



BAVARIA



## WHERE IS BAVARIA?

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Almost 13 million people call Bavaria home. Located in the southeastern corner of the country, it is the largest state in Germany with Munich as its capital. Bavaria borders Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland and has the famed Danube and Main rivers running through it. The region has a long and rich history, dating all the way back to 6th century. In 555 it was party of the Holy Roman Empire, in 788 it was ruled by Charlemagne and 1946 it was established as a free democratic state.

Bavarian Swabia is a region in the southern most part of the state. The eastern part of Swabia is home to the Allgäu (pronounced AL-goy), well known throughout Europe for its stunning landscapes and farmlands. It's also an area particularly renowned for its fine dairy farms and milk producers.

This special place is the home of Käserei Champignon, and the many local farms from which we source our milk.





## THE ALLGÄU

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The Allgäu region of Bavaria has been described by many as the backdrop of a fairytale. Cows can be seen lazily grazing in lush green meadows. Blue-green glacier carved lakes dot the landscape between bucolic villages and white capped mountains.

Nearby there are century old castles and onion-domed churches. In the distance you can spy the Appenzel Alps of Switzerland. Not even Hollywood could create a more perfect setting.





## A TASTE OF PLACE

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The idyllic pastures, crystal clear water and clean air are pivotal reasons Käserei Champignon cheeses are so flavorful. In creating Alpine cheeses local farmers have also learned how to use the land to its greatest advantage. The region has both cold and temperate climates with high average rainfall and snow melts that carry minerals to the grazing lands below.

Farmers also practice the art of transhumance, or shifting where the cows graze to different altitudes depending on the season. Eating different flowers and grasses throughout the year allows the cows to create milk with delicate and distinctive flavors that finally create some of the most unique cheeses in the world.





## BROWN CATTLE OF THE ALLGÄU

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Swiss Brown cows are as much a part of the Allgäu landscape as the skyline of the Alps. This special breed of cattle is adapted to the climate and altitude of the region and is a cultural heritage, providing a source of milk for alpine communities for hundreds of years.

The milk from these local grazers is aromatic and protein rich, making Käserei Champignon cheeses so distinctive. The milk has a high concentration of casein protein, which coagulates during the cheese making process. A higher concentration of protein means better coagulation and firmer curd, resulting in excellent cheese texture.

In 2011 the Brown Cattle of the Allgäu boarded the Slow Food Foundation's Ark of Taste, a catalog of food products recognized by the foundation as being distinctive in quality, tied to a specific area, and reflective of a local community's traditions.





## THE ALLGÄU: FROM BLUE TO GREEN

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The Allgäu was not always covered in green pastures. In fact, during the 18th century, farmland had a tinge of blue due to the region's main crop flax, which was used to make cloth. After the invention of the cotton gin, flax demand declined, and in turn, so did the Allgäu's agricultural economy. One forward-thinking Bavarian named Carl Hirnbein saw this shift on the horizon and was willing to take a risk. He pulled the flax from his lands and allowed grass to grow instead, on which he could raise cows. The cows' milk would provide a critical source of protein that could be preserved as cheese. He started to produce Limburger and Romadur with the milk from his cows, packaged the cheese in a sellable portion, and began to market it.

Hirnbein influenced locals to follow suit by offering to pay them for milk they produced from their nascent dairy farms. By cultivating grass, which grew well in the region, farmers could keep their farms and, more importantly, provide a form of sustenance to the region.

Today, a visit to the Allgäu region yields breathtaking views of a vibrant and verdant landscape. Unlike a patchwork of green, yellow, and brown common to so many farming landscapes, here you see rolling hills of green pasture for miles. It needs no irrigation, no pesticides, no replanting. Grass here is a perennial crop that has the potential to yield perennial outputs of milk, and continues to sustain family farms and communities throughout the region.





## BAVARIAN FESTIVALS

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It's hard to meet a Bavarian who doesn't love a good party. There are beer and wine festivals, historic festivals and the famed outdoor Christmas markets like Nuremberg's Christkindlsmarkt.

The most famous Bavarian festival of course is Munich's Oktoberfest famed for its 24 hour week long beer bash.

