10 Things to Do at German Fest

Wisconsin is a cultural melting pot, but, let’s be honest, it’s also notoriously German. From our beers to our brats, we embrace the German culture. While there are several Oktoberfest celebrations scattered across the state, there is nothing like one iconic celebration in Milwaukee. “Get your Deutsch On” at this year’s German Fest, which features all things German for all ages. Here are just a few things to do there:

1. **Taste your way through authentic German food**  
   German food, in our opinion, is seriously underrated. We do embrace the bratwurst plenty here in Wisconsin, but German Fest will also feature Spanferkel (roasted pig), Bienenstich (a german coffeecake), Potato Pancakes, Bismark Herring, Usinger’s sausages, Strudel, and so much more.
2. **Take in musical performances**

Returning direct from Austria to the German Fest musical lineup is Die Lauser, a six-man folk-rock group sporting kilts and playing bagpipes. Also featured is Alte Kameraden, a large brass band, Alpensterne, a band featuring German singing and yodeling, and many more musical performances!

1. **Learn about German heritage in the Culture Pavilion**  
   Children of all ages can test their knowledge on the German language with games like German Scrabble, word searches and “Zungenbrecher” (Tongue Twisters). Head to the Handwerker (Craftsmen) Area to watch artists and wood turners demonstrate their talents, and make your way to the History & Genealogy area where Genealogists will be able to look up your family tree.
2. **Learn how to play Schafskopf (Sheepshead)**  
   Sheepshead originated in Europe in the 1700s as a game that peasants developed when fed up with the government, therefore giving the King Card a lower rank. Sign up at the beginning of the day to reserve your spot for a round!
3. **Attend the STIHL TIMBERSPORTS ® U.S. Championships**

Male, female and elite college athletes will compete to prove that they’re the best lumberjack athletes in the nation and move on to represent the U.S in international competition. Contestants battle in competitions like the standing block chop, the hot saw, and underhand chop. Come see an elite competition featuring some of the nation’s strongest and most unique athletes.

1. **Check out the Marktplatz**  
   The Marktplatz is a German marketplace which offers authentic German clothing, steins, table linens, nutcrackers, candies, and gifts. No need to go to Germany for a souvenir when it’s brought straight to you!
2. **Escape to the Niche Schnapps’ Garten**  
   The Niche Schnapps’ Garten serves up Germany’s oldest and most esteemed distillers of spirits, allowing guests to sample a variety while relaxing in the “garten”.
3. **Try German wines**Stop by the wine tasting area near the Harley-Davidson Stage to try delicious Schlink Haus and Turn Me wines from Wein-Bauer, Inc, the official wine sponsor of German Fest for more than 30 years. Purchase wine on festival grounds, or buy a bottle to take home with you.
4. **Watch the Dachshund Derby and Costume Contest**  
   A permanent fixture at German Fest each year, the Dachshund Derby features six age brackets of races, followed by a Wiener Dog Costume Contest, where winners are determined by audience applause and a celebrity judge. You won’t want to miss it.
5. **Polka alongside the Dance Groups**German Fest’s dance groups are the heart and soul of the festival. Grab your German food and make your way to watch the authentic Bavarian dancers, ranging in age from three to adult.

Milwaukee’s German Fest is the perfect way to learn about and embrace our state’s German history. What are you most looking forward to at this year’s festival? Share with us on social media!