

**LIB  
ERO**

# GER MA NY

2024



**DÜSSELDORF  
BERLIN  
FRANKFURT  
MUNICH  
GELSENKIRCHEN  
LEIPZIG  
HAMBURG  
STUTTGART  
COLOGNE  
DORTMUND**



It may be shamelessly Eurocentric to say so but there's something irresistible about a major finals being held once more within a single country of undisputed European football pedigree. The last time was France 2016, and a lot – war, pandemic, Platini's misplaced romanticism to make Euro 2020 a moveable beast – has happened since.

GERMANY  
2024

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World Cups have gone to the highest bidder, though before Qatar and Russia, this same trope could have been levelled at Euro 2024 host Germany. Whatever the machinations that brought the 2006 World Cup to the home of beer, Beethoven and Beckenbauer – and, sadly, in this of all years, Kaiser Franz isn't around to ask – there is no doubt that the month-long, 32-team extravaganza of 18 years ago was a huge success.

As captured by filmmaker Sönke Wortmann in his award-winning documentary *Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen* ('Germany. A Summer Fairy Tale'), released on German Unity Day in 2006, during those four weeks a soccer super power rediscovered the sheer joy of football.

Speaking of Italy, this was why, in that epic semi-final against the host nation, Alessandro Del Piero blootered the advertising hoarding to celebrate his 121st-minute clincher. "This is our *football!*" is how he explained his uncharacteristic actions afterwards, weeks after the Calciopoli scandal (and Australia, lest we forget) nearly sank



Olympiastadion/Rudi Jansen

Italy's eventually successful bid to lift a fourth World Cup trophy.

But that summer really belonged to Germany, whose swashbuckling side, fan zones and superb stadia made the tournament so memorable.

More or less the same venues are being brushed up for Euro 2024. Thanks to Beckenbauer, **Leipzig** made its debut on the modern international stage back in 2006. It has since sealed its status as a

football force, albeit one powered by an unpopular source of energy.

For these coming four weeks, however, the former Zentralstadion of GDR lore will no longer be a showcase for a carbonated drink, just as **Munich's** arena will temporarily forget about insurance and **Frankfurt** will disown banking.

Dropping sponsors' names from the ten stadiums accommodating Euro 2024 will not disassociate them from tainted

commerce in people's minds, of course, just as **Berlin's Olympiastadion** will forever be linked with Hitler's Games of 1936.

But in ten cities, from **Stuttgart** to **Hamburg**, this summer's spotlight will fall on football and the fans who follow it, able to take advantage of affordable accommodation and a single national train network to hop between matches. And even if **Deutsche Bahn** blows its big chance to recover at least some of its damaged reputation – the trains



Alan Deamer

haven't run on time in Germany for years now – urban transport is superb across the country and cyclists are well catered for in this green-conscious land.

It is said that during the first decade of the 21st century, history took a holiday, meaning that many of us who basked in the 2006 World Cup here knew little of climate crises, European conflict or global pandemics. 2024 may not be a summer fairy tale like the last one but there should be enough young talent on display and solid

gold legends bowing out to create another memorable movie. After all, everyone's a filmmaker these days.

### Timings & tickets

Euro 2024 involves 24 teams in six groups of four. The top two plus four best third-placed sides go through to the final 16. Head-to-head records decide tiebreakers. Extra-time and penalties follow 90 minutes if needed in the knock-out stage, when a sixth substitution can be made in extra-time.

Kick-off times are at 9pm (8pm UK) and 6pm (5pm UK), with a handful of group games at 3pm (2pm UK). Between the opener in Munich on June 14 and the final in Berlin on July 14, 51 games will be played in ten cities, with one stadium in each.

While venues for group games are rotated, as instigated by Platini at France 98, certain countries play two games in one city, making logistics easier. Hungary's many fans will surely take over Stuttgart, the Czechs Hamburg, the Slovaks



Cologne Stadium/Alan Deamer

Frankfurt, the Austrians Berlin and the Serbs Munich.

To give you some idea of demand, half a million Hungarians applied for tickets for each of their country's group games, so it's no surprise that the last general release on May 2 sold out straight away. However, there may still be a few odd seats available on the resale market, and UEFA still need to distribute some tickets if an unexpected team wins through to the knock-out stage – keep your eye on **UEFA** ([uefa.com/euro2024/ticketing](http://uefa.com/euro2024/ticketing) for details).

### Station to stadium

Were it not for the shocking decline in the reliability of national rail company **Deutsche Bahn** ([int.bahn.de/en](http://int.bahn.de/en)), Germany could claim to be the perfect

country to stage an event of this kind. Nine of the ten host cities have an airport, most served by trains directly connecting with centre of town.

