

Over the years, German food culture has changed based on food supply and political situations.¹ Food patterns include higher carbohydrate or starchy foods.¹⁻³ Potatoes, noodles, fruit, and juices are consumed in larger amounts than recommended.¹⁻³ Meats like sausages and some cheeses are also frequently consumed.¹⁻⁷

Traditional and Staple Foods and Dishes:^{4,5}

- Kartoffelsalat – potato salad
- Knödel – potato dumplings
- Currywurst – sausage with curry sauce
- Kohlroulade – cabbage rolls
- Leberwurst – liver pâté
- Sauerbraten – marinated beef pot roast
- Sauerkraut – pickled cabbage
- Schnitzel – crumbed fried veal, chicken or pork
- Spätzle – German egg noodle



Traditional Foods⁵

For special holidays such as Weinachten [Christmas] food is prepared in the home.^{4,5} This holiday meal may include knödel, bratwurst [sausage], roulade [beef rolled with bacon and onions], and sauerkraut or red cabbage.^{4,5} To drink, *Glühwein*, mulled wine, is served.^{4,5}

For dessert, one serves Lebkuchen [gingerbread] or stollen [Christmas bread].^{4,5} Stollen is a German version of fruitcake with chopped nuts and dried fruit.^{4,5} It was originally made without butter and milk.^{4,5} The Catholic tradition did not allow those ingredients during Advent season.^{4,5} After the 17th Century, the law was changed to allow butter and milk.^{4,5}

Traditional eating patterns:

Eating patterns in German culture typically follow three meals per day with snacks. Germans use typical cutlery (fork, knife, spoon) though they do have some finger foods.^{4,5} *Frühstück* [breakfast] is the first meal of the day in Germany.^{4,5} It is usually eaten in the home. These breakfast foods include:^{4,6}

- Käfē or Saft – coffee or juice
- Brot – bread served with butter, jams/preserves, or honig [honey]
- Wurst – sausage
- Kase – cheese
- Ei – egg (usually boiled)
- Quark – creamy cheese that looks similar to yogurt
- Müsli – cereal flakes, nuts, dried fruit, yogurt and milk



Breakfast Foods⁵

The next meal is *Mittagessen*, lunch, which is usually between 12pm to 2pm.^{4,5} It is usually the main meal and eaten at home or in the town.^{4,6} Potatoes, rice, or noodles are featured with meat or fish and vegetables.⁶ Some typical foods include:^{4,6}

- Bier – beer
- Kartoffelsalat – potato salad
- Kartoffel – potatoes (boiled, mashed, fried, croquettes, French fries)
- Spätzle – noodles

- Pork or chicken
- Möhren, Erbsen, or Kohl – carrots, peas, or cabbage

The evening meal is called *Abendbrot*, which means “evening bread.”^{4,5} It is a light meal usually served between 6pm and 7pm in the home.^{4,5} This meal may include:^{4,6}

- Bier, Wein, or Mineralvasser – beer, wine, or mineral water
- Brot – breads
- Kase – cheeses
- Deli meats or Wurst – Sausage with mustard or pickles
- Salat or Suppe – Salad or Soup

If eating a hot meal for dinner, it may be enjoyed in a restaurant. This meal will be similar to the lunch meal.^{4,6}

Between meals, German people may have *Zwischenmahlzeit* or snacks.^{4,5} Such foods could be sandwiches, *brezeln* [soft pretzel], jogurt [yogurt], or obst [fruit].^{4,5}

Another popular snack time is called *Kaffee und Kuchen*.^{4,5} This means “coffee and cake” and is enjoyed in the afternoon.^{4,5} Friends and family have coffee with a slice of *Käsekuchen* [Quark cake] or

Apfelkuchen [apple cake].^{4,5} They are homemade or bought from a *Bäckerei* [bakery].^{4,5}



Kuchen⁵

Traditional health beliefs:

There are old wives’ tales about health and healing in Germany. It was recorded that there are 62 homemade medicines and 46 plant-based medicines.⁷ Examples include using sorrel or berries to prevent colds and the flu.⁷ Another example is using dill or coriander for digestion.⁷

Current food practices:

Current food practices today are similar to the patterns described above.⁸ Breakfast can be different since people have busy mornings.^{4,5} In this case, breakfast may be a piece of bread with cheese.^{4,5} The German Nutrition Society recommends:⁹

1. Enjoying whole grain cereals and potatoes
2. Having five servings of fruits and vegetables
3. Eating milk and dairy products, meats, fish and eggs
4. Milk and dairy products
5. Limiting fats, oils, and sugars
6. Drinking 1.5 liters of water per day



Nutrition Circle⁹

In both the native country and in the United States, food patterns are similar.^{5,8} In the United States, they purchase food from both European markets and American markets.⁵ Then they may prepare foods according to traditions at home.⁵ Immigrants have also introduced sausages, sauerkraut, and more in the United States.⁸ There are now several German-style restaurants available as well.^{4,5,8}

References:

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