

COMMUNITY

## WHENCE CAME OKTOBERFEST

*On the origin of Oktoberfest and how  
it became a tradition in Lancaster County*

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Lancaster Liederkrantz hosts Oktoberfest each year at its home in Rapho Township.

It's called Oktoberfest, so why is this German festival celebrated in September? The answer goes back to 1810, when Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig married Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The wedding festivities in Munich started Oct. 12 and lasted five days. The party was such a hit the public continued the tradition year after year, according to the official Oktoberfest celebration in Munich. Through the years, the start of the party moved into September to take advantage of better weather. So while the last Oktoberfest weekend is in October, it begins in September.

In Lancaster County, with its strong German heritage, it's no surprise Oktoberfest tradition was adopted here more than a century ago.

The Liederkrantz in Lancaster traces its history to the 1870s, when it was started by German immigrants, according to LNP's archives. The group began as a German singing club for men. Today, more than 2,000 men and women are members of the club and make up the Liederkrantz choirs and dance troupes, says Paul Stanavage, who is in charge of the group's festivals.

Oktoberfest remains the biggest event at the club's home along Chiques Creek in Rapho Township.

"It's a family-friendly event," he says. "There's all kinds of things for all ages there. It's definitely a traditional German festival."

At this year's Oktoberfest on Sept. 20-22, there will be German dancing groups, German music and bands, and activities for kids, including face-painting and puppet shows. A maypole is set up

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# Oktoberfest: A Lancaster tradition



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next to the creek and tents will be filled with tables and chairs.

Plenty of people wear traditional leiderhosen, Bavarian hats and dirndls (dresses) to the celebration.

There's also German food, including bratwurst, weisswurst (veal), kielbasa and currywurst. On the side will be sauerkraut, potato pancakes and soft pretzels. For dessert, there are lots of pies, apple treats and bienenstich, a German cake with almonds on top. Breaded pork schnitzel will be available Sunday.

To toast, there will be German beers by the liter and in smaller glasses.

If you're strong and patient, sign up for the masskrugstemmen contest Saturday at 6:30 p.m. Competitors get a glass liter stein filled with beer but before the first sip, they need to hold the stein steady with a straight arm for as long as possible. Stanavage has watched people last for 25 minutes.

"Most people are done in about two minutes," he says.

While organizing the Oktoberfest is a lot of work, the weekend's festivities are a way to keep German cultural traditions alive.

Many breweries are joining the Oktoberfest celebration with parties and the release of German-style beers.

Stoudt Brewing Co. in Adamstown is celebrating its 40th year

of Oktoberfests in the Adamstown beer garden with bands, German food and beer.

Here's more information about eight Oktoberfests happening throughout Lancaster County.

And if you are up for the travel, Oktoberfest in Munich is Sept. 21-Oct. 6.

— Saturday, Sept. 14, Appalachian Brewing Co., 55 N. Water St., Lititz. German-style beer and food will be available through Oct. 5. Details: [bit.ly/ABcOktoberfest](http://bit.ly/ABcOktoberfest).

— Friday, Sept. 20, through Sunday, Sept. 22 (6 to 11 p.m. Friday, 1 to 11 p.m. Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday), Lancaster Liederkranz, 722 S. Chiques Road, Manheim. A celebration of German food (bratwurst, potato pancakes, pretzels, plus pork schnitzel sandwiches on Sunday), beer, music, song and dance. Adults, \$6; children ages 6 to 15, \$2. Details: [lancasterliederkranz.com](http://lancasterliederkranz.com).

— Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Sept. 20 to Oct. 13, Lancaster Oktoberfest at Lancaster Brewing Co.'s three locations, including two in Lancaster County. The Oktoberfest beer, a Marzen, will be on tap, and there will be German-style food.

— Thursday, Sept. 26, 6-7 p.m., Uncensored Oktoberfest yoga at Funk Brewing, 28 S. Market St., Elizabethtown. Exhale at E-Town Yoga Studio leads an uncensored, one-hour vinyasa yoga class. First drink is half off. Cost is \$10, and

costumes are encouraged. Details: [bit.ly/FEtownOktoberfest](http://bit.ly/FEtownOktoberfest).

— Saturday, Sept. 28, noon-9 p.m., Oktoberfest party at Moo-Duck Brewery, 79 S. Wilson Ave., Elizabethtown. Canadian Goose Lager, an Oktoberfest Marzen beer, will be released. A special menu will include bratwurst sandwiches and there will be polka music. Details: [bit.ly/MDOktoberfest](http://bit.ly/MDOktoberfest).

— Saturday, Sept. 28 and Sunday, Sept. 29, Oktoberfest at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire, 2775 Lebanon Road, Manheim. Bar Olympics will include pub games and a barkeep contest. Beer from the on-site Swashbuckler Brewing Co., plus German food and dancing. Cost is \$31.95; children 5 to 11; \$12.95. Details: [bit.ly/PRFOktoberfest](http://bit.ly/PRFOktoberfest).

— Thursday, Oct. 10, 2 to 6 p.m., 40th anniversary Oktoberfest at Stoudt Brewing Co., 2800 North Reading Road, Adamstown. Continues on weekends through Oct. 20. German music, dancing and food. General admission tickets are \$12. Ticket packages including admission, drinks and food range from \$25 to \$45. Details: [stoudts.com/events](http://stoudts.com/events).

— Saturday, Oct. 12, 2-6 p.m., Biergartenfest with Wacker Brewing Co., 417 W. Grant St., Lancaster. Wacker will have German-style beer, entertainment and food. Cost is \$20; kids under 16 and designated drivers are \$10. Details: [bit.ly/WackerOktober](http://bit.ly/WackerOktober).