Public transport is superb and match-ticket holders will be entitled to a free travel pass valid for 36 hours on the local network of the venue city, from 6am on the day of the game until 6pm the following day. See **UEFA** ([www.uefa.com/euro2024/event-guide/ticket-holders](http://www.uefa.com/euro2024/event-guide/ticket-holders)) for details.

While this isn't valid for inter-city trains, there's also a **Interrail Pass Euro 2024** ([euro2024.interrail.eu/en/go](http://euro2024.interrail.eu/en/go)), giving a 25% discount on certain Interrail Passes for citizens of 32 European countries, excluding Germany but including the UK. This offer is for match-ticket holders for →





various travel periods, from four days to 15, up to July 21.

**Deutsche Bahn** have their own **offer** (int. [bahn.de/en/offers/special-offers/fan-ticket-football](https://bahn.de/en/offers/special-offers/fan-ticket-football)) for match-ticket holders, of single tickets between cities at €29.90 second-class, €39.90 first-class, but in many cases, tickets will be cheaper than this anyway. Certainly, travelling between the four host cities in the Ruhr/Rhineland hub of Cologne, Dortmund, Düsseldorf and Gelsenkirchen, is short and swift on the adjoining VRR/VRS regional networks.

Apart from a couple of tunnels in the north and east, there are no **motorway tolls** or **vignettes** in Germany. Do note, though, that older vehicles with poor emissions will not be able to access the so-called

Environmental Zone (Umweltzone) as signposted in seven host cities, all those not in the Ruhr industrial zone.

Germany is extremely **cycle-friendly** and all stadiums should have a parking places for bikes – although Berlin's Olympiastadion currently only has 100. Deutsche Bahn runs a nationwide **Call a Bike scheme** ([callabike.de/en/home](https://callabike.de/en/home)) for cycle sharing, starting at €1, then €1 for every 15mins' use, for up to €9/day.

### Stay and play

Germany specialises in the hybrid hostel/hotel, where you can snag a cheap dorm bed with shared facilities or relax in your own en-suite single. Chains with branches across all major cities include **A&O** ([aohostels.com/en](https://aohostels.com/en)), **B&B** ([hotel-bb.com/](https://hotel-bb.com/)

BVB Stadion/Matt Walker



en/de) and **Meininger** ([meininger-hotels.com/en](https://meininger-hotels.com/en)).

**Motel One** ([motel-one.com/en](https://motel-one.com/en)) is Germany's leading low-budget brand while French chain **Accor** oversees economy/mid-range **ibis** ([all.accor.com/brands/ibis.en.shtml](https://all.accor.com/brands/ibis.en.shtml)) and **Mercure** ([mercure.accor.com](https://mercure.accor.com)) hotels across the country.

Land of the 500-year-old Purity Order on beer ingredients, Germany takes its

brewing seriously. Munich, where the law was first adopted in 1487, serves local **Hofbräu** and **Augustiner** in historic hostelryes, while

**Paulaner** is the beer Bayern players celebrate with after trophy wins. **Löwenbräu** traditionally sponsors city rivals, the lion-branded TSV, die Löwen.

Dortmund is also a beer capital, **DAB** the major brand there, while **Cologne**

is synonymous with the lighter *kölsch*. **Düsseldorf** swears by the copper-coloured *altbier*, **Hamburg** by little brown bottles of Astra with the heart-and-anchor logo, and **Stuttgart**, Stuttgarter Hofbräu.

Football in Germany would be unthinkable without sausages, most commonly *Bratwurst* with pork and beef, with the white-coloured *Weißwurst* popular in Bavaria. **LE**

## 2024 MATCH SCHEDULE

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## BERLIN

Olympiastadion p8

## COLOGNE

Cologne Stadium p10

## DORTMUND

BVB Stadion p12

## DÜSSELDORF

Düsseldorf Arena p14

## FRANKFURT

Frankfurt Arena p16

## GELSENKIRCHEN

Arena AufSchalke p18

## HAMBURG

Volksparkstadion p20

## LEIPZIG

Leipzig Stadium p22

## MUNICH

Fußball Arena München p25

## STUTTGART

Stuttgart Arena p27

## COLOGNE

Sat 15.6  
HUN v SWZ  
3pm/2pm UKWed 19.6  
SCO v SWZ  
9pm/8pm UKSat 22.6  
BEL v ROM  
9pm/8pm UKTue 25.6  
ENG v SVN  
9pm/8pm UKSun 30.6  
1B v 3A/D/E/F (39)  
9pm/8pm UK

## DÜSSELDORF

Mon 17.6  
AUS v FRA  
9pm/8pm UKFri 21.6  
SVK v UKR  
3pm/2pm UKMon 24.6  
ALB v SPA  
9pm/8pm UKMon 1.7  
2D v 2E (42)  
6pm/5pm UKSat 6.7  
QF3 W40 v W38  
6pm/5pm UK

