

It's All About the Sausages

Like no other food, Nuremberg bratwurst is a symbol of the history of this Franconian city with a more than 700-year-long tradition. One can trace a sophisticated bratwurst tradition in Nuremberg back to as early as the 14th century.

The first written mention of sausage production is in a law passed by the Nuremberg City Council in 1313: "alles Schweinelenden-Prät soll man in die Würste hacken" (all pork loin should be chopped into sausage). That means that only the best lean meat without bones or gristle should be used. Even in those days, production was tied to certain standards such as structure, the composition of meat, water content and adherence to a recipe. A bratwurst must contain coarsely trimmed pork with no filler (maximum 35 percent fat) filled in a narrow sheep's intestine, seven to nine centimeters long. Due to Nuremberg's strategic position as a flourishing trading center in the Middle Ages, exotic spices could also be used in production. Salt, pepper and marjoram are the basic spices used in a typical Nuremberg bratwurst. Then and today, the raw sausages weigh 20 to 25 grams. Only then can they be called original Nuremberg bratwurst.

There are many legends about the origins of the Nuremberg bratwurst: This specialty was supposedly made so small so that in medieval Franconia they could be sold through the gates of the city after they were locked at night – to hungry customers who were willing to pay. It is certain that in the Middle Ages the citizens of Nuremberg already appreciated the small, high-quality sausages and preferred them to the larger Franconian style.

The most current decision from the Nuremberg City Council about the quality and size of the sausages was passed in 1998 and officially written into law. In the same year, the Association for Protection of the Nuremberg Sausage was founded, to safeguard the quality, flavor and recipe of the bratwurst. Since 2003, Nuremberg bratwurst have a protective seal from the European Union. With the status of a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), the bratwurst take their place among other specialties – such as Parma ham, champagne and Grana Padano cheese – in the top list of European foods. They may only be produced within the city limits of Nuremberg according to a specific recipe and bear, in addition to the official seal of the EU, their own original seal. About two million are produced daily in Nuremberg and exported around the world.

Typically, they are served as 6, 8, 10 or 12 original Nuremberg bratwurst with horseradish and sauerkraut or potato salad. They are also available in an onion-vinegar broth, called “Blaue Zipfel” (blue tips), or as “3 im Weggla” (three in a bun) to eat on the go.

There is sure proof that there are prominent fans: Lorient enthusiastically drew a picture in the guest book of a bratwurst restaurant. The prince of poets Johann Wolfgang von Goethe regularly had sausages sent from Nuremberg to Weimar. And the Bayreuth author Jean Paul received his Nuremberg bratwurst by mail from his publisher. In 1813, he wrote his thanks with the words: “The sausages in my stomach are a wonderful forget-me-not from Nuremberg”.

Those who want to combine culinary enjoyment of the sausages with a city tour can take part in a tour where “alles worschd’ ist (und isst)” (“Everything about sausages”).

You can find more information about Nuremberg bratwurst at the website of the Association for Protection of the Nuremberg Sausage e.V.: <http://www.nuernberger-bratwuerste.de/>