



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 19 – Don't Leave Germany Without Trying These 10 Foods

Transcript

Here's something travelers don't always plan for, but absolutely should. What to eat in Germany. And if you're thinking German cuisine is all about heavy meats and sauerkraut, you're in for a tasty surprise.

This is the Germany Travel Planning Podcast, the show that helps you plan a super fun trip to Germany. My name is Cate, and I'm your Germany destination specialist. I'm here to help you plan the trip of a lifetime, and that includes what to eat along the way.

So in this episode, we're gonna cover 10 must try German foods that range from warm and cheesy comfort dishes to tasty street snacks and even a beer based drink you can sip with lunch guilt free. I'll give you the lowdown on what to try, where to find it and I'll give you some delicious tips. So let's dig in!

The first one is German soft pretzel or eine Brezel. We're starting with something iconic here. This is a soft, chewy golden brown pretzel. and you'll find them everywhere in bakery windows, to beer gardens, outdoor markets, Christmas markets, and even in grocery stores. You'll find them in the bakery department.

These pretzels are especially good when they're from a local bakery, fresh in the morning. They're crisp on the outside, they're pillowy soft on the inside, and they're often sprinkled with coarse salt. You can get them with melted cheese. Those are really, really good. And then sometimes you can also find them, where the thick part of the pretzels, cut open and then they'll either spread butter in there or cream



cheese or cream cheese and chives and those are also really really good. Usually these pretzels are about the size of your hand but sometimes you can find the really big pretzels like the shareable pretzels like you want to buy one pretzel and share it with everybody at your table. You can find those at like Oktoberfest or at some beer gardens.

And one time when I was up in northern Germany in Bremerhaven, I was looking around for a snack before going to museum and I found a little food cart and they had pretzels, but they were a little bit different from the pretzels that I was used to. This one was a little bit bigger and it was softer and it wasn't like that dark brown color. It was smothered with cheese and it was hot and fresh and it was a chilly kind of drizzly day. So this hot fresh cheese covered pretzel just really hit the spot. It was so, so good. And you know, if you've ever seen our logo, you've probably noticed that it has a pretzel in it. And that tells you how much Aaron and I love German pretzels. I mean, they are just the perfect snack for on the go. So highly recommend you try one of those.

Number two is a Döner Kebab. Okay, hear me out on this. One of the most popular street foods in Germany is actually Turkish.

And that is the Döner Kebab. This was introduced by Turkish immigrants and is now a staple across Germany. Döner it's filled with warm spiced meat that's kind of like sliced off of a rotating spit. And it's stuffed into a fluffy flatbread. And then it's filled with fresh vegetables and cabbage. then usually you get to choose from three different sauces, like a yogurt sauce, a garlic sauce, and then a spicier sauce.

And usually people just get all three because it just gives them more flavor and they're all good. These doughnuts are filling, they're cheap, and my God, they are so good. And they are especially good on a cold day or when you've been out walking around and you're so hungry. It's just perfect. We get Döner a lot for a quick dinner or if it's late at night and we need something to eat, we'll go to a Döner shop.



And they're also really good for lunch, like between sightseeing stops. Definitely bigger than a snack. Like if you want to share it, you could get one for a snack, but they are a meal. They're definitely, a Döner is like a full meal. Sometimes you can get smaller ones, but just the standard size is quite a lot. You can find döner shops on like every corner. They are all over Germany, so it's easy to find them.

Some of them just focus on having the traditional döner which is made with lamb and sometimes beef. But pretty often now you can also find chicken döner and you can also get falafel or cheese döner. then some of them have, they use like a different type of wrap. So it looks a little bit like a döner burrito. You can also get döner boxes. And that's really great if you like french fries and you don't want the bread. So no matter what you try, I highly recommend going to a döner shop and trying a döner. They are absolutely delicious.

Number three is Käsespätzle So this is cheese Spätzle. Spätzle are like little noodles or egg noodles. They actually look a little bit more like really tiny dumplings. And I made them fresh. It's actually really fun to make up the dough and then like kind of have to slice it off a certain way from the cutting board into hot boiling water. You can also just buy them at the store, especially if you're in southern Germany, you can buy packages of Spätzle and you can make it like I make it in my Airbnb whenever we're in Germany. But especially if you want a vegetarian dish or you want something that's like kind of comfort food, Käsespätzle is so good.

