

Munich

Early Days of Munich

Munich is the fabled capital of the Kingdom of Bavaria and is just as famous for its beautiful architecture and fine culture as it is for the annual Oktoberfest celebrations.

“Munich first began to change from a tiny village to a city in the 7th century. Benedictine monks from Scotland and Ireland who had been living at the lake Tegensee founded a tiny new monastery nearby the river Isar in 777.”

John B. Wetstone

The origins of modern day Munich date back to 1156 when an unpleasant battle between church and state took place over the river Isar. The river itself was a major trade route for salt coming from Salzburg going to Augsburg. A powerful Bishop from Freising used a bridge over the Isar as a toll station for passing boats which transported the goods; but with the ruler of Bavaria (Duke Henry the Lion) in need of cash he decided that he should collect the very lucrative toll himself by building his own bridge in Munich.

As a result, he blazed the bishop’s bridge and built his own bridge a few miles upstream near a small community of Benedictine monks. This small community referred to as “bei Monchen” – the monks place – created the foundations for the new city. As homage to its heritage, a monk is still the symbol of Munich today.

In 1158, the Duke officially granted the settlement of Munich the right to hold a market, paving way for the Marienplatz – then and now the centrepiece of the city and the crossing point of the Salzstrasse (Salt Route). Almost two decades later in 1175, Munich was granted city status and received the first of the city’s fortifications; consisting of a stone wall studded with watchtowers and five gates.



John B. Wetstone

Owner, Johns Bavarian Tours

John B. Wetstone is an American who has been living in Munich since 1978. Originally, he travelled to Europe to study the English painter, J.M.W. Turner. Inevitably, the awe-inspiring landscape of Bavaria captured his heart and soul.

Munich’s fascinating history and distinct cultural lifestyle played no small part in convincing him this was the place he wished to call home. Now, he takes great pleasure in sharing his knowledge and experience with his guests while showing them all of the fascinating aspects which has kept him entranced for more than 30 years.

Together you will visit southern Germany’s most famous sites including treasures that are off the beaten path. You will experience Bavaria through the eyes of an insider.

Through using his training as a landscape artist, along with his expertise on Bavaria, John will provide you with an unparalleled travel experience. Discover the wonderful world of Bavaria, absorb the visions and make them your own.

Expert Bio

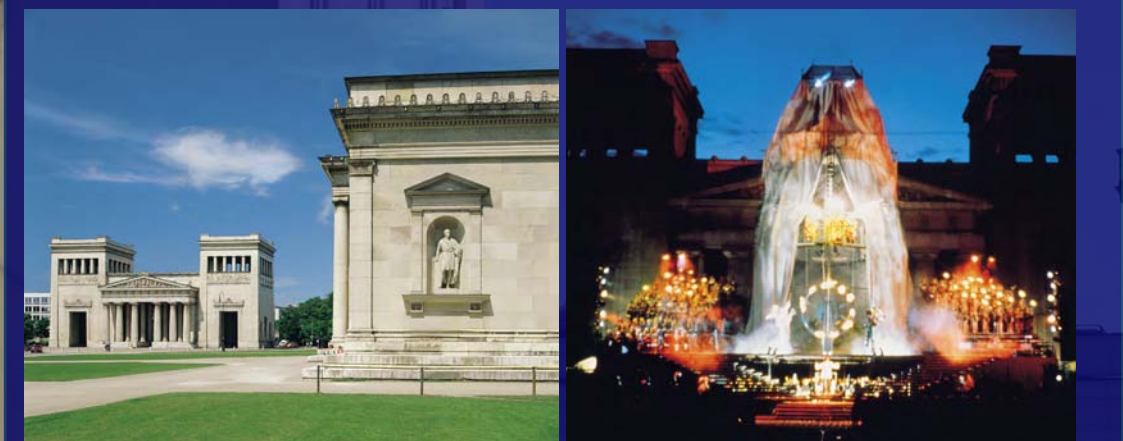
The Stunning Architecture of the Four Royal Avenues

The importance and grandeur of the King of Bavaria has survived long after the demise of the monarchy and can be witnessed through a visit to the Four Royal Avenues of Munich.

Briennerstrasse

During the reign of Maximilian I at the turn of the 19th century, the very first royal avenue was built with the completion of the neoclassical Brienner Strasse in 1812. Built in the style of European Classicism, it is clear that the Glyptothek and Propylaea which adorn the Königsplatz square were modelled on the Acropolis in Athens.

