

## **Straubing: Gäubodenvolksfest / Ostbayernschau**

Straubing (about 45.000 residents) has always been the economic and cultural focus of the "Gäuboden". Due to its rich available ground, this area is also called "Bavaria's granary".

Without doubt, the "Gäubodenvolksfest" is one of Bavaria's oldest and most popular festivals. By successfully balancing tradition and progress, it combines a wholesome mixture of genuine Bavarian life-style and vitality.

When Maximilian I Joseph, King of Bavaria, signed a decree in 1812, which set down the preparation of an agricultural festival, he intended to organize an annual meeting-point for the people of the Danube region. Of course, the local newspaper reported in detail on the winners of the farming and breeding contest and the winners of the horse-races of this first festival.

Ever since that time, the festival has been held in regular intervals, except for war and force majeure. Over the years, however, the "Gäubodenvolksfest" has expanded and nowadays it also includes an exciting amusement park as well as a trade fair called "Ostbayernschau".

The fair is Eastern Bavaria's biggest and most important one. More than 700 firms of industry, trade, craft and agriculture show their new products on an area of about 55.000 sq.m every year.

On the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1962, the town council decided that the festival henceforth be held in mid-august.

The "Gäubodenvolksfest" has always been held on a former meadow called "Am Hagen". It is located next to the historical town square with its magnificent old burgher-houses. Recently, the town council has put a lot of effort and millions of euros into this place of amusement, which was flooded by the Danube in 1912 during the "Gäubodenvolksfest", so that the ground is more attractive than ever. Carefully replanted, it now looks a bit like it used to be: A "real meadow".

What started as a farmers' festival, soon has developed into one of Bavaria's biggest events.

In 1997 Straubing celebrated 185 years of "Gäubodenvolksfest".

After all, Straubing's "5<sup>th</sup> season" does attract more than 1 million visitors, only within 11 days. Yet, it has kept its original character as a genuine festival of the locals. Seven big beer-halls containing 24.000 seats and a rich amusement park with more than 120 roundabouts, carousels, shops and shows guarantee fun, entertainment, diversion and – last, but not least – a variety of delicious Bavarian food. Besides, there are a lot of cultural and sporting events going on.

### **Info:**

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