What it is, is it's the Spätzle. So the quick aside here, if you order something in, especially in southern Germany and you know, it's like a meat dish, you'll often get plain Spätzle on the side, especially if you order something that has a gravy with it. So this cheese Spätzle, Käsespätzle Spätzle, it's the noodles, the Spätzle, and then it's covered with melted cheese, kind of like a really creamy melted cheese. And then they pop it in the oven for a little bit, take it out, put some crispy onions on top. Oh, it's so, so good. And it's really good with a side salad.



The Käsespätzle a lot of people say that it's kind of like the German version of mac and cheese. It's a little different from mac and cheese, but it is so delicious. It's richer and a little bit more rustic than mac and cheese, and I find it more filling. I can't eat quite as much of the Käsespätzle as I can of just homemade mac and cheese. So you'll find Käsespätzle all over Germany, but especially in the South, in Bavaria and in the Swabian regions.

It is the perfect thing to order on a chilly day because it really is like just getting a big warm hug in food form. And if you're thinking like, that sounds really good, but maybe it's a little bit too much too heavy and you're with somebody else, order like a dinner salad and then order Spätzle, Käsespätzle and then split them. I think that's a really good ratio because I find sometimes as much as I love Käsespätzle it's just a little bit rich and a little bit too much to have the whole entire thing. That's a good compromise.

Number four are potato pancakes. Now these are like hot, crispy, golden potato pancakes. They're fried in oil, so they're definitely not healthy, but they are absolutely delicious. These are really popular at festivals. You'll find them at Christmas markets and even some like street food stalls. And you'll find them in restaurants sometimes too.

They're served fresh and hot, like straight out of the fryer. Usually you get three and they're served often with applesauce, but sometimes you can also get it with sour cream or like an herbed sour cream or cork sauce. And then sometimes you can also get them topped with smoked salmon, which I highly recommend because that with like the herbed cream sauce, so, so good. You can also just get them plain. They're really good with just a little sprinkle of salt. You'll smell them frying before you see them.



And once you get a taste of them, you'll understand why they are a fan favorite. I mean, I think so many people love them. You really can't go wrong with them. And one last thing, these potato pancakes have a variety of names depending on where you are in Germany. So you can always ask for Kartoffelpuffer. That's a popular name, but you might also see them referred to as Reibekuchen or Reiberdatschi.

And I'm sure that there's probably some other regional names that I am not thinking of because I swear this one thing has so many different names. regardless of the name, they're definitely recommended to try.

Continuing on with our potato theme, number five is potato salad or Kartoffelsalat in German. Maybe you've tried something called German potato salad outside of Germany, but here's the thing. There's no single German potato salad. Every region and I'm guessing probably every German family has its own version of potato salad.

So speaking very generally, in southern Germany, you'll often find potato salad made with like a tangy vinegar and broth mixture. And sometimes it's served kind of on the warm side and sometimes there might be speck or kind of like a type of bacon in it. And in northern Germany, it tends to be like creamier and made with mayo and sometimes herbs or cucumbers or maybe even egg slices. So it's a little bit more on the cool side.

When I lived with a German family in Northern Germany when I was in high school, my host mom made the best potato salad. And I had her show me how to do it. And it was with these little German potatoes, like really little. And when I lived there, I was only used to the really huge American potatoes. I'd never seen potatoes that small. And they're very waxy and just different from the potatoes that I was used to. She would slice them up and then mix with this creamy sauce and handful of fresh herbs. And I'm sure there were a few other things in there that I'm not thinking of, but it was so, so, so good. You can usually get potato salad as a side with things like schnitzel or maybe bratwurst.



And it's something you'll find at restaurants and at markets, food trucks, and you can even get it at the grocery store. If you're going to be traveling to different parts of Germany, I highly recommend trying potato salad in different places. And then you can kind of compare the different styles and you can see which one you prefer. And if you're meeting up with Germans, like if you have German friends or a family, ask them how they make potato salad.

Number six is asparagus or Spargel in German. If you're visiting Germany in the spring, you'll enter what Germans call Spargelzeit or asparagus time or asparagus season. The asparagus you get during Spargelzeit is not your average green asparagus. It's actually white. German white asparagus, it's a little different from green asparagus. It's tender, it's a little, maybe a little sweeter, and it's really, really popular in Germany.

