

## INTRODUCTION TO MUNICH

Munich, the original home of the royal Wittelsbach family, survived domination by Hitler's Nazism and devastation by the Allied



forces, to be reconstructed from the rubble and transformed into a major European city. Munich offers much to those who want to explore its rich history and culture. With a population of 1.6 million, it is small enough to enjoy yet large enough to offer significant services, shops, airports, and more.

About a hundred years ago, Munich was the capital city of Bavaria, a rich and grand independent “kingdom” within Europe. The Wittelsbach family, which gained control of Bavaria in 1180, maintained uninterrupted

power until 1918.

During their reign, the royal family established Munich as Bavaria's capital city, and its wide boulevards, imperial palaces, jewels, magnificent architecture, and cultural events are the remaining legacies of its extensive regal past.

The end of imperial rule and the social and political upheavals afflicting Europe in the early 20th century radically transformed Munich. In the late 1930s, it was the cradle of Nazism and Hitler's terrorization of Europe. Consequently, the city was almost entirely destroyed by Allied bombing in 1945, leaving most of the central core in rubble.

It took several long years to reconstruct the damages wrought by WWII. Today, you see a mix of the old and the rebuilt standing side-by-side, almost invisible to the eye.

Approaching Munich from the north, giant artificial hills dominate the skyline. These hills, reaching 150 feet, are covered with green grass and laced with biking trails. To-

day, these hills serve as a public park and recreation area for the people of Munich. However, just below the surface lies the bomb-damaged guts of Nazi Munich. As cleanup and restoration progressed in the 1940s and 50s, this area became a dumping ground for tons of rubble and debris left by the city's destruction at the end of World War II. Every time I see these hills framing the skyline of Munich, I think of the devastation of war and the toll it takes on all people.

## CITY CENTER ORIENTATION

Circling the historic old city is a ring road (also the location of the old town walls in past times). All the tourist sights are within this circle. Tower gates, known as *tor* in German, serve as entryways through the city walls into the heart of Munich.

The gates known as *Karlstor* (near the train station), *Isartor* (near the Isar River), *Odeonsplatz* (near the palace), and *Sendlinger*

**Tor** make good reference points on any city map.

**Marienplatz** is the center of the city. Europe's first pedestrian-only zone cuts the ringed town in half, running from *Karlstor* and the train station through *Marienplatz* nearly to *Isartor*. Most sights are within a few blocks of this east-west pedestrian zone. Upon arrival, orient yourself with the gates, *Marienplatz*, and the pedestrian-only streets known as *Kaufingerstrasse* and *Neuhauserstrasse*.

Get out and experience Munich on foot. The historic center is flat, well-marked, and pedestrian-friendly. The rest of urban Munich is easily connected with its fine system of U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams, and buses. Taxis are costly and usually unnecessary. Biking is also an option.

# CHRISTMAS MARKETS

## *Christkindlmarkt in Marienplatz square -*



The first Nativity Market appeared here around 1757, but the square has been the “market” square since the 14th century. Today’s Christkindlmarkt is enchanting,

especially with its backdrop of the Rathaus, the city’s town hall. By the way, this old gothic-inspired building, dating from 1908, has an inner courtyard filled with a nativity scene, public toilets, and the Glühwein vendor selected by the city for this year. You’ll also find the *Ratskeller* (the city hall cellar) in the basement, an elegant restaurant, a wine cellar bar, and free toilets.

## *The Viktualienmarkt Winter Kiosks -*

This outdoor market is open year-round; see my description below for details. Only a few steps from Marienplatz, local vendors sell everything from vegetables to flowers to food and drink. You'll find the added bonus of holiday lights, hot Glühwein, and an outdoor Nativity scene during the Christmas season. [www.viktualienmarkt.de](http://www.viktualienmarkt.de)

**“Eiszauber” at the Karlsplatz-Stachus-**  
Bavaria's largest mobile ice arena is on Karlsplatz-Stachus. Visitors can skate between 10.30 am and 10 pm. [www.muench-nereiszauber.de](http://www.muench-nereiszauber.de)



## *Residenz (city palace)*

The Christmas Village fills the largest courtyard of Munich's city palace, the Residenz. Here, you'll find a sort of medieval Bavarian village scene complete with goldsmiths, tanners, and glassblowers, along with the usual food and drinks.

