

Add the New Braunfels Texas Wurstfest to Your Fall Travel

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By Susan Dunn

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT (warm friendliness, good cheer)

"Willkommen zum WURSTFEST! Prosit, und hab' Spasz!" is the slogan for this really appealing annual event. It means "Welcome. Cheers! To your health, and have fun!"

Combining a unique German community in South Texas, great food, fabulous bands imported from Germany for the occasion, amusement rides, affordable entry, a well-run event and often beautiful weather, the New Braunfels, Texas, "Wurstfest" has all the ingredients of a great family outing. (Plenty of local accommodations available, as this is an area where "gemütlichkeit" is plentiful and tourists are welcome.)

New Braunfels is located just a few miles north of San Antonio, Tx., which offers a full array of activities to include in your schedule - Fiesta Texas, Sea World, the Alamo, the RiverWalk, and wonderful Mexican food and markets, should you wish to make this a multicultural adventure.

Having just returned from a lovely evening at Wurstfest, I'm compelled to tell you how much fun it is. We began on a perfect fall evening unable to resist the smell of the sizzling pork chops and huge German sausages served on a stick, complimented by a great selection of beers, potato soup, German dinners, Reuben sandwiches, corn on the cob - and more -- and ended our evening with pfankuchen, funnel cake and coffee.

We rode the beautiful Ferris wheel and then settled under Das Grosse Zelt, the big tent, at the end of the Marktplatz to be charmed by the 10-piece brass band from Germany whose rousing tunes got everyone up and dancing - just as many kids as adults, and partners not at all required. They were only topped by the band that followed.

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This Wurstfest, the celebration of German sausage, began in New Braunfels in 1961, just a one-day affair which nonetheless drew a crowd of 2,000 due to press coverage throughout the nation and in Germany.

Since then, it has grown to a ten-day affair with well-maintained permanent facilities drawing over 100,000 and raising many dollars for local charities. Your good time will also be a good deed!

You can learn more about Wurstfest at their official website: <http://www.wurstfest.com/index.html> , and from the Wurstfest Association, Post Office Box 310309, New Braunfels, Texas 78131-0309, 830/625-9167, or toll free 1-800-221-4369.

Admission is a mere \$8.00 per person (children under 12 free), with special rates for early purchase, groups, and day discounts.

ADD ANHALT

If Wurstfest dates should ever coincide with the 3rd Sunday in October (and even if they don't), make it a homerun by including public dancing at Anhalt Hall, just down the road apiece, about 28 miles west of New Braunfels.

Anhalt was settled by German pioneers around 1857 and this may be the oldest dance hall in Texas, with a newly renovated 6000 square foot hardwood dance floor usually featuring a German band (you MUST do the German Grand March) and then a C&W band (local talent).

It's open air and you can sit in the grandstands and watch or pay to get on the dance floor. Kids welcome and great food and beer. It is run by the Germania Farmers Verein, originally established to protect the settlers and their livestock from Indians. It's out in the country and an experience you don't want to miss.

How far out in the country? Well, according to the website, in the 1970s "the population along Anhalt Road between Farm Road 475 and the hall was estimated at ten." Population figures for 2000 were not available.

Admission and ample parking are free; there's a minimal charge (\$7?) if you want to get on the dance floor (which you will)!

To read more about Anhalt, go to the Texas Honky Tonk Dance Hall website: <http://www.honkytonktx.com/dancehalls/>

They also feature public dancing during Mayfest (3rd Sunday in May), and Summerfest (last Saturday in July).

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no-residency program.

Store-bought chili - a short history.

By Glenn J Fournier

Willie Gebhardt, originally of New Braunfels, Texas and later of San Antonio, produced the first canned chili in 1908. Gebhardt also invented the first commercial chili powder in 1896. Very little else is known about Mr. Gebhardt; he apparently sold out to a brother-in-law and disappeared from the scene. His chili powder nonetheless remains popular today. I can remember my Grandmother using that brand of chili powder when I was a kid.

Another popular chili brand is Wolf Brand chili, which was founded by rancher Lyman Davis near Corsicana, Texas, in 1885. In the 1880s, in partnership with an experienced range cook, he began producing heavily-spiced chili based on chunks of lean beef and including rendered beef suet, which he sold by the pot to local cafés. In 1921, Davis began canning his product in the back of his meat market and named it for his pet wolf, "Kaiser Bill". Wolf Brand canned chili was a favorite of Will Rogers, who always took along a case of it when traveling and entertaining in chili-less regions of the world.

Both the Gebhardt and Wolf brands are now owned by ConAgra Foods, Inc. In the UK, the most popular brand of canned chili is sold by Stagg, a division of Hormel foods.

Another method of marketing commercial chili in the days before widespread home refrigerators was "brick chili", in the production of which nearly all of the moisture was squeezed out to leave a solid substance roughly the size and shape of a half-brick.

Glenn J Fournier has been cooking for 40 years. He believes the key to successful cooking is to cook by the book. Get recipes from his new site at;

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