If you get it in a restaurant, it'll usually be served like melted butter or cooked in butter actually. Or there might be hollandaise sauce over it and then you might be able to get it with ham or potatoes. That's pretty common. You'll find entire menus dedicated to Spargel during Spargelzeit. So it's kind of fun to go to restaurants and see all the different white asparagus creations that they have. When we have a kitchen when we're in Germany, we'll go to the grocery store and just buy white asparagus and then we'll go home and make it.

And when you're at the grocery store and you buy it, there are these special machines. Not all stores will have these, but some of them will. There are these special machines that you can use. You like put your asparagus stocks in there and it peels the white asparagus because you do have to peel white asparagus before you cook it. So if you're in a grocery store and you buy some white asparagus, look for the machine that will peel it for you. You can always peel it at home, but using the machine is a little bit easier. So if you're in Germany from about April to June, look out for Spargelzeit and give it a try.



Number seven is a dish called Königsberger Klopse. Königsberger Klopse are meatballs with Prussian roots and it's served in a creamy white sauce with capers and often potatoes on the side. The name comes from the city of Königsberg, which is now Kaliningrad, and the dish has deep East German roots. It's creamy, it's tangy, and it is delicious.

You'll often find it in Berlin restaurants or more traditional restaurants in Eastern Germany. And this is actually one of the dishes that we got to sample on a really amazing food tour I did a couple months ago in Berlin. One of the stops we went to was a traditional German restaurant. And we got to try a few different classic comfort dishes and a local beer. And one of those dishes was Königsberger Klopse. And they were so, so good. I could have eaten so many of those meatballs. They were delicious.

I'm going to link up this food tour in the show notes because it was fantastic. And if you're interested in trying different types of German food and going out to restaurants that are outside of the kind of touristy city center, old town area, you will love these food tours. I did one in Berlin, did a beer tour in Munich, and they're really fantastic. We've gotten to know the couple who started the business. And I think you will really, really enjoy it if you want to try different types of food. So I will link that up in the show notes. Definitely go take a look at it. It's such a great way to dive into German food culture.

And by the way, if you're listening and you're thinking, okay, this is great. I want to try all these different things and more, but how do I make sure I actually get to try these dishes on my trip? Am I going to go to the right places? Will I have enough time in my itinerary to go to these places? What else can I try? Where should I, what restaurant should I go to?

Our DIY Germany travel planner helps you connect the dots between things like food and going to the right destinations that you want to see, transportation that will work



for you, and so much more. Places to stay and all of those things that you need for your trip so that you don't miss the good stuff, how you define the good stuff. It's really important to us that we don't just tell you to go to the touristy places. We don't just tell you to go where we like to go. we show you, like we narrow things down for you to show you the best things that are popular and off the beaten path so that you can look at it and you can say, "yes, we want to go here, here, here, and here.

And then there's no FOMO. You know that you're going on a unique trip that you are super excited about. OK, I can talk about that for a long time because we've put so much heart and soul into this planner and make it super useful for you. And I just can't stop talking about how useful it is. We get so much good feedback on that.

So all right, let's move on to number eight, which is German sausage or Wurst. You knew this one was coming, right? German sausages are legendary, but there's so much more than you might expect. Like there are so many different kinds of German sausages. could try, I mean, you could try all of them. You probably would need to stay in Germany for several months.

But since you probably don't have that much time, let me tell you about three that you're likely to encounter in Germany on your trip. The first one is Bratwurst. This is really common. It's a grilled sausage, and it's often served with mustard on top and in a crusty roll or a Brötchen. So this one is very popular. You can find this at pretty much everywhere in Germany. You'll find them at farmers markets, festivals, Christmas markets, like all over the place. You can get them in restaurants. They're super affordable. So they're really easy for lunch, great lunch, snack, and they're just absolutely delicious.

And when you're traveling around to different parts of Germany, some cities will say, you know, like, try our specific type of Bratwurst. So like Nürnberg has its own Bratwurst and they come in. You get like three of them in a roll. I think other, well, there are other towns that have different versions of Bratwurst. Another one to try is



called Currywurst. This is a Berlin favorite and it's sliced sausage and it's topped with a curry ketchup and curry powder. I'll admit it's really not my favorite. I've tried to like it. I don't love it, but I would recommend trying it and see if you like it.

