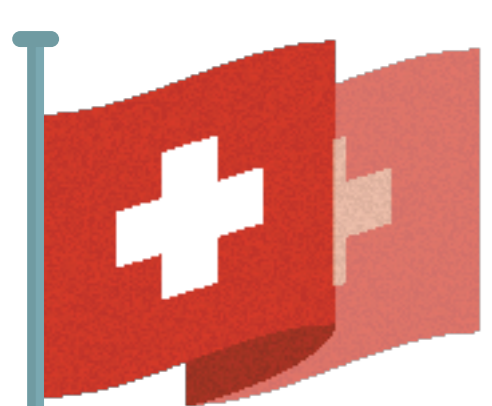


9 Fun facts about the Austrian, German and Swiss Alps

Explore this Alpine region with breathtaking landscapes and a rich history of innovation, culture and culinary delights.



Switzerland

Rigi



This scenic mountain in central Switzerland is accessible from any side and is surrounded almost entirely by lakes. It is home to the first cogwheel train in all of Europe, which still brings passengers up to the top of the mountain.

A visit to the summit offers breathtaking views, and the location boasts a variety of activities, such as hiking, fine dining and spa retreats.



Germany

Oktoberfest

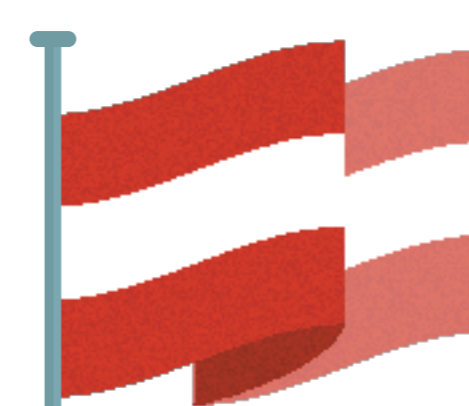


The largest beer and folk festival in the world, this annual event attracts around 6 million visitors to Bavaria's capital city, Munich.

In 2015 alone, 7.7 million liters of beer



were consumed amid traditional singing and dancing performances. Despite the name, Oktoberfest actually starts in September!

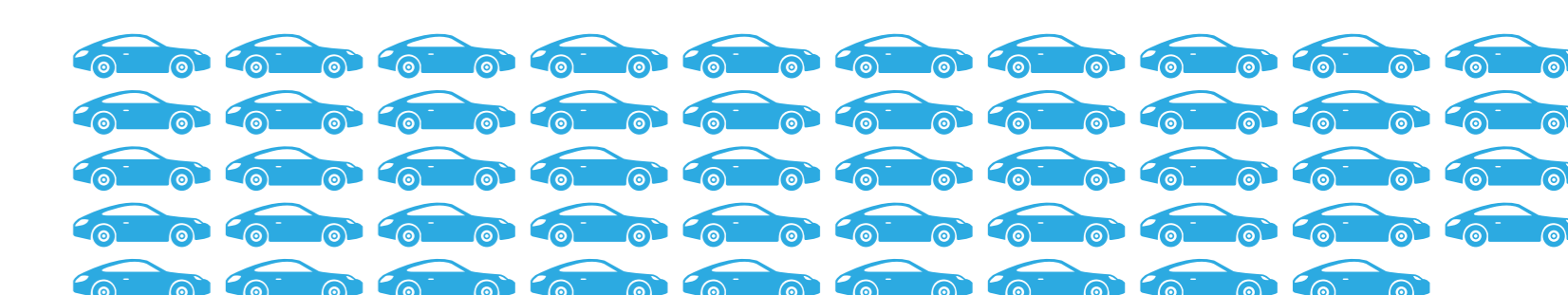


Austria

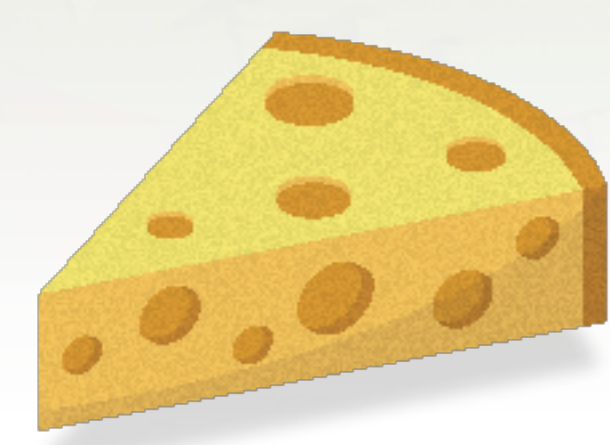
Ferdinand Porsche



The founder of the Porsche automobile company was born in Maffersdorf, Austria in 1875. The first Porsche car – the Porsche 365 – was created in the town of Gmünd, Carinthia.



