaurants you will not be seated. Just walk in and pick the table of your choice. Don't rely on english menus, better bring a phrase book or a little dictionary – or ask the staff or the people at the table next to you. You don't get water for free, you have to pay for each glass or bottle you order. There is not such a thing like free refills for coffee, soda or water. If you want ice, you have to explicitly order it and some places might not have it! In many German states smoking was recently prohibited inside public restaurants and bars. Some places offer so called “smoker rooms”. Despite the German's reputation as a law-abiding folk, the new non-smoking regulation can be ignored at some places, especially at late night bars and small beer pubs. The tip is usually about 10%. Basic restaurants might not be used to handle credit cards. Therefore make sure, that you always bring enough cash to pay the check – just in case. To “open a tab” at a bar or pub is not common. If you hand over your credit card before you have finished drinking, the barman either thinks you want to pay now or you can just enjoy the big question marks in his or her eyes. If you want to get separate checks, tell the staff in advance when you order. If it is crowded in a bar or pub, it's OK to pay the check directly at the bar counter instead of waiting for the waiter or waitress. And one more thing – do not expect German pubs, restaurants or bars being airconditioned, the overwhelming majority of it is not no matter how hot it may get in July or August! But much more important – enjoy the German food and beverages and have fun!

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