## GELSENKIRCHEN

Sun 16.6  
SRB v ENG  
9pm/8pm UKThur 20.6  
SPA v ITA  
9pm/8pm UKWed 26.6  
GEO v POR  
9pm/8pm UKSun 30.6  
1C v 3D/D/F (40)  
6pm/5pm UK

## DORTMUND

Sat 15.6  
ITA v ALB  
9pm/8pm UKTue 18.6  
TUR v GEO  
6pm/5pm UKSat 22.6  
TUR v POR  
6pm/5pm UKTue 25.6  
FRA v POL  
6pm/5pm UKSat 29.6  
1A v 2C (37)  
9pm/8pm UKWed 10.7  
SF QF3 v QF4  
9pm/8pm UK

## HAMBURG

Sun 16.6  
POL v NL  
3pm/2pm UKWed 19.6  
CRO v ALB  
3pm/2pm UKSat 22.6  
GEO v CZE  
3pm/2pm UKWed 26.6  
CZE v TUR  
9pm/8pm UKFri 5.7  
QF2 W41 v W42  
9pm/8pm UK

## BERLIN

Sat 15.6  
SPA v CRO  
6pm/5pm UKFri 21.6  
POL v AUS  
6pm/5pm UKTue 25.6  
NL v AUS  
6pm/5pm UKSat 29.6  
2A v 2B (38)  
6pm/5pm UKSat 6.7  
QF4 W47 v W44  
9pm/8pm UKSun 14.7  
FINAL  
9pm/8pm UK

## LEIPZIG

Tue 18.6  
POR v CZE  
9pm/8pm UKFri 21.6  
NL v FRA  
9pm/8pm UKMon 24.6  
CRO v ITA  
9pm/8pm UKTue 2.7  
1D v 2F (44)  
9pm/8pm UK

## MUNICH

Fri 14.6  
GER v SCO  
9pm/8pm UKMon 17.6  
ROM v UKR  
3pm/2pm UKThur 20.6  
SVN v SRB  
3pm/2pm UKSun 25.6  
DEN v SRB  
9pm/8pm UKTue 2.7  
1E v 3A/B/C/D (43)  
6pm/5pm UKTue 9.7  
SF QF2 v QF1  
9pm/8pm UK

## FRANKFURT

Mon 17.6  
BEL v SVK  
6pm/5pm UKThur 20.6  
DEN v ENG  
6pm/5pm UKSun 23.6  
SWZ v GER  
9pm/8pm UKWed 26.6  
SVK v ROM  
6pm/5pm UKMon 1.7  
1F v 3A/B/C  
9pm/8pm UK

## STUTTGART

Sun 16.6  
SVN v DEN  
6pm/5pm UKWed 19.6  
GER v HUN  
6pm/5pm UKSun 23.6  
SCO v HUN  
9pm/8pm UKWed 26.6  
UKR v BEL  
6pm/5pm UKFri 5.7  
QF1 W39 v W37  
6pm/5pm UK

## Group A

Germany (GER)  
Scotland (SCO)  
Hungary (HUN)  
Switzerland (SWZ)

## Group B

Spain (SPA)  
Croatia (CRO)  
Italy (ITA)  
Albania (ALB)

## Group C

Slovenia (SVN)  
Denmark (DEN)  
Serbia (SRB)  
England (ENG)

## Group D

Poland (POL)  
Netherlands (NL)  
Austria (AUS)  
France (FRA)

## Group E

Belgium (BEL)  
Slovakia (SVK)  
Romania (ROM)  
Ukraine (UKR)

## Group F

Turkey (TUR)  
Georgia (GEO)  
Portugal (POR)  
Czech Republic (CZE)





## Berlin

Germany's capital is also a football one, centrepiece by a historic national stadium due to host the final of Euro 2024. Regular tenants of the **Olympiastadion**, the city's flagship club **Hertha** fill out most of this 74,000-capacity heritage arena for domestic games.

But no amount of prestigious occasions – German Cup finals, the Champions League final of 2015, Germany international games – can offset the legacy of this national arena. Not only is the signature architecture from the 1930s in place today after two major rebuilds, this is still the stadium that Hitler built for his tainted 1936 Olympics.

The next major global sporting occasion seen here was an entirely different affair, in a rebuilt city that delineated the border between East and West. The 1974 World



Cup kicked off here, Beckenbauer's West Germany making heavy weather of a 1-0 win over Chile. The South Americans, who had qualified after the USSR withdrew for political reasons, were East Germany's next opponents in a tournament full of undercover intrigue.