Then there's the Odeonsplatz which features the Feldherrnhalle (Hall of Heroes) and Theatiner Church. Given its spectacular surrounding beauty it comes as little surprise that King Maximilian I had chosen his royal residence to be the Leuchtenberg Palais. The palace was modelled on the Palazzo Farnese in Rome and now serves as the home of the Bavarian Treasury Department.



Left: Königsplatz, Right: Open Air at Koenigsplatz

Ludwigstrasse

Not wanting to be outdone by his predecessor, King Ludwig I of Bavaria decided to follow Maximilian's example. After taking to the throne he embarked upon the creation of a new royal avenue which also starts at the Odeonsplatz, this time leading from the monumental Feldherrnhalle in the south, to the Siegestor in the north. The avenue is lined by Italian renaissance buildings and Romanesque architecture such as the St. Ludwig Church and the main buildings of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in modern day Germany.



Maximilianstrasse

This tradition was continued by King Maximilian II with the creation of Maximilianstrasse. Not content with just a royal avenue, he also commissioned the National Theatre Munich with its Corinthian columns and scintillating palace of marble, gold and crystal as well as building the palatial Maximilianaum which is framed by neo-Gothic palaces showcasing Munich's grandeur. Nowadays, this famous boulevard is known for its collection of exclusive boutique and upmarket designer stores.



Top: Maximilianstrasse, Bottom: Nationaltheater Bavarian State Opera



Prinzregentenstrasse

The fourth and final royal avenue runs parallel. The Prinzregentenstrasse was the last avenue built under the Wittelsbach family in the 19th century. It was named after Prince Regent Luitpold who ruled in Bavaria after King Ludwig II had been deposed. The Prinzregentenstrasse is home to a fascinating collection of museums as well as the Prinzregentheater, which served as a festival hall for the operas of Richard Wagner.

“Since Munich is spread out over rather large area, part of this tour will be made by with a car, van or bus when needed. I do enjoy showing my guests the many historical points by foot and can plan an entire walking tour if requested.”

At the end of each city tour my guests will have the option to return to the point of their own personal point of interest, so that they may continue on their own. It is also possible to be returned to their hotel or just be dropped off at the Marienplatz; for shopping or to watch the world renowned Glockenspiel, Munich revolving clock.”

John B. Wetstone



Above: Prinzregententheater

Munich’s Museums



A trip to Munich would not be complete without visiting the Deutsche Museum. This masterpiece was founded in 1903 by Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) who was Chancellor of the German Empire 1871-1890: this intuitional Museum has over the years it has expanded to become the largest technical and scientific museum in the world. Throughout the visit you can learn about the history of the musical instrument or the development of new technologies such as robotics and nanotechnology. Interactive exhibits ensure this is an adventure for the entire family.

Whether or not you are fascinated by history, we would highly recommend a visit to the Munich Residenz Museum. The former Wittelsbach residence opened to the public in 1920 and is home to a collection of undulating luxury, giving visitors an insight into how rulers lived in past times and how they used art and architecture as an expression of power.

At least one day of your schedule should be saved to visit Munich’s three World renowned art Museums known as the Pinkotheken. The three famous art collections can be found in the (Old) Alte Pinokothek, (New) Neu Pinokothek and Pinokothek der Moderne (The Modern). Allow yourself to be mesmerised by the creativity of Rembrandt and da Vinci, through to marvellous works by Picasso and Warhol. With an expansive chronicle of art history that dates back to the 14th century, you will explore the past, present and future.

There are more than 80 museums spread across the entire city of Munich and whether you are looking for a historical, scientific or cultural journey there is something here for everyone.

Artistic Centre



The Brandhorst Museum is not only a museum; it is an artistic centre that is home to a world-class collection of modern art. If you can delve beyond the dizzying façade you will come across a stunning collection which includes works from internationally renowned artists such as Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter and Damien Hirst. If you are looking for something more Munich orientated then you may find yourself at home in the Lenbachhaus art museum. The gallery contains a variety of works by Munich painters and contemporary artists, in styles such as The Blue Riders and New Objectivity. Once you have explored the works of Wassily Kandinsky, Gabriele Munter and Paul Klee you may want to visit the scenes in the lake-filled countryside with Johns Bavarian Tours which inspired this talented group of artists.



Not only is John B. Wetstone an art expert in Bavaria, but after studying and re-travelling the painting tours of the famed English painter **Joseph Mallord William Turner** 1775-1851; he has developed his own style of classic watercolour himself using professional Winsor and Newton water colour paint on varied materials.

After John B. Wetstone had completed his study of Turner’s theories on aerial perspective, he began developing his own style of watercolour painting and motives. He based his own work on the colour progressions found in the sunsets, sunrises, moonsets and moonrises. Using this colour theory, the artist was able to capture Mother Nature’s many colourful moods.

