



By Genevieve Northup

Autumn's Kürbis: FESTS, FOOD & FUN

In Germany, pumpkin isn't for jack-o-lanterns and pies — the pumpkin harvest is a reason to celebrate! This autumn, venture to these *Kürbis* festivals near the Kaiserslautern Military Community.

Kürbisfestival Gartenschau Kaiserslautern

The idyllic Swiss Alps are the theme for this year's *Kürbis* exhibit at the Gartenschau. From Sept. 1 to Oct. 31, see icons of Switzerland constructed from the seasonal crop. Sample pumpkin-infused dishes at the center's Brauhaus, and browse for pumpkin-themed edibles and décor.

For hours, ticket prices and directions, go to www.gartenschau-kl.de/veranstaltungen/kalender/2014.

Kürbisausstellung Ludwigsburg

An exhibition of Europe's largest pumpkins overtakes the grounds of the Baroque Ludwigsburg Residential Palace from Sept. 5 to Nov. 2. Event highlights include a canoe race across the palace's lake on Sept. 21. The twist? The boats are pumpkins! On Oct. 5 and 12, farmers weigh their gigantic pumpkins, and the top three heavy weights are displayed. Artists transform the runners-up into sculptures for viewing from Oct. 19.

Pumpkin is the main ingredient in many culinary creations, including *Flammkuchen*, quiche, spaghetti and burgers. Snack on pumpkin popcorn or roasted seeds while sipping pumpkin Secco. Visit Sept. 27-28 to have a bowl of piping hot goodness from Germany's largest cauldron of pumpkin soup.

Still craving pumpkin? Buy a bottle (or six) of pumpkin bubbly, whole pumpkins of several varieties and ornamental gourds. On the last day of the event, take home champion seeds after the record-breaking pumpkins are carved.

Find out more at www.kuerbisausstellung-ludwigsburg.de.

Hoffest Hitscherhof

The Hitscherhof B&B and farmers depot hosts a two-day pumpkin and corn harvest fair beginning Sept. 27. Bring euros because you'll find plenty of shopping and treats at this charming event.

Wash down pumpkin bratwurst, pumpkin soup or roasted corn with sweet *neuer wein*. Browse 80 stalls offering gourmet condiments, cheese, jewelry,

candles, housewares and all things pumpkin: decorative items, sparkling wine, oil, seeds and produce. Before you have too much wine, challenge your companions to a race through the huge cornfield maze. Good luck!

The Hitscherhof shop sells pumpkins and pumpkin products through early winter. Visit www.hitscherhof.com/en for details.

Even More Pumpkin

During autumn, pumpkin is featured on restaurant menus. Traditional German restaurants, such as Hotel Rosenhof in Ramstein and Burgrestaurant Lichtenberg near Kusel, make flavorful pumpkin soup. Ristorante Taormina and Trattoria da Salvatore, both Italian restaurants in Landstuhl, offer superb pumpkin-filled pasta. Kaiserslautern's Restaurant Himalaya serves *Rato Farsi*, roasted and spiced pumpkin.

Enjoy German culture and pleasant fall weather while getting a dose of vitamins from delicious pumpkin. And if you need ideas for cooking with pumpkin at home, do a quick search on Pinterest and visit www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/pumpkin. ■

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