Berlin, a paranoid, divided city before Unification in 1990, would have been the



perfect setting for the GDR's following match – in which they beat West Germany – but that took place in Hamburg. Munich staged the 1974 final.

Overlooked for Euro 1988 after the Soviets vetoed the use of West Berlin, when it was Germany's turn to host the World Cup again, in 2006, Berlin did the honours. Here Zinedine Zidane famously headbutted Marco Materazzi before Italy picked up a fourth World Cup.

Overlooked for Euro 2020, the Hauptstadt got the nod for the final of Euro 2024, elevating Berlin alongside Paris, Madrid, Rome, Munich and London as cities where World Cups and European Championships have been won. As well as the final, two other knock-out games and three group matches will be played at the Olympiastadion.

For **Euro 2024**, the **Fan Mile** runs from the Siegessäule Victory Column through the Tiergarten to the Brandenburg Gate.

### Getting around

City airport **Berlin Brandenburg** is 18 km (11 miles) south of town. At level U2 of Terminal 1, **BER Airport station** connects with **Berlin Hauptbahnhof**, the main station in the city centre. The Airport Express service **FEX**, **regional lines**, **S-Bahn line S9** and **Intercity trains** make the 30-minute journey into town every 10-15mins.

S-Bahn S9 runs directly to **Olympiastadion**, a journey of 1hr 10mins, slightly slower →

but more convenient than changing in town.

Berlin's **transport system** of U-Bahn, S-Bahn and buses is divided into zones A, B and C, zone A the city centre.

If you're without a valid match ticket, once you buy your day pass or single transport ticket, make sure to stamp it by using the machines on platforms. Ticket checks are not unknown and the fines draconian.

You can also download the Berlin transport app **Jelbi** ([jelbi.de/en/home](https://jelbi.de/en/home)) for tickets and information.

**Berlin Hauptbahnhof** is on four main S-Bahn lines linking with the main points of Hackescher Markt and Alexanderplatz to the east, Zoologischer Garten and **Olympiastadion** (S3/S9) to the west.

At the airport, the **taxi rank** is located outside Terminal 1 at level E0. Depending on traffic and final destination, the journey into town should cost around €45-€50. **Berlin Airport Taxis** suggest a fee of €49 with no nighttime surcharges. Around town, **TaxiBerlin24.de** (+49 163 717 3833) is as good as any and accepts credit cards.

### Where to drink

Many first-time visitors flock to the revamped retail and nightlife hub of **Hackescher Markt**, where sport-friendly pub **Kilkenny** is built into the station building. The other side of the station, **The Pub** shares the same name as its Czech-

Bierbrunnen



chain cousins, with match action also in focus, though here the beer you can pour at your own table is Berliner Pilsner.

To explore the world of beer a little further, the nearby **Biermeisterei by Lemke** serves the many brews crafted by Oli Lemke over the last 25 years or so, after being one of the first to set up a successful business, the initial, smaller **Brauerei Lemke**, under the rails at Hackescher Markt. His expansion into larger, shinier premises on Karl-Liebknecht-Straße coincided with a focus towards gastro post-Covid.

All these bars have terraces, handy if you just been battling with the crowds around Alexanderplatz next door. A short walk north at Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, **Belushi's** is one of two in town, a hostel-attached sports bar open to all,



attracting a younger clientele. This one spreads out over two floors and an outside terrace, the wall dedicated to music hinting at the live concert agenda here on Friday nights.

A short stroll along main Torstraße to Rosenthaler Platz brings you to **Sportsbar Tor 133**, where many screens tune into match action behind an unmistakeable



flame-red façade. For something more original, further north up Brunnenstraße to the junction with Veteranenstraße, the long-established cult football hangout, the **FC Magnet Bar**, still draws soccer aficionados 20 years after starting out as an outpost for homesick Mönchengladbach fans.

At the next junction over, you'll find the **Berlin Mitte** branch of the **BrewDog** chain at Ackerstraße 29, promising big-screen Euro 2024 coverage to complement its usual 28 varieties of draught beer and pizza offers.

Just beyond Mitte is workaday Wedding, the district where the Boateng half-brothers grew up and the spiritual home of Hertha. Here, by the Berlin

Wall, was **die Plumpe**, aka **Stadion am Gesundbrunnen**, the club's ground until it was demolished in 1974, by which time they were playing top-flight fixtures at the Olympiastadion.

In its memory, slap opposite Gesundbrunnen S-Bahn station, the wonderful wood-panelled **Bierbrunnen** bar is shrine to the old ground and Hertha's history, smokers in a glassed-off room puffing away beneath huge photos of Germany's World-Cup winning line-ups. Authentic down to its retro Berliner Kindl ads.

