Press information

Oktoberfest 2020 will not take place due to coronavirus pandemic

(21.2.2020) The world's largest public festival, the Munich Oktoberfest, will not take place this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. This was announced today by Mayor Dieter Reiter in a joint press conference with the Bavarian Minister President Dr. Markus Söder. This marks the 25th time in its over 200 years of history that the Munich Oktoberfest has not taken place.

Mayor Dieter Reiter explains. "This is of course very sad news for all 'Wiesn' fans, in Munich, in Bavaria and around the world. But the risk that people could become infected with the virus at the Oktoberfest, with its some 6 million visitors, is just too great. Hopefully we will have got over the health crisis for the most part by the end of September, which means it would be even more irresponsible to risk a new wave of transmission. This would also be to the detriment of our internationally beloved festival. The news affects not only visitors but of course all who work at the Oktoberfest and rely on income from this every year – from waitresses and stall runners, to performers and the Wiesn hosts. It is also a bitter loss to the whole of the tourism industry, to restaurants beyond the Wiesn, the hotels, the taxi companies, and many others who are already experiencing difficulties. I too will also miss the grand opening this year. The tapping is one of the most wonderful official functions on a Munich mayor's schedule.

So I'm even more excited about next year, and we can all look forward to that!"

Clemens Baumgärtner, Head of the Department of Labor and Economic Development: "As the event organiser I of course also completely agree with the decision. After all, the highest priority has to be that there is no health risk for visitors to the world's largest public festival. In view of the current situation this cannot be guaranteed this year.

It's a hard hit to those who supply the Wiesn, including beer tent proprietors, carousel operators, pretzel sellers. Due to the lengthy planning and contracting process, the Wiesn cannot be postponed and it cannot take place in another format. Holding an 'emergency festival' would be harmful to the Oktoberfest brand in the long term. Oktoberfest must take place in all its glory – or not at all."

This year, Oktoberfest would have taken place for the 187th time in its 210-year history. 25 Oktoberfests have not taken place since 1810, mostly during wars. However, failure to take place also occurred due to inflation in 1923 and 1924 and the cholera epidemics in 1854 and 1875. A replacement festival was held on a smaller scale after each World War.

The Munich Oktoberfest is the world leader when it comes to public festivals. Guest numbers and consumption figures on the festival premises are clear proof of this. According to estimations from the festival directors, 6.3 million visitors came to the Oktoberfest and drank at least 7.8 million litres of beer in 2018 and 2019.

The economic value of Oktoberfest was, according to calculations from the Department of Labor and Economic Development, 1.23 billion euros in 2018. This also includes economic effects achieved with the income on the festival premises as well as turnovers that benefit the Munich tourism industry.

According to the calculations, the some 6.3 million festival visitors spent in total approximately 442 million euros (70.22 euros on average per person) at Oktoberfest itself over 16 days.

The foreign visitors spent a further 285 million euros on food, shopping, taxi rides or public transport.

Visitors from abroad spent in total around 505 million euros on overnight stays alone. 70 percent of guests slept in accommodation such as hotels, bed and breakfasts or youth hostels.

More than 500 companies are present at Oktoberfest every year. From the festival tent to the roast chicken and sausage stands, the carousels and show booths, to the pretzel, almond and souvenir stalls.

Some 13,000 jobs are created at Oktoberfest during the "Wiesn-Saison". 8,000 people are employed contractually, while a further 5,000 people work as flexible employees on the Wiesn.

Oktoberfest defines Munich's image and contributes a great deal as to why the city is so well known across the world. The advertising value of the Wiesn for Munich is, naturally, not measurable yet the national and international reputation that Munich enjoys because of the Oktoberfest is reflected in the visitor numbers. Last but not least, Munich is one of the leading tourism cities in Germany thanks to this unique festival.

More than 2,000 "Oktoberfests" in the Munich style are hosted across the world. The largest of these take place in Blumenau (Brazil) and in Kitchener (Canada), each seeing around a million visitors. They're followed by the the event in Frankenmuth/Michigan (USA) with around 350,000 visitors.

In China, Oktoberfest-style "beer festivals" are held in Beijing, Dalian and Qingdao.

Statement from Mayor Dieter Reiter at https://youtu.be/c9bcBLK_bFk
Statement from the Head of the Department of Labor and Economic Development Clemens Baumgärtner at: https://youtu.be/4yQ8lHpu-sI
Information and facts and figures on Oktoberfest online at https://www.muenchen.de/rathaus/Stadtverwaltung/Referat-fuer-Arbeit-und-Wirtschaft/Presse/wiesn-presse/Pressemitteilungen.html

Press contact

Oktoberfest press office
Dr. Gabriele Papke and Claudia Bauer
Tel.: +49 (0) 89 233-82813
Email: presse-veranstaltungen.raw@muenchen.de
www.oktoberfest.de/presse

The official addresses for all information regarding Oktoberfest
www.oktoberfest.de

Facebook: www.facebook.com/oktoberfest

Instagram: www.instagram.com/oktoberfest

Offizielle Oktoberfest App: www.oktoberfest.de/app

Oktoberfest – the festival of the state capital Munich