## *Christkindlmarkt at Sendlinger Tor*

By 1886, a Christmas market was common on the grounds in front of Sendlingertor. The tradition continues today with a small Christkindlmarkt. The Sendlinger Tor, one of the three remaining city gates of Munich's former fortifications, is aglow with lights and invites visitors to visit and sample the Glüwein and *Feuerzangenbowle*, a "fire-tongs punch." This punch is a fragrant mixture of red wine, rum, and spices. It is served from a huge cauldron with a "wreath" of flames.

## *Munich Advent Spectacle and Medieval Christmas Market*

On Wittelsbacher Platz, dozens of wooden huts bring the Middle Ages back to life. Merchants in historical garb offer their goods for sale. Artisans demonstrate ancient crafts. Bakers prepare traditional tarte flambée and grilled sausages sizzle over an open beechwood fire. Of course, hot drinks like *Drachenglut* (dragon's embers) and spiced wine abound.

### **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

**Public Transportation:** Subways are known as S-or U-Bahns. Each track displays numbers, such as S-2 or U-5. The S-Bahn is the long-distance commuter rail that travels underground through the city. The U-Bahn is the “subway” for local transportation. Trams and buses cover other routes.

In the underground stations, purchase tickets at user-friendly, self-service machines that accept coins, bills, credit cards, and contact-



less payment. Once you purchase your ticket, you must “validate” it before use. Look for yellow rectangular validation machines located at all subway entrances. Slide your ticket in, and the machine will stamp the time and date. Then head to your train.

All S-Bahn trains stop at the *Hauptbahnhof* (train station) and *Marienplatz*, allowing for quick and effortless transfer from one to the other.

- Regular tickets cost €3.70 and are valid for two hours of travel and changes in one direction.
- For short rides of 1 or 2 stops in an hour, buy the €1.90 ticket called a *Kurzstrecke*.
- The All Day Pass is €8.80 and is a great value. (Valid until 6 am the following morning)
- If you have several folks traveling together, consider a Partner ticket for €17, allowing up to 5 adults to share the fare. (Valid until 6 am the following morning).

More information at the official site: <http://www.mvv-muenchen.de/en/mvv-info-service/index.html>

## MUNICH TOP SIGHTS

Munich's tourist sights are mostly in the old town, south of the train and north of the river. Whether you're seeking cultural sites, historic buildings, museums, shopping, a stroll in the park, or just people-watching, Munich has something for everyone.

***Marienplatz (Mary's Square)***, the center of the city, is where you should begin sight-seeing. Stretching in either direction, you'll find Europe's first pedestrian-only streets, surrounded by countless shops, sights, and eateries.

**St. Peter's Church-** The city's founding monks built St. Peter's Church on the south side of Marienplatz in the 12th century. The interior is worth a look and houses photos of the WWII damage. The **bell tower and spire** (reached from an alley outside and to

the back) provide the best city views.

*Altes Rathaus* (Old City Hall) and *Neues Rathaus* (New City Hall) are the ornate buildings looming over Marienplatz. Smack in the center is the **glockenspiel**, which puts on a “show” for all to see at 11:00, 12:00, and 17:00 every day.

**Pedestrian-only walk-** Face the *Neues Rathaus* in Marienplatz. It’s the building that looks old but is newer than the rest. From here, proceed left (west) on Kaufingerstrasse and Neuhauserstrasse to visit shops, cafes, and historic sights.

**St. Michael’s Church** – Proceeding west towards *Karlstor* in the pedestrian zone, you’ll pass one of the first Renaissance (1450-1600) churches north of the Alps. St. Michael’s Church is about halfway between Marienplatz and Karlstor. It’s on the right as you walk away from Marienplatz, and you’ll miss it if you’re not careful. The interior is in the Baroque style (lots of ornamentation). Just inside the door are photos of the church after the Allied bombing during WWII and

the reconstruction efforts.