When his time is not consumed with accompanying visitors on tours throughout Munich, he can be found creating these masterful works of art. The artist now uses motives consciously to create an atmosphere of harmony and a positive and relaxing mood in his paintings.

Hoping to reach individuals through his work, John B. Wetstone wishes his public peace, enlightenment and a more open door to their inner selves as an alternative to the hectic, stress, aggression found in our modern society.

For more information on John B. Wetstone’s artwork, please visit Atelier Wetstone Munich.

Architecture Throughout The Ages



Munich is not a city that is content with living on former glories. As a result you will find numerous examples of modern marvels. Start off with a visit to the Olympic Tower which was built for the 1972 Summer Games. This 190 metre tall observation platform provides an unparalleled panoramic view of the entire city. It could be argued that this set the standard for similar structures such as the famous CN Tower in Canada which commenced production the very year the Olympic Tower was completed.

Another modern marvel is the KPMG Building, but not for the usual reasons. This impressive structure stands out as one of the greatest and most unusual staircases in the world. This artistic design was created by Olafur Eliasson and was completed in 2004.

Complete your tour with a visit to Munich's newest architectural wonder – the BMW Welt. With a futuristic façade and impressive mirrored double cone it is difficult to believe that the interior could match this, and yet it does. Car-lovers and non-car lovers alike will come here to see the latest BMW cars and motorcycles, and learn about the incredible technology and design elements that power one of the most famous products literally on the road.



Top Left: Hubschrauber Rundflug Muenchen Helicopter Tour. Top Right: Skyscraper of HypoVereinsbank. Bottom Left: KPMG Munich. Bottom Right: Feldherrnhalle Odeonsplatz

850 Years of Wittelsbach Rule

In 1180, Duke Henry quarrelled with Emperor Barbarossa and was banished forever from Munich and the rest of Bavaria. The Emperors best knight, Otto von Wittelsbach, had himself designated as the ruler of Bavaria hereafter. This marked the beginning of the longest and most conservative reign of any dynasty in Germany.

From its opulent castles to its elegant royal avenues – a walking tour through the vast city of Munich will share many interesting facts and paint the tale of how this important family shaped Bavaria and Munich between the 12th and 19th century. The House of Wittelsbach reigned until the abdication of King Ludwig III of Bavaria in the German Revolution of 1918 and is still viewed by the Bavarians with a kind of nostalgic affection.

“Munich is a city of multi-level history covering a huge period of time through many centuries. During this long span of time there were also several wars and many occupations of the city.

Enumerable amounts of changes have taken place with-in Munich city walls over a period of more than 850 years of Wittelsbacher rule which cannot be covered in a single book much less a short article.

During my tours, I do my best to bring to light the most important aspects of this tremendous amount of information and history in a short period of time, as required of our modern society.”



John B. Wetstone



Welcome to the Kingdom of King Ludwig II of Bavaria

One cannot visit Munich without being aware that the most famous King of our times was born here. King Ludwig II of Bavaria was known as der Marchenkönig – ‘the fairytale king’ – and was once described as the “only true king of this century” by esteemed poet Paul Verlaine.

Having showed no great interest in politics, King Ludwig II delegated most government business to his ministers so that he could indulge in his romantic ideas which found their expression in his architectural projects.

Ludwig will long be remembered for the castles he built and attempted to build, most notably the Neuschwanstein Castle, perched high in the Alpine foothills. He was a great friend and supporter of composer Richard Wagner, and even hired theatrical set designers rather than architects to design his opulent palaces.

“Roy and Walt Disney visited Neuschwanstein in 1935 making photos from every angle before building Cinderella’s Castle in Disneyland, this information is not written in any books but comes from my personal contacts and experience.

You will need several days to make my full day tours, where I will show you his many castles. Ludwig’s life has become my passion, which I will be delighted to share with you. During your tour day with me I will tell you many of stories that very few people know.

You should allow at least two full days for my tour highlights, but with three or four you can move totally into Ludwig’s world ending your last day where his body was found June 13, 1886.”



John B. Wetstone

The Exclusive Class

“The Sky’s the Limit”

The phrase “*Vorsprung Durch Technik*” may be the main slogan and company ethos for Audi, but the phrase which translates as ‘progress through technology’ has long been associated with German car manufacturers in general.

Johns Bavarian Tours will utilise the very best in automotive transportation and every effort will be made to fulfil your every desire. Large tour groups can be conducted courtesy of a Volkswagon Bus, while those seeking the added luxury of an executive service can opt for an Audi, BMW or Mercedes.

