

## Episode 108: Munich

### Summary

In our first ever three-person conversation, Nick, Wendy and Nick's brother Tim talk about the German city of Munich. In particular, they talk about Munich's parks, its traditional beer culture and its untraditional urban surfing culture.

### Transcript

Nick: Today I am in Munich, Germany, once again, and I'm here with my brother Tim. Tim, welcome back!

Tim: Thanks Nick.

Nick: And I'm also here with Wendy. Hi Wendy!

Wendy: Hi!

Nick: So we're going to do a three-person conversation for the first time, and we'll see how that goes. And we're talking about where we are, which is Munich. So, Tim, you're the one who lives in Germany, so what do you think of Munich?

Tim: Munich is a really pretty city. It's very clean, uhh, it's quite beautiful and it's very green, too. I like it.

Nick: Wendy, what do you think?

Wendy: Well, this is my second time to Munich, and if you've listened to our episode about Prague, uhh, I talked then about how I had first been to Prague about 18 years ago and then just recently returned. So it's the same situation with Munich. I first visited on that same trip around Europe about 18 years ago. I haven't been back since then, umm, and to be honest, I don't really remember very much about that trip, so it's almost like I'm here for the first time. Umm, yeah, it is a lovely city. It's very green. We're sitting, right now, in a huge park next to a lake with some ducks swimming around, and I really like that aspect. Fortunately it's, uhh ... we've had good weather, so it's been nice to walk around and be outside. Umm, I'm probably ... I don't have a huge connection with German culture in the way that Tim does. And so, yeah, I don't feel that attracted to, say, the language and the culture and the architecture and stuff here. So Munich doesn't wow me in the way that an Italian city would wow me. But that's just my personal preferences.

Nick: Yeah, you and I obviously travel more, within Europe, in the Latin countries rather than the Germanic countries and that's kind of our preference, but it's always nice to go somewhere different as well. This is my first time in Munich and, yeah, it's been quite interesting. I would say it doesn't have, necessarily, iconic sites that you, kind of, must visit. And so Tim, if you would compare it with Berlin, where you've got things like the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag and Checkpoint Charlie and all these places that you kind of ... everybody knows about before they go. Maybe Munich doesn't have those things. Is that a fair comment, do you think?

Tim: Absolutely. Berlin has a vast array<sup>1</sup> of attractions related to modern history, uhh, recent events. Uhh, and that is absolutely fascinating and it turns it into a wonderful tourist hotspot. Uhh, Munich slightly less so, umm, but the surrounding areas - I know we're talking specifically about Munich, the city here - but you don't have to go very far outside of Munich to find just beautiful, uhh, mountains or Alps, I suppose. Umm, and, uhh, wonderful outdoor, sort of, activities that you can do.

Nick: Yeah, so Garmisch-Partenkirchen, which is the kind of the main, I guess, ski resort in Germany, is really close to here, about an hour away. And so Munich bid for a Winter Olympics recently, which they didn't win, but the ice events were going to be held here in Munich and then the snow events were going to be held in the mountains, which are nearby. So, yeah, I'm sure for people who live here, it's great to have that ability to get away into nature really quickly. And so it does really strike me as a place, for that reason and for other reasons, that's probably really nice to live in. You've got all these parks everywhere, which is really great. And the facilities and the infrastructure and everything, I'm sure, is really, really good. And there's a lot of things to do for local people.

Wendy: Right. Yeah, it's just that for tourists, there aren't a lot of obvious sites that you need to hit, you know, on your ... you know, this is your three-day itinerary for Munich and these are all the things that you have to see. That's not to say that there aren't things to see; there are actually dozens of museums in Munich, and so if you're interested in art at all, then it's a wonderful place to come. Umm, and you have different kind of museums. I think a lot of them are art museums, but you have other things as well. Umm, there's something about cars, there's some kind of BMW museum or something.

Nick: Yeah, Tim probably knows about that.