***Frauenkirche*** (The Church of Our Lady) is the twin onion-domed church that dominates the Munich skyline. From the pedestrian zone, head two blocks to the north on a little side street, look for and follow the red domes.

***Viktualien Markt*** – From Marienplatz, walk east (to your right facing the Neues Rathaus) through the gate, and just a little to your right, you'll find a wonderful outdoor market and *Biergarten*.

***Residenz***– This was the seat of government and home of the Wittelsbach family, who ruled Bavaria for over 700 years.

**Olympic Stadium and Grounds** - This is another good spot to get out of the city. Here, you'll find the site of the 1972 Olympics. If you go, be sure to walk into the swimming complex for a close-up view of the unique web-like glass dome. Nearby is

a tower, which provides sweeping views of the surroundings.

## MUNICH COAT OF ARMS

The **coat of arms of Munich** (*Münchener Wappen*) depicts a young monk dressed in black holding a red book. It has existed in a similar form since the 13th century.

As the German name for Munich, *München* means «*of Monks*» and depicts

the founders of this city by monks on the hill now occupied by St. Peter's Church.



# MUNICH'S HISTORIC BREWERIES

In the Vitkualienmarkt, the blue and white Maypole proudly displays Munich's official breweries. The six Munich breweries have a rich brewing tradition, which has been a cornerstone of Bavarian culture for centuries.