Want to stand out from the crowd? Then why not choose a classic and ride in the back seats of the extremely rare Buick Road Master 72. Built in 1956, this limousine model represents the glamorous early years of rock n’ roll. With a total of 11,804 manufactured worldwide, there are only 15 units still in existence today. Should you wish for an older classic car how about a Buick 8-57 convertible built in 1931, this beauty is an extremely rare treat for all classic car lovers.



Top left: Buick Road Master 72, Top right: Buick 8-57, Bottom: 1960 Austin Healey Bug Eye Sprite Driver J.B.W

“I will organise your tour so as to fulfil every desire, making this vacation the one you always dreamed of. Here, for example, are some highlights: Munich’s English Garden and City rides with a coach & horses, Private plane flights over the Alps & King Ludwig’s Castles, or rides in classic old-timer cars.”

John B. Wetstone



We have all heard the saying ‘*the sky’s the limit*’. Well with Johns Bavarian Tours, it doesn’t have to be. Fly over upper Bavaria on a private flight while enjoying the majestic scenery from a very unique vantage point, soar through the clouds in a helicopter journey over the Neuschwanstein Castle, or sit on a pillow of air as you paraglide through the skies – the possibilities are endless.

For something completely different to the norm, why not climb aboard a Zeppelin NT. The blimp-like aircraft was made famous during World War I when the German military made extensive use of Zeppelin’s as bombers and scouts. While it is no longer considered to be a practical weapon in modern warfare, the famous aircraft does continue to provide a memorable journey and once-in-a-lifetime experience.



Top right: Helicopter EC120 2, Bottom: left: Alpenflug, Bottom Right: Paragliding over Neuschwanstein

Munich may no longer be the home of royalty but a tantalising trip to the Bavarian capital will make you feel as though it still is. With an impressive history and an equally exciting future – now is the time to discover Munich.

Johns Bavarian Tours



Welcome to Munich, Bavaria's Capital

“The City with a heart”

Visiting The Bavarian Capital of Munich for the first time? Want to discover its exciting arts scene, vibrant student life, thrilling architecture, fantastic music, famed museums, and amazing history? Would you like to be free from driving and communication difficulties? Not sure what to see, how to get there or even where it is?

Allow John B. Wetstone to be your private English-speaking guide. He will open the doors to Munich's special magic and Bavaria's beauty. By putting himself and his car at your disposal he will follow your agenda, not the guidebooks. Travel at your pace, not racing to beat the clock.

Visit the Wonderful World of Bavaria.
It's all there, just waiting for you!

John Wetstone's specialty is planning each tour as a personalised tour according to the individual wishes of each guest. Being your driver, guide and translator, he will be there to attend to all your needs, and answer questions.

Share your interests so that he may tailor the tour to your taste. All guests are offered red carpet door-to-door service. Getting away from the large group tours means that you will have more freedom to see and do what you want in a shorter period of time. You will enjoy more high quality vacation time to relax, sight see and take photographs. Included is transport for up to four people in a comfortable car, larger groups up to eight individuals can also be accommodated. Both long and short Munich City Tours are offered by car on a year round basis. Allow John to take you to Neuschwanstein (Cinderella Castle), King Ludwig's Castles, the Alps, nearby lakes, famous and the little known Baroque & Rococo churches, Monasteries, Christmas markets, medieval cities, historical sites, festivals, pageants, and countless breathtaking views.

John's Bavarian Tours offers professional help with your holiday planning. If you have a day or a week John can assist you in planning your vacation in Bavaria from your landing in Munich to your return flight!

[Check out John's Bavarian Tours Holiday Planning Services Here.](#)

“In the course of barely a dozen years, Johns Bavarian Tours has gone from being a great idea to a burgeoning success primarily because of the individual, personal attention its founder and operator, John B. Wetstone, devotes to his guests.

Started on a shoestring, but extremely well-endowed with John's own decades of grass-roots European experience, Johns Bavarian Tours grew exponentially, initially showing visitors from all corners of the world Munich and Bavaria, to a much broader geographical area.

Now Johns' guests venture beyond Bavaria's “white-blue” borders to Austria, Switzerland. Following the lesser-known paths which Wetstone has discovered in his tiny old timer sports car and on his beloved motorcycle, John finds new sights, vistas, destinations and by-ways seldom seen by most tourists and visitors.”

*Tom Lipton, owner of Vistas & Visions,
marketing and communications company.*

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To book a tour with John B Wetstone please fill out his contact form or visit his website:
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For more information contact us and a member of the
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