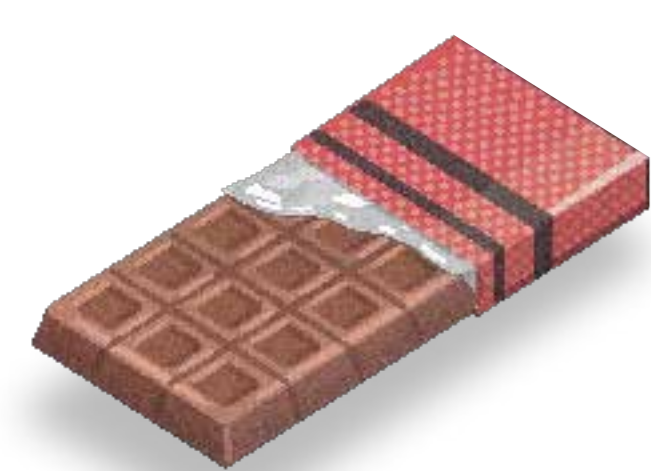
Porsche started manufacturing the Porsche 356 in an old saw mill in Gmünd and built 49 365s entirely by hand.



Raclette Cheese

Switzerland is world renowned for its cheese. The semi-hard Swiss cheese formerly known as Bratthäs was first manufactured in the Canton of Valais in 1291.

Blocks of the cheese were carried by shepherds, who melted it over a campfire to use as a dip for potatoes and onions. This traditional dish is just as popular today as it was hundreds of years ago.



Swiss Chocolate

The Swiss Alps region has a rich legacy of creating fine chocolate. The Toblerone is the most famous Swiss chocolate bar, dating back to 1908. It was first produced by Theodor Tobler, who wanted to create a bar that represented the Alpine mountains.

Toblerone bars still resemble Switzerland's mountain ranges and come in a variety of flavors, including plain chocolate, white chocolate, fruit and nut, and snowtop.



Lederhosen

The most symbolic of Bavarian clothing, these famous leather breeches have been worn by locals since the 18th century. Women wear an ornate equivalent called Dirndl, which range from simpler designs to high-class fashion pieces.

Over the years, the traditional clothing has remained just as popular. The pieces are still worn with pride by both the young and the old for special occasions.



Reinheitsgebot (Beer Purity Law)

Germany is home to the world's oldest food regulation law still in use today. Not surprisingly, it is linked to one of the products the country is best known for: beer!

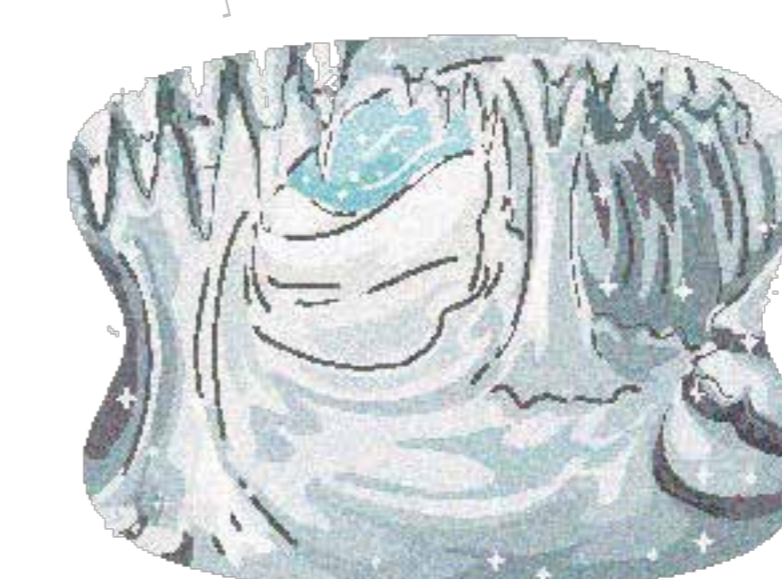
Signed into law in 1516, the Reinheitsgebot (beer purity law) ensures that only hops, malt, yeast and water are used to produce internationally popular German beers.



The Birth of the Dollar

In the small town of Hall in Tyrol in 1486, Duke Sigismund of Tyrol decreed the creation of a silver coin called a Thaler.

The modern word dollar is derived from the revolutionary currency. Visit the Hall Mint Tower, where it all began.



The Eisriesenwelt Caves

The Eisriesenwelt Caves in Werfen, known as "the world of the ice giants," form the largest accessible ice cave system in the world.

Largely as a result of its isolated location in the high mountains, this cave remained undiscovered until 1879 when Salzburg explorer Anton von Posselt-Czornich ventured 650 feet into its depths.