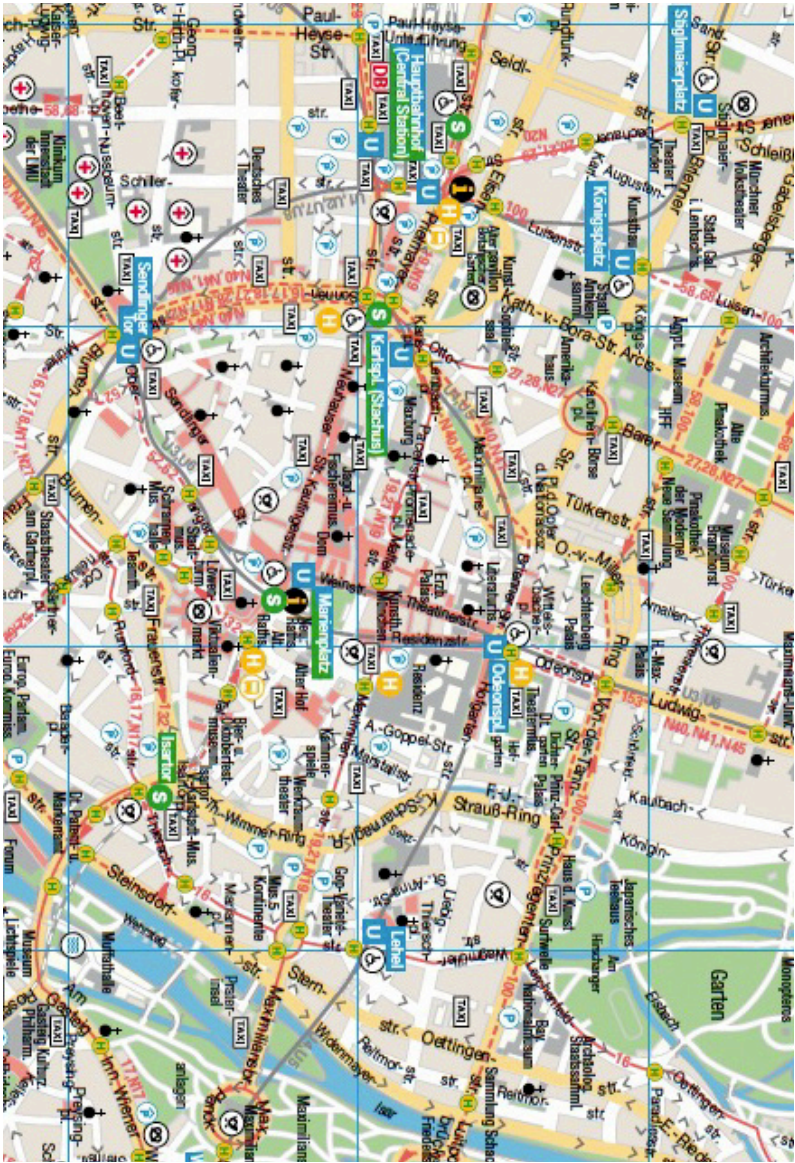


Munich's brewing history officially began with the foundation of the *Augustiner-Bräu* brewery in 1328 by the Augustinian monks. Over the centuries, other iconic breweries emerged, such as *Hofbräuhaus* in 1589, *Paulaner* in 1634, *Löwenbräu* in 1383, *Spaten-Franziskaner-Bräu* in 1397, and *Hacker-Pschorr* in 1417. Each brewery carries a unique legacy, often rooted in family traditions, royal patronage, or religious origins.

These breweries have weathered war regulations, changed consumer tastes, and adapted and innovated to remain at the forefront of the global beer scene. Munich's Oktoberfest, the world's largest beer festival, further elevated the city's brewing culture, drawing millions of visitors to savor the distinct brews crafted by the Big Six.