The third one that I want to tell you about is called Weisswurst or white sausage. This is a white veal sausage and you'll find this in Bavaria and it's often served or always served actually with sweet mustard and sometimes you can get it with a pretzel. And I think it's usually served in a bowl and served in water and it's served I think warm. I'm telling you I think because this is not a sausage I like so I don't order it.

I know a lot of people who do like it. So, if you're in Munich or somewhere in Bavaria and you see Weißwurst on the menu, I would say try it. See if you like it. My favorite sausages are definitely the Bratwurst. I could probably eat one of those every single day. So if you eat meat, I highly recommend trying at least one sausage of some kind when you're in Germany. And yeah, I would love to hear which one is your favorite.

And number nine is fish rolls or fish sandwiches, and in German, Fischbrötchen. So this is something for the seafood lovers out there. Along Germany's northern coast and all over northern Germany on the north seaside, the Baltic seaside, especially in Hamburg and all that whole area, you can get what are called Fischbrötchen, which is basically fresh fish sandwiches.

These sandwiches are made with things like herring or mackerel or salmon. Sometimes it's breaded fish and they're often topped with things like a creamy sauce or pickles or onions. They're very popular. You can get them all over again at markets or food trucks in restaurants. And they're very Northern German. So I would highly recommend trying at least one. I'll admit I am not a huge fan of fish, but I do really like the salmon sandwiches and I will always get those.

Aaron is much more of a fish lover than I am, so he tries all kinds of fish sandwiches, and he has enjoyed every single one that he's tried. He usually just goes up and



points to one and just tries a new one each time. You can also get shrimp sandwiches, Krabbenbrötchen And this is basically shrimp on a really, really good German roll, or Brötchen.

And you can get them a couple different ways. You can get the like little tiny shrimp and it's just the shrimp maybe with, I don't know, I don't think there's any sauce in it really. Or you can also get the shrimp that are a little bit bigger and it's in a creamy sauce, maybe with some pickles or cucumbers or herbs. I'm not exactly sure what's in it, but whatever it is, it's really good. That's the other one that I like. So if you are going to Northern Germany, definitely give one of those a try.

And number 10. This is not food, but we have to include it. It's a Radler, which is a refreshing mix of beer and lemonade or lemon soda. It's perfect for sunny afternoons when you want something lighter than a full beer. And especially if you want to enjoy a beer, but you don't maybe want the effects of drinking a whole lot of beer. It's especially great in beer gardens when you pair it with a pretzel or a sausage.

And sometimes you can also find them with other flavors, like you'll find beer and grapefruit soda or beer and lime soda, orange soda or lemon lime soda. You can also get Radler in bottles and cans in grocery stores. we get this sometimes. Well, sometimes we'll actually just go to the grocery store and we'll just try different brands of Radler. It's just really nice at night. Again, because you just don't want a full beer. So if you do like beer and you want something a little bit different, I highly recommend trying a Radler.

And there you have it. 10 must try German foods. Of course, there are so many things you should try in Germany. I could have made this podcast five times as long, but I wanted to narrow it down to 10 to get you started. I'm actually going to do another podcast where I'm focusing on sweet treats you have to try in Germany. And maybe I'll come back another time. If you're interested in this, let me know. Maybe I'll come



back and tell you some other really good savory things to try in Germany. So let me know if you'd like to hear that.

And two quick things before you go. First, if you enjoyed this episode and are now excited to try some German food, please leave a five-star rating and a review if you haven't done that yet. The more ratings and reviews we have on the podcast, the more that our podcast will be shown to other travelers. So your rating and review really helps us out.

And second, if food is just one of the many things you're trying to figure out, and if you're feeling a little overwhelmed with all the things, definitely check out our DIY Germany travel planner. It's like having a travel savvy best friend handing you time saving shortcuts and step-by-step directions and insider insights. So you can go from where do I even begin with planning my trip to this trip is going to be the most amazing one I have ever taken in my entire life. It's basically a masterclass in how to plan your perfect trip to Germany.

We also create complete custom trips, do Zoom travel consults that are live, and video itinerary reviews. And we would love to help you plan the perfect trip. You'll find links to our DIY Germany travel planner and our services in the show notes and on our website at mygermanyvacation.com. Thanks so much for listening to the Germany travel planning podcast. And until next week, happy travel planning!