Tim: That's right. If you're a bit of a rev-head<sup>2</sup> or a gear-head, umm, certainly Germany is certainly the country to come (to) and Munich is the city to come (to). Umm, BMW, or *BMW auf Deutsch* (in German), uhh, stands for Bavarian Motor Works.

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<sup>1</sup> vast array: large number

<sup>2</sup> rev-head (informal): someone who likes cars a lot

Nick: Really? I didn't know that!

Wendy: I didn't know that either.

Tim: And of course Munich is the capital of Bavaria. And so they are very much ... their head office is here in Munich. And there, umm, there is a BMW World, or *BMW Welt*, uhh, *auf Deutsch*, umm, basically in the city centre. And it's a very iconic building, because it - to anyone uninformed - it sort of looks like four circular, almost cylindrical, uhh, umm, buildings. Uhh, and of course, uhh, they represent the four cylinders in a car engine. Uhh, so if you're a gear-head, it's definitely worth a visit.

Nick: Cool. One of the other interesting things that we've seen, and we've been quite fascinated by it, is that there is a place in Munich, on an artificial river, where there's this artificial wave, and people go surfing. And it's quite interesting. It's more interesting than it sounds.

Wendy: Yeah, I mean I've never seen urban surfing before, or I've never seen river surfing, you know. So it's very different from watching someone surf in the ocean, because obviously it's quite a narrow space, and so they have to just keep going back and forth on the same wave. And there's a lot of skill involved. We've been watching quite a few people do it. Some of them are more skilled than others, so sometimes they just fall off right away<sup>3</sup>, and then others are able to stay on for a while and even do some tricks and, you know, 360-degree turns and flip<sup>4</sup> their boards around. But, uhh, yeah, it's a lot of fun to watch, and it's something that I've never seen anywhere else.

Nick: Yeah, it's hard to describe because the wave itself doesn't really break<sup>5</sup> or move, so they're just kind of going back and forth on the same wave. And you just go as long as you can manage it, and then at a certain point you fall off, and then it's the next person's turn, and they jump from the river bank onto the wave and try and do it themselves. And so, yeah, it's quite interesting to just sit there and watch. And you have this great viewpoint from a bridge and you just look down on them. And, uhh, it's probably unfortunate for them, especially for the beginners, that they have a big audience who's watching them fall off their surfboard, uhh, if they're not that good.

Wendy: Yeah, I'm sure that would be really embarrassing, but you have to start somewhere, right? And, uhh, that's definitely the only place to go surfing in Munich, so if you want to surf, then that's where you're going to go. Uhh, but yeah, that's probably the thing that I will remember the most about Munich, is watching the surfers. And there's also the *glockenspiel*, uhh, so that is, I would say, probably an iconic sight that everyone would want to come and see if they've never been to

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<sup>3</sup> right away: immediately, straight away

<sup>4</sup> flip: turn over in the air

<sup>5</sup> break (with regard to waves): collapse, become white water

Munich before. And that is on ... it's a clock, uhh, that's part of the town hall, the new town hall, which is a beautiful building in itself. And then at certain times of the day, the clock, umm, you know, starts chiming<sup>6</sup> and so it plays a song and then you have these little, uhh, figurines that dance around and, uhh, do this kind of performance, similar to the astronomical clock in Prague, uhh, where we were just a couple of weeks ago. But that was still under renovation so we did not get to see it, so I was happy that we got to see the *glockenspiel* this time in Munich.

Nick: Definitely. And the other thing that Munich is famous for is Oktoberfest, and we're a bit early, we're going to miss it by only a few weeks actually. But still it's a very popular place for beer, uhh, any time of the year, and the beer halls here are really part of the city's culture, right?

Tim: Absolutely. Uhh, it is almost September, which confusingly, signals the start of Oktoberfest, uhh, which is around about the third week of September, it begins. Umm, the cultural aspect is most evident in the dress. Umm, it is very stereotypical, you see the boys wearing the *lederhosen* and the girls wearing the very frilly<sup>7</sup>, sort of, outfits<sup>8</sup>. That is very, very traditional, umm, and it's, uhh, it's a wonderful, uhh, celebration of, uhh, all things beer.

Nick: Definitely. But, yeah, even know, I mean, we're in the height of summer, so there's a lot of beer gardens, so people are outside enjoying it. And the Germans have an amazing capacity to drink beer at, like, nine o'clock in the morning, uhh, which we certainly don't have. Umm, but it's just a huge part of what they do, I guess.

Wendy: Yeah, and, uhh, normally, anywhere that I've been, a pint would be considered a large beer, or at least a standard size beer. But here they serve beer by the litre. If you order 'a beer', you get a gigantic glass that holds a full litre of beer.

Nick: Yeah, and so a pint is half a litre, and, for example, in Australia, or in Sydney, we drink out of what's called a schooner, which I think is a third of a litre, uhh, or maybe a little bit more. But so you'd need almost three of those to get one of these enormous one-litre German jugs of beer, but, uhh, that's how they roll<sup>9</sup> here.

Tim: They take their beer very seriously in Germany. They have a set of rules, by which beer must adhere to<sup>10</sup>, or at least German beer. And that contains only four ingredients, umm, and I think this rule was written in the seventeenth century or something.

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<sup>6</sup> chiming: ringing in a harmonious way, like bells

<sup>7</sup> frilly: elaborately or delicately decorated with lace or cloth

<sup>8</sup> outfits: entire sets of clothing

<sup>9</sup> that's how they roll: that's how they do it, that's how things are done

<sup>10</sup> adhere to: stick to, hold to

Nick: Well there you go. Well, it's the afternoon, so maybe we should go to a beer garden and, uhh, get some beer for ourselves.

Tim: *Prost!*

## Comprehension Questions

1. What is interesting about the design of the BMW World building in Munich, according to Tim?
2. What does Wendy say will be her biggest memory from Munich?
3. What's interesting about beer in Munich, according to Wendy?

## Exercises

*Use the words and expressions in the footnotes of the transcript to fill in the gaps.*

1. She just got a new job and she'll have to dress more formally than in her last job, so she'll need to buy some new \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He has subscriptions to several car magazines and buys a new car seemingly every year. He's a real \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Their hotel in Rome was right near the Vatican, so they got to hear the church bells \_\_\_\_\_ every day, which they loved.
4. They couldn't decide whether to go to the movies or the theatre, so in the end they decided to \_\_\_\_\_ a coin.
5. For our holidays this year, our friends wanted us to go camping with them because \_\_\_\_\_. But we don't like camping, so we declined the invitation.
6. If you stay at a youth hostel while travelling, there might be a few rules to \_\_\_\_\_, such as being back inside by 10pm or being out in the middle of the day while the place is being cleaned.
7. On the weekend we went to a folk music festival, where everyone played traditional instruments and dressed up in \_\_\_\_\_ clothing.
8. Good surfers catch waves before they \_\_\_\_\_, and then surf across the face of the wave to avoid the white water.
9. They went to lunch at a restaurant that had a huge buffet, containing a \_\_\_\_\_ of dishes from all over the world.
10. He said he'd send the notes from the meeting to everyone \_\_\_\_\_, but he forgot all about it and never ended up sending them.

## Discussion Questions

Discuss these questions with a partner or in the [English in 10 Minutes Listeners group on Facebook](#):

1. Have you been to Munich? If so, did you like it? If not, would you like to go? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever been surfing? Would you try surfing the artificial wave in Munich if you lived there?
3. Do you like beer? What size does beer come in where you live?

## Answers

### Comprehension Questions

1. The building is in the shape of the four cylinders of a car engine.
2. The urban surfers riding an artificial wave in a park in Munich.
3. It comes in very large, one-litre glasses.

### Exercises

1. outfits
2. rev-head
3. chiming
4. flip
5. that's how they roll
6. adhere to
7. frilly
8. break
9. vast array
10. right away