Just the other side of the former stadium, the **Offside Pub & Whisky Bar** →



FC Magnet/Trevor Fletcher



on Jülicher Straße specialises in the namesake spirit, with tastings scheduled, and TV football.

If you're visiting Checkpoint Charlie, you might want to pop in for a pint at **Murphy's** on Zimmerstraße, with big-screen sport and standard pub grub.

Following Friedrichstraße towards the Turkish quarter of Kreuzberg, you come to a more bohemian bar hub and the historic heartland of football in Berlin. At Mehringdamm 32-34, the pub-like **Vogt's Bier-Express** has long screened

matches to a local clientele, next door to a branch of Curry 36 if you hanker after a Currywurst while you're watching. Deeper into Kreuzberg, on Wiener Straße, music-focused **Bar 11** is equally fussy about its football, with scarves on display along with horse's heads, and match action shown.

If you're staying in the west end of town, you'll find **Puschel's Pub** by Kurfürstenstraße U-Bahn station. Loyal regulars gather to watch games in a narrow space amid amusing, usually soccer-related, décor. It's a friendly place

to catch the match if an informal buzz if what you're after.

For big-tournament summers, outdoor bars, parks and beer gardens come into their own, such as Kreuzberg hangout **Golgatha** in Viktoriapark, with its huge screen like an open-air cinema.

**Where to stay**  
**Visit Berlin** ([visitberlin.de/en](http://visitberlin.de/en)) has a **hotel database with a booking function**.

Of the lodgings near the Olympiastadion, one stop back to town diagonally opposite

Golgatha



Heerstraße S-Bahn, bucolic **Hotel Rotdorn** is a 1920s' villa set in greenery. Shared-bathroom singles/doubles are a steal, with apartments and bungalows also available.

A short walk from Zoologischer Garten S-Bahn, the four-star **Crowne Plaza Berlin City Centre Ku'damm** caters to business visitors and those on city breaks with a conference centre, meeting rooms, spa and sauna.

Built into the Europa Center, the privately run, high-design **Hotel Palace Berlin** gazes over the city's skyline from its upper rooms and Club Lounge. Other amenities include the House of Gin, beef 45 restaurant, and impressive pool and sauna complex. For the main station and Poststadion, **Motel**

**One Berlin-Hauptbahnhof** is one of a handful of eminently affordable and stylish lodgings in town, in a chain expanding across Germany. Cheaper and closer to the stadium, the **A&O Berlin Hauptbahnhof** is part of another handy chain that offers hostel and hotel stays – at hostel prices.

Closer to Hauptbahnhof, on the other side of Europaplatz, the **MEININGER Hotel Berlin Central Station** offers en-suite singles and doubles, plus dorms, more than 800 beds in total, on eight floors. A games zone and children's area should appeal if you're travelling with the family.

Diagonally opposite the main station, the **AMANO Grand Central** shows Italian influence in its design and cuisine, its rooftop terrace ideal for private functions. Alongside, the **Hotel ROMY by AMANO** is its boutique sister, its kitchen and cocktail bar Mexican in influence. In between, the three-star **ibis Berlin Hauptbahnhof** couldn't be more convenient, also facilitated by a noon check-out.

Further along Invalidenstraße, two chain hotels provide convenience and affordability: the **Hotel Berlin Mitte by Campanile** has a bar and 24-hour reception, while diagonally opposite, the **Mercure Hotel Berlin City** packs 246 mid-range rooms into this large corner building.

In the tourist-friendly hub of Hackescher Markt, the nearby **Motel One** on Dirckenstraße is stylish for the price. **LG**



## Olympiastadion

Germany's largest sporting arena, the 74,000-capacity **Olympiastadion** hosts the final of Euro 2024, 18 years after the World Cup final of 2006. This elevates the venue to the elite pantheon of stadia used for football's two showcase occasions – three if you include the Champions League final of 2015.

And four if you throw in the Olympic football final of 1936. The stadium was built, of course, for those tainted Games, organised by the Nazis for propaganda purposes.

Or rather rebuilt. A sports complex had been designed on this site for another Games 20 years before. 1916 was cancelled because of World War I, and architect Otto March died before the Deutsches Stadion was put to full use.

It was left to his sons Werner and Walter to create anew when Berlin was re-awarded hosting rights in 1931. Within two years, Hitler was in power and a revised plan was set in stone – natural stone, 30,000 cubic metres of it, transported from all over the nation to symbolise Germanic values.

A titanic 110,000-capacity bowl centrepieced a complex of smaller stadia, a 25,000-capacity amphitheatre and the ceremonial Maifeld, where Mussolini addressed nearly one million Germans in 1937.