In early fall one of the most memorable festivals is the Almabtrieb in the Allgäu region. After a long summer in the Alps, farmers lead their cattle down to the valley's below adorned with wreaths of alpine flowers and hand made cowbells. The bells are an ancient way of warding off evil demons and many of the cows wear crosses and mirrors as a way to give thanks for the safe return from the grazing season





## A TOUR OF BAVARIA

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For any traveler there is an endless list of amazing things to see and do in Bavaria starting with the provincial capital of Munich. Apart for being known as the home of the Oktoberfest, Munich is perhaps Germany's most beautiful city, with stunning architecture, world class shopping and a history that goes back over 850 years. Not far away, Neuschwanstein, the world's most famous castle can be found in the Bavarian Alps. The castle is one of four designed by the eccentric and solitary King Ludwig II (locally called "Mad King Ludwig").

Nature is often illustrated in Bavarian design and architecture, perhaps because of the beauty that surrounds nearly every town and hamlet. Bavaria is the home of Germany's highest peak, the Zugspitze, where glacier skiing enthusiasts are seen hitting the slopes until the late spring. Those who like to stay closer to earth enjoy the lovely 261-mile long scenic drive called The Romantic Road, which leads travelers from the Alps to the Franconia wine country.





## BAVARIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP

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Tradition is still celebrated throughout the Allgäu. Native costumes like the Altbayern Lederhosen on men and Dirndl dresses on women are still often worn at weddings, holiday parties and special family occasions. Traditional folk music is also still popular and many towns still have a wreath and ribbon decorated Maibaums (or Maypole), a tradition which dates back to the Middle Ages and depicts figures of local trades people on a pole in the center of town.

Tradition also extends to the Bavarian love of artisanship. Andreas Nuslan has been making handcrafted hats in Regensburg for over 100 years. Intricate word carving and glass making are still skills handed down from generation to generation. In the Käserei Champignon homeland of Allgäu the ancient craft of hand made cow bells is still alive and well. As farmers in villages throughout the area carry out the annual procession to drive the cows down from their summer pastures high in the Alps to the lowland, each cow bell will create a distinctive sound that is all its own.







## A BAVARIAN WAY OF LIFE

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Many Bavarians think of themselves as Bavarians first and Germans second. They are proud of their roots and traditions and but at the same time they are culturally sophisticated. Bavaria is sometimes nicknamed “the Italy of the North” because people here often love to relax and talk over a beer and Weisswurst (a sausage made from veal) at an outdoor cafe and live “la dolce vita.”

The state is also a primary agriculture and beer producer for the entire country. Bavarian beer is considered among the best in the world. In the northern areas of the state there is a brewery in nearly every small town and that means lots of local specialties like the Bamberger Schlenkerla (a beer with a taste of smoked bacon) or the foamy Weissbier, which has the distinct flavor of wheat.





## ALL NATURAL INGREDIENTS FOR 500 YEARS

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Prost! 2016 will certainly be a time to celebrate. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Reinheitsgebot, a purity law adopted in Bavaria in 1516 that regulated the production of beer. The Reinheitsgebot – the oldest food law - decreed that beer could only be made from hops, barley, and water (yeast had yet to be discovered).

Though today the regulation is no longer enforced, many Bavarian brewers still abide by the rule. Beers brewed in accordance with the law are all natural, without any chemicals, artificial flavors, or preservatives. The fact that over the years Bavarian brewers have been able to create so many varied beer styles and flavor profiles from such few ingredients stands as a testament to their artistry and craftsmanship in brewing. Brewers continued commitment to the Reinheitsgebot represents a dedication to using quality, all natural ingredients, and upholding a longstanding Bavarian tradition.





## A TRADITION CONTINUES

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Cheese making has long been a tradition in Bavaria's alpine region as a way to preserve milk and provide a source of protein throughout the year. The techniques of cheese making have been passed down from generation to generation, and are a great source of cultural pride.

Cheese making at Käserei Champignon continues in this tradition. Our cheeses are crafted by master cheese makers trained in technical expertise and the artistry of affinage to create cheeses of exceptional quality and taste. Our recipes have been handed down and perfected over our company's hundred year history of cheese making. A Käserei Champignon cheese is a mark of high quality, innovation, and craftsmanship.







## OUR STORY

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Käserei Champignon has been making cheeses in the Allgäu since 1908. The first cheese produced was a Camembert, which had an earthy, mushroomy flavor profile, which became the inspiration for the Champignon name.

Over the years, more cheeses were crafted and perfected and the company expanded production to include soft-ripened cheeses, washed rind cheeses, Limburger, blue cheeses and other dairy products.

Today, we bring our specialty cheeses to people around the world, yet we are still family-owned and are deeply rooted in the Allgäu. We maintain production only in Bavaria and continue to source our milk from the local farms that have been supplying Käserei Champignon for generations.