

## Bamberg and the beer

The city of Bamberg now has thirteen breweries that brew a total of around 50 different beers. If you include the district of Bamberg, the beer cosmos expands by a further 60 breweries with a good 300 beer creations. Ascending trend. Creativity, whether in traditional establishments or in new microbreweries, is a popular choice in the Sondersuden. But first a look at history.



The Altenburg with its striking tower stands on a mountain cone on the edge of the Steigerwaldhöhe. The castle was the residence of the Bamberg prince bishops from 1305 to 1553 / © Photo: Georg Berg

## A very special brew full of brewery stories

Beer brewing in the monasteries also began in Bamberg. Think of the many beers and restaurants that are still called Klosterbräu today. Later, brewing beer became a typically bourgeois trade. The brewing rights were granted in Bamberg by the prince bishop. But it was not tied to people, but to houses and property.



The house at Dominikanerstraße 6 in Bamberg is a prominent example of the brewing right attached to a property from the Middle Ages / Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier, brewery bar since 1405 / © Photo: Georg Berg

The documented right to brew meant that beer was brewed in one and the same place for centuries, even with changing owners. With regard to the famous Purity Law, Bamberg can come up with a superlative.

Because as early as 1489, the Bamberg prince bishop specified the ingredients for the beer. Only malt, hops and water should be used for its production. The Bavarian Purity Law was first drafted in 1516, a full 27 years later.



The Schlenkerla is omnipresent. That's what the people of Bamberg called the brewer Andreas Graser, second in the generation of today's owner family. He wobbled his arms while walking, which is how he got his nickname / © Photo: Georg Berg

## Bamberger Rauchbier – A beer legend

The history of Bamberg's smoked beer is almost 1,000 years old. In earlier times, beer without exception had a distinct smoky taste, and not only in Bamberg. Because in our latitudes, the malt could not be dried smoke-free. Only since smokeless drying technology was introduced in England in the first half of the 19th century has smoked beer become something special. From the 1930s, the Bamberg breweries *Schlenkerla* and *Spezial* were the only ones who remained true to smoked beer. Both breweries have their own smoke kiln. This is how they turn the beer into a local specialty using the old production process.



Matthias Trum from Schlenkerla Bräu in front of the wood-fired oven with which the green malt is dried. In his hand he is holding a drawing of industrial malt drying based on Sir Nicholas Halse / © Photo: Georg Berg

## How does the smoke get into the beer?

The so-called green malt is responsible for the distinctive smoky taste. In the brewing process, after soaking and germinating, it is dried on the kiln. It is dried by the hot smoke of an open beech wood fire in the brewery's own smoke kiln. The smoke penetrates the green malt and as the brewing process continues, the smoke aromas are released into the beer.



Smoked beer is available all year round. You can even cook with smoked beer. The Schlenkerla brewery offers many dates for this. Medieval food based on old recipes and with the aromas of smoked beer is new at Schlenkerla / © Photo: Georg Berg

## Smoked beer all year round

The traditional Bamberg smoked beer produced with this smoked malt is available from the Schlenkerla brewery all year round and also in special brews. It starts in February with the Aecht Schlenkerla fasting beer. The full-bodied Lenten beers are tapped on Ash Wednesday. This tradition has its origins in the monastery and is a rather clever interpretation of the monks. Because *what is liquid does not break a fast*. Accordingly, the fasting beers were richer in order to counteract the lack of solid food.



With Matthias Trum, who has managed Heller-Bräu since 2003, you can delve deep into the history of the brewery. You quickly notice that he is also a beer historian and has extensive knowledge that also helps him to preserve the approximately 600-year beer history of his own brewery / © Photo: Georg Berg

The beer cellar season runs from May to September. Cellar beers are light summer beers. In the Schlenkerla there is then the Aecht Schlenkerla Krausen from the wooden barrel. October and November is the time of the bock beer tapping. The tapping of the Aecht-Schlenkerla Rauchbier Urbock is then celebrated in the Schlenkerla.



Heller-Bräu in the Felsenkeller on Stephansberg, which has been run by the Trum family since 1866. In the past, brewers were often the cooperage who made the barrels / © Photo: Georg Berg

## The beer bar with a variety of beers from Franconia and around the world

In the 19th century there were still over 60 breweries in Bamberg. With industrialization, this number declined. But in recent years the trend has been going in the opposite direction. Craft-brewed, well-made beer is finding more and more fans. Young brewers enter the industry. One of these more recent success stories is the Bierothek. It was founded in 2014 and in 2016 David Hertl took over from the *Hertl brewery* in

Bamberg.



Bamberg's Bierothek is centrally located on Untere Königsstrasse / © Photo: Georg Berg

In 2021 there will already be 16 beer bars in the franchise system nationwide. Here you can buy pretty much every type of beer that is brewed on the globe. David Hertl has around 350 varieties in its range. Of these, 20 percent are constantly changing. Sometimes a variety doesn't do so well, sometimes it does too well, sometimes it's a special brew, then the rule is: *what's gone is gone*. New varieties are constantly being added, including many from the very active Franconian beer brewing scene, of which there are over 100 varieties in the Bierothek Bamberg. Of course also the varieties from the Hertl brewery.



The family is always there: Here is a selection of beers from the Hertl brewery / © Photo: Georg Berg

David Hertl's father is a winemaker, but his son's heart has been beating for beer ever since he saw a brew kettle at the age of 15. The small Hertl brewery now produces more than 40 different varieties a year. These include very seasonal products such as beetroot beer or canned Drunken Pumpkin beer in the fall. In summer, the refreshing cucumber beer called Gurken Gose is a hit. It goes well with light dishes such as fish and salad. David Hertl is not only a master brewer and maltster, but has also completed training as a beer sommelier. This helps to advise the customers of the beer shop when choosing a beer from the huge range.



With great enthusiasm: David Hertl with beer from his own family brewery and surrounded by beers from all over the world / © Photo: Georg Berg

## Bamberg also quenches the thirst for knowledge

The possibilities in Bamberg to approach the topic of beer or to enrich one's own half-knowledge through well-founded training courses seem unlimited. So it is possible to book a beer connoisseur tour with a beer sommelier. You can take beer taster tours through Bamberg's brewery scene on your own. The Weyermann malthouse, an institution in Bamberg and world market leader in the field of specialty malts, also offers numerous gourmet seminars. The German Beer Academy is also based in Bamberg. And if you want to have your own thirst for knowledge certified, you can also train as a beer sommelier in Bamberg.

### book tip

Appropriately at a time when people are looking for off-the-beaten-track travel destinations, Dumont has published a travel guide entitled *The Underestimated Cities of Germany*. The list is headed from **B** for Bamberg to **M** for Mannheim to **T** for Trier. The travel tips each provide enough arguments for an exciting city trip.

DuMont photo book: The underestimated cities in Germany, ISBN-13: 978-3770188697

## material

Our work is inspired by human encounters and repeated culinary discoveries. Which format do you need? A report with news value, an entertaining report, a short travel tip or a picture gallery? [You can view all of Georg Berg's beer-themed photos](#) at the international photo agency Alamy .

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