More than half a century later, after a small roof had been added for the 1974 World



Rudi Jansen

Cup, regular tenants Hertha played a gala Reunification match here against city rivals Union in January 1990. For the 2006 World Cup, the Marathon Gate with its clock tower remained in place for the reconstruction, which lowered the pitch, extended the roof and upgraded the lighting. Spectators, now closer to the pitch, could number 74,500, all agog as Zinedine Zidane headbutted Marco Materazzi in the final.

Hertha's following gather in the Ostkurve of this two-tier arena,

sectors Q-T. The low curve of seating throughout means an optimum view wherever you are, in the Süd Haupttribüne, Gegentribüne opposite or either Kurve.

### Getting here

**Olympiastadion** has two stations. The one on the **red U2 line**, eight stops from Zoo, gives access to the main walkway lined with souvenir stalls and grills. Just follow the signposts through the pre-war underpasses.

The station on the **S-Bahn**, six stops from Zoo, is closer to the arena and a hub of bars on Coubertinplatz.

### Where to drink

Diagonally opposite the S-Bahn station stands the **Preußisches Landwirthshaus**, an authentic, family-run Prussian bar/restaurant comprising a beer garden and room indoors with a big screen for sport.

Nearer the stadium, **Stadionterrassen** dates back to the days before there was



a stadium here at all. Opened in 1909, this was once a coachman's inn. Today, it's a simple restaurant which should open on match days.

Opposite, **Olympia-Eck** remains the classic pre-match bar, with a beer garden attached and a basic kitchen with a serving hatch attached. Inside, you'll find a photo display of the stadium in a cosy dining room. Even though they've upped the ante on the food and smartened the surroundings, it's still Currywurst and chips, washed down with Berliner Kindl beer. **LG**

## Cologne

Rhineside **Cologne** is the home of Germany's main sports university – the nation's top football coaches receive their training here. The centrepiece of Germany's largest sports complex was created in 1923, when city mayor Konrad Adenauer, later West German Chancellor, created a sports park on Cologne's western outskirts.

**Cologne Stadium** has twice been rebuilt, most recently for the 2006 World Cup. Covid restrictions in 2020 allowed Cologne to co-host the final phase of the Europa League, including the final itself, between Inter and Sevilla.

Euro 2024 group games involving England, Scotland and Hungary should see a huge buzz in this party-focused town.

The winners of Group B then grace the stadium in the first knock-out round. This could be an international farewell for Luka Modrić and/or club teammate Toni Kroos, if the football gods align.

Cologne's **Fan Zone** for Euro 2024 is at central **Heumarkt**.

## Getting around

**Köln-Bonn Airport** is 15km (nine miles) south-east of Cologne, with its own railway terminal, on Germany's high-speed network, linked to Frankfurt and other major cities.



All pix Alan Deamer

From Terminal 2, the local **S-Bahn 19 line** and **regional trains** frequently run to Cologne main station, **Köln Hauptbahnhof**.

**City transport** also consists of buses, trams and U-Bahn underground, using the same ticket system.

**Taxi Ruf Köln** (+49 221 2882) charges around €45 from airport to town.

## Where to drink

The local drink is **Kölsch** – a light beer served in a thin glass. You can sample it at **Früh am Dom** near Cologne Cathedral, a bar dating back to 1904.

Close by stands one of Cologne's many Irish bars, **Barney Vallely's** on Kleine Budengasse, 'the small pub with a big heart' –

and plenty of sport on TV. Right on main Alter Markt, the **Corkonian** is the oldest of the Gaelic hostelries, with a prominent terrace.

Across the square, **Papa Joe's Biersalon** has a 1920s' theme and vintage machines from old cinemas. Stablemate **Papa Joe's Jazzlokal** on Buttermarkt celebrates the music of New Orleans. Next door's **Biermuseum** goes beyond Kölsch and also shows games.

Near the river, **Kunst Kaschämm** opened in the World Cup year of 2006 and keeps the party going with shots, cocktails, Kölsch and Fußball. On Heumarkt, **Gilden im Zims** lends a contemporary touch to brewing in Cologne, with big-screen sport thrown in.

## Where to stay

**Tourist Information Cologne** by Cologne Cathedral links to a **hotel-booking site**.

There are no hotels by the stadium but the smart **AMERON Hotel Regent**, five tram stops away, offers a gym, spa, bar and trattoria. Also on the No.1 route, **Motel One Neumarkt** belongs to one of Germany's brightest affordable chains.

Integral to the train station, economy chain **Ibis** contrasts with the five-star, 160-year-old **Excelsior Ernst** round the corner on Trankgasse.

