

School Resource – Blog Post

Stuttgarter Frühlingsfest: Dirndls, Dancing, and Deutschland

There aren't many things more stereotypically German than beer steins, pretzels, and people clad in Lederhosen and Dirndls. Happily, all these things came together at the Stuttgarter Frühlingsfest, where I went for a day out with my friends.

We spent the week in busy preparation for The Big Day, buying Dirndls and Lederhosen, debating which train tickets to buy, and fruitlessly hunting for push-up bras in Primark.

I remember admiring the Dirndls that lined the shop windows when I first moved to Mannheim and, eight months later, I finally became the proud owner of one. I honestly loved it as soon as I tried it on; I've never felt so immersed in German culture and I can't wait to wear it at some point in my final year at Warwick (oh, didn't you know I did a year abroad in Germany?).

We set off from Mannheim on a Flixbus to Stuttgart at 9am and then had to get a tram to the Frühlingsfest grounds.

At the Frühlingsfest there was a big fun fair and massive beer tents. The tents are lined with wooden tables and benches, on which people quickly start dancing after a stein of beer or two, and there's a stage at the front with a live band playing German *Volksfest* songs.

The band also busted out an ABBA medley which went down even better than the beer, Paisley screaming with excitement. The whole group was on the benches belting out *Gimme Gimme Gimme* together, it was so fun.

The atmosphere was great, everyone was so jolly and friendly. Paisley and I had a fun experience in the toilets with a German girl who was at the fest with her friends to celebrate the end of her Abitur (the German A-Level equivalent) exams. She was unbelievably excited to meet people from the UK, and totally starstruck that she'd met girls from Wales and Scotland. From her reaction, you'd think she'd bumped into Meghan Markle and Kate Middleton in the loos. She even asked for our numbers so she could keep in touch. She was so sweet; I sincerely hope that she does contact Cecily from Wales (Mannheim Uni) and Paisley from Scotland (Mannheim Uni).

Some of us went for a look around the fair and to get some food. I bought a bretzel (could I get any more German?) and some chips which were certainly needed after hours of drinking and dancing on tables.

Randomly, there was an airbrush tattoo van, so Maryann and I decided to get matching temporary tattoos; I originally wanted a unicorn but after seeing the prices we downscaled to

a 2€ plain heart. According to the lady it was going to last five days but mine came off in the shower when I got home. At least it was cute whilst it lasted.

After some more drinking and singing and dancing on wooden benches I went outside for a breather with Reuben and fulfilled my wish of going on a ferris wheel to see the whole fair. I'm not sure that taking someone who'd had nothing but three litres of beer all afternoon on a ferris wheel was the best idea I'd ever had but it all worked out nicely. It was sunny and bright, so we got a really good view of the fair and for some reason the man running it let us go around three times.

Reuben also tried to win a cuddly sloth by knocking over a pyramid of cans which obviously didn't happen (everyone knows these things are rigged!). However, we got a consolation prize of a fake rose which is so cute, I can keep it forever and I could wear it in my hair for the rest of the afternoon.

Once we got back to the tent they were playing *My Heart Will Go On* and soon they were playing *Angels* which may have been even more exciting than ABBA. It also gave my Frenchies Maryann and Max and the Finnish girl Eeva a taste of Robbie Williams' magic (however it seems that Brits and Germans are the only ones who fully appreciate the power of *Angels*). They also played *Pocahontas* by AnnenMayKantereit which is one of my favourite German songs. I almost leapt over the table in excitement to tell Alex, "oh my God, they're playing AnnenMayKantereit!"

Soon afterwards we left the Frühlingsfest to make our way back to the Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof. The next train wasn't for fifty minutes so we sat in McDonald's for a bit. Thanks to McDonald's brand new McVegan burger, which recently launched in Germany, I was able to have a full McDonald's meal for the first time in forever. It was so exciting, especially at 9pm after an evening of drinking *Weinschorle*.

When we got back to Mannheim, we were all quite worn-out but very content; we'd all had a blast and I was so happy to be able to tick a full-blown *Volksfest* off my Germany year abroad to-do list. *Deutschland, Ich liebe dich von ganzem Herzen.*