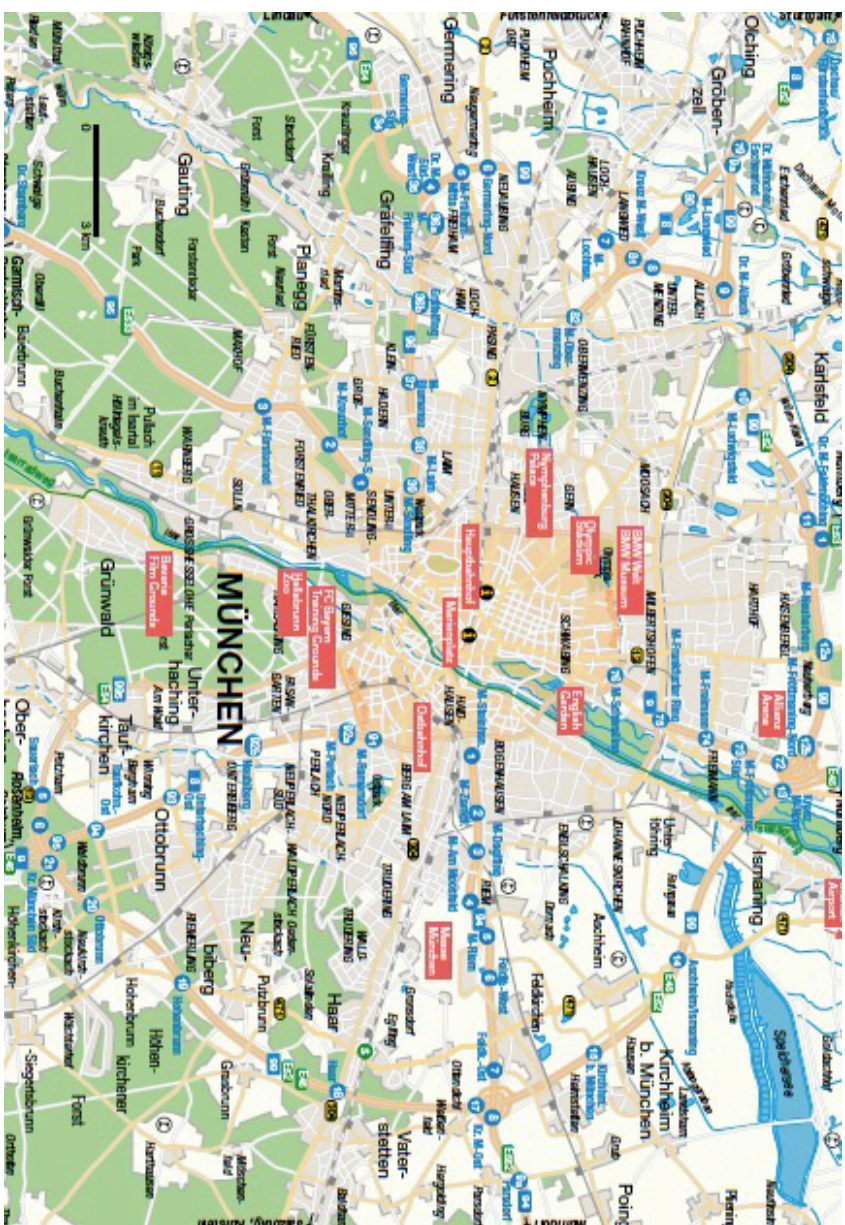


Hofbräuhaus



Munich - City Center

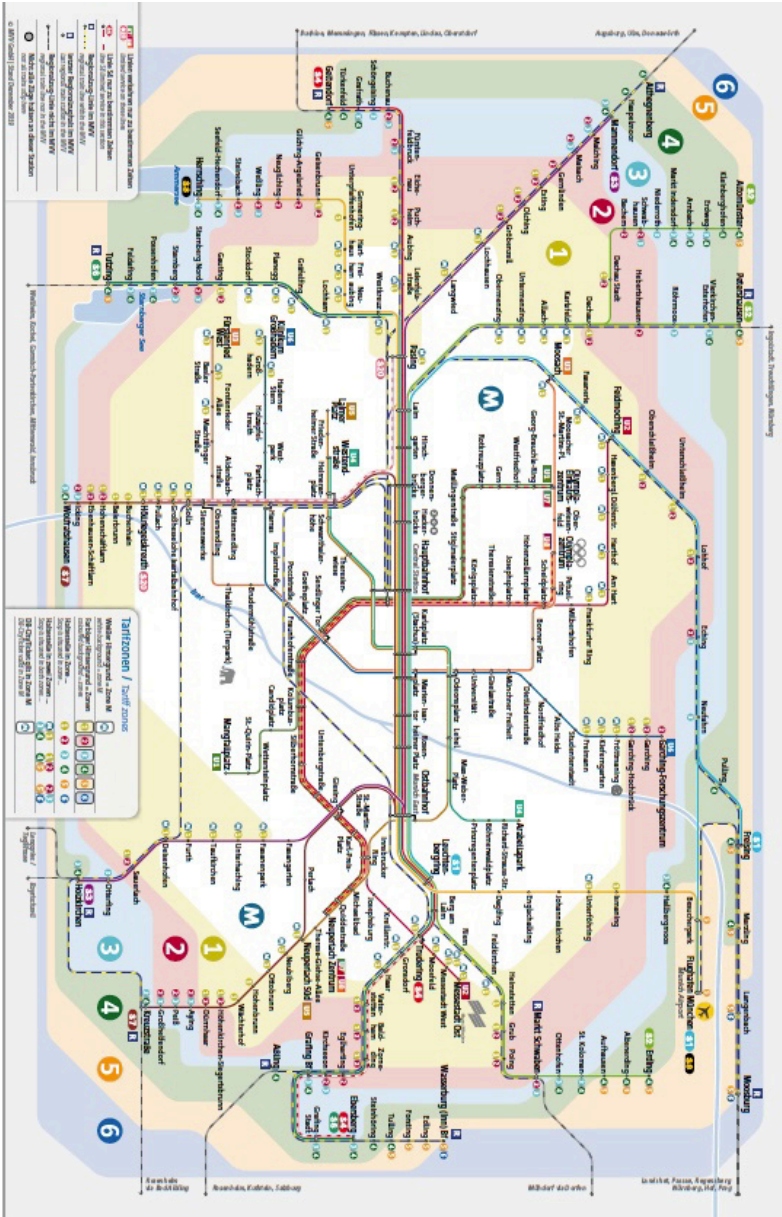




# SUR S-Bahn, U-Bahn und Regionalzug im MVV

Südbahn train, underground and regional train in the MVV

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Munich U and S- Bahn (Subway)