Just the other side of the Cathedral, the **Mondial am Dom MGallery** contains trendy wine bar Legs Eleven and global



restaurant Mondial 1516. Attached to the Kölsch brewery bar Früh am Dom, the **Eden** has 86 rooms, some with views of the spires, while the restaurant keeps things traditional. **LE**





## Cologne Stadium

**Cologne Stadium** emerged from the old Müngersdorfer Stadion, whose original brick gateposts still welcome matchgoers pouring off the tram from the main road leading west from town. Surrounding them is a large sports complex set in greenery, as envisioned by one of the greatest political figures in German history.

The first Chancellor of post-war West Germany from 1949, Cologne-born



All pix Alan Deamer

Konrad Adenauer was mayor of his home town when it was on its knees after the previous global conflict. Adenauer decided that a sports ground, with courts and training pitches around it, would provide weary, hungry Kölner with much-needed recreation and gainful employment. Construction began in October 1921 and the largest sports park in Germany – until Berlin's Olympiastadion complex opened in 1936 – was unveiled in 1923.

The Müngersdorfer was rebuilt just over half a century later, though too late

to co-host the 1974 World Cup. With a new upper tier and scoreboards, the 61,000-capacity arena was opened with a derby match between 1.FC Köln and city rivals Fortuna in November 1975. Thirteen years later, the stadium hosted two matches for Euro 88.

For the 2006 World Cup, €117.5 million was spent on creating a whole new stadium, compact and intimate, with the running track removed, and steep banks of red-and-white seating holding 46,000 for internationals.

For Euro 2024, in shades of 1974, ambitious plans to increase capacity to 75,000 had to be curtailed, although regular sell-outs for home club 1.FC Köln would surely warrant it. A few thousand upper seats were added to raise capacity to just under 50,000. As well as England-Slovenia and Scotland-Switzerland in the group stage, a Round of 16 game will be played here.

### Getting here

**Cologne Stadium** has its own stop, **RheinenergieSTADION**, on **red U-Bahn line 1** west from

central **Neumarkt**, ten stops/18mins away, direction Weiden West. If you're coming from Cologne main station, **Köln Hbf**, then follow the signs to **Köln Dom/Hbf** and take either lines **5, 14, 16** or **18** to **Neumarkt** two stops away. Overall journey time from town is around 30mins including changes.

### Where to drink

Your first port of call should be the excellent **Geißbockheim**, the clubhouse and training centre set deep in the woods at Franz-Kremer-Allee 1-3. Classic black-and-white archive shots of Wolfgang Overath and Hennes Weisweiler surround a traditional bar-restaurant, where a full kitchen operates most of the day, and Kölsch is obligatory. Near the stadium at Alter Militärring station, **Stadtwaldgarten** is a handy choice, though it's more steakhouse than sports bar.

At that same junction, just up Alter Militärring, **Em RingströÙje** was opened by a celebrated opera singer in 1964, and passed from the Nelles family to the current owners in 2022. As well as Kölsch, there's Augustiner Hell, plus regional and seasonal cuisine.

By the stadium on the Südkurve side, **Playa in Cologne** is a beach bar/beer garden screening major home games. Treat yourself to Sion Kölsch or Paulaner on tap, particularly if you've been roped into a game of beach volleyball. **LE9**



## Dortmund

**Dortmund** is built on beer and football. Set in Germany's industrial Ruhrgebiet, around a compact and pedestrianised centre, this is very much a one-club city – and that one club, **Borussia**, attract the highest average attendance in the European game.

Dortmund's standing terrace of 24,454 in the Südtribüne of the **Westfalenstadion** forms the famed Yellow Wall, football's largest Kop. The most memorable moments of Sönke Wortmann's wonderful fly-on-the-wall documentary of Germany's 2006 World Cup, *Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen*, take place at this stadium, built for the 1974 tournament.

Germany's profits from 2006 went towards the construction of another football institution. The **German Football Museum** (Tue-Sun 10am–6pm, last entry



5pm) sits opposite Dortmund's main station and traces Germany's long quest for World Cup and Euro gold. You can even replay the original footage from '66 and see the ball not cross the line again and again...

The **Fan Zone** for Euro 2024 is on **Friedensplatz**, at the southern end of the city centre, in the direction of the stadium.



### Getting around

**Dortmund airport** is 10km (six miles) east of town. From outside Arrivals, **Airport Express bus 21** runs on the hour to **Dortmund Hauptbahnhof** main station (€10, 25min journey time). Airport-bound from town, it's on the half-hour.

A **Dortmund Airport Taxi** to Dortmund Hbf should cost €35. For a taxi around town, **Mölders** (+49 231 77 77 77) is long-established.

Regional transport overseen by **VRR** can work out cheaper by using their **eezy**

**app**. This includes Dortmund's **light-rail network**, linking the Rhine-Ruhr region with Dortmund's stadium south of town

### Where to drink

You're in the beer capital of Germany – lap it up! On the main square of **Markt**, the terraces of Thier Brauerei's **Zum Alten Markt** and **Der Thüringer** fill with fans. Across the square, **Wenkers** is a busy football bar by the BVB store.

