

## Microbrewery and Beer News # 08 TGAC

**The history and tradition of Germany's world-famous beergardens:** During summertime you can find a beergarden, a so-called "Biergarten", almost everywhere in Germany – South, North, West and East. Sometimes they are huge places with several hundreds of outdoor seats, sometimes it's just a few tables hidden in a pub's backyard. But where and how did it start? It might not be very surprising, that Bavaria claims to have created the first beergardens – and they are most likely right about that. Historically correct, those places should be named "on top of the beer cellars". Everything began in 1539 with the Bavarian Brewing Law, which says that brewing beer is only permitted in the time from the feast day of St. Michael (Sep 29) until the day of glory of St. Georg (April 23). During summertime, brewing beer was prohibited due to the high fire hazard of the simmering process. To avoid beer shortage in summer, the Bavarian brewers came up with several ideas. First of all they brewed a stronger beer with a better storability in spring, the so called "Maerzenbier" (March beer). At the time, mostly bottom-fermented beer was brewed, which is naturally more stabile than top-fermented beer. In addition, the brewers built cellars to store the beer in wooden barrels under a huge layer of ice chunks, which were broken out of rivers and lakes during wintertime. And last but not least, they planted chestnut trees on top of the cellars. Especially the large leaves created shade and protected the cellars – and the stored beer – from too much sun and heat. Then Napoleon enters the stage: in 1805, he raised kind of an embargo in Bavaria: Now pub-owners were allowed to choose their brewery, and the brewers were allowed to sell their own stored beer directly to the public. Soon the brewers started to set-up tables and benches in the shade of the trees, that people could drink the fresh beer right there – the beergarden was born! Of course, the pub-owners protested immensely. Finally King Ludwig I. decided: Brewers keep the right to sell beer, but they are not allowed to sell food. That's why the Bavarians started bringing their own victuals. Until today it's an official rule: Even in pub-linked beergarden with full menus, everyone can bring a picnic hamper, at least in Bavaria. A perfect chance to enjoy German beergarden culture, is to go with us on a [German Beer Crawl](#).

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