Don't miss little **Lütge Eck** (Lütge Brückstraße 1) towards the station, a BVB haunt filled with memorabilia. Jürgen

Klopp has been a visitor, meeting fans and signing autographs.

On Kleppingstraße, **Klubhaus 1249** is that rare thing, a football bar with a conscience. In 2022, it refused to screen the Qatar World Cup despite the loss in beer sales. At weekends, a karaoke party spot takes over later on.

### Where to stay

The closest hotel to the stadium is the four-star **Mercure Hotel Dortmund Messe**, linked to the congress centre and its Rosenterrassen restaurant.

Also convenient is the affordable **B&B Hotel Dortmund-Messe**, near Theodor Fliedner Heim U-Bahn station – note the football-themed breakfast room. Walking distance away are two upscale, business-friendly establishments: swish **Steigenberger Hotel Dortmund** and the business-oriented **Dorint Hotel Dortmund an den Westfalenhallen**.

By the station, the four-star **NH Dortmund** offers parking and lazy Sunday stays, while a branch of the **a&o Hostel** chain offers singles, doubles and shared rooms, with TV sport in the bar and communal games. Nearby, handy for the German Football Museum, contemporary mid-range **The Grey** caters to visitors of 'Fussballhauptstadt Dortmund', while the three-star **Hotel Livinn** has a sports bar attached. **LG**





## BVB Stadion

**Borussia Dortmund** are a giant, populist club in Germany's beer-fuelled heartland, who bounced back from the Jürgen Klopp era to make the Champions League final in 2024 and come within an agonising 90 minutes of winning the German title.

With the highest average attendance in European football, 80,000-plus, Borussia will always be there or thereabouts. Backed by the Yellow Wall, the solid Südtribüne of 24,454 standing fans,

Dortmund generate the kind of revenue other clubs can only dream of.

Built for the 1974 World Cup, the **Westfalenstadion** is the perfect football ground. When it comes to international fixtures, the Südtribüne fills with temporary seating that takes an inordinate number of man hours to remove afterwards.

The Westfalenstadion still overshadows the modest ground it usurped, the **Rote Erde**. In 1971, Cologne turned down the chance of being a venue for 1974 World Cup, so the opportunity, and the funds, passed to

Dortmund. This 54,000-capacity, football-specific ground hosted four games, including the de facto semi between Holland and Brazil.

As Borussia gradually rejoined the European elite, so the Westfalenstadion kept increasing capacity, first 68,600, then 83,000. For the 2006 World Cup, architects Engels and Partners unveiled €35ml worth of improvements, including five video screens. Capacity fell back to an all-seated 65,000 – not that many would have been calmly sitting down during Germany's epic semi-final with Italy. For Euro 2024,

capacity has been capped at 61,524, with another semi-final likely to raise the roof.

### Getting here

The stadium is south of town, a 25min walk from the centre down Hohe Straße. It has its own train station, one stop/five minutes from Dortmund's main **Hauptbahnhof**, a quick and easy and journey.

Trains leave from platform 4 at Dortmund Hbf, tucked away from the main platforms. They arrive just behind the swimming pool, part of the Rote Erde sports complex. Once you cross the station walkway, you cut through the Rote Erde ground for the Nord- and Osttribüne, or head left for the West- and Südtribüne. Attractions such as the Biergarten, Strobels bar, Borusseum museum and Fanwelt BVB megastore, are all behind the Nordtribüne. Alternatively, the **Stadion** stop on the north side, close to the Rote Erde

Biergarten and Strobels, operates on match days only, on the **U45 light-rail line**, direct from Dortmund Hbf, 12min journey time. This brings you slightly closer to the stadium. On non-match days, the U45 only runs as far as **Westfalenhallen**, a 10min walk to the ground through Rosenterrassen.

### Where to drink

Alongside the stadium, **Strobels** is the BVB pre- and post-match hangout. This party-minded bar/restaurant with adjoining terrace is perfectly set up for the occasion, a special grill menu in operation for home or away games, shown on 12 big screens and another the size of a house. Brinkhoff's No.1 is the go-to choice for beer on draught, complemented by Schlösser Alt and pricier Hövels Original. Next to it, the traditional **Biergarten** overlooks the Rote Erde pitch, serving beer at one hut and grilled sausages at another. **LB**

## Düsseldorf

Downstream from the rival Rhineland carnival city of Cologne, affluent **Düsseldorf** is the home of electronic music legends Kraftwerk. Football also shared the spotlight in the 1970s when flagship club **Fortuna** made a European final.

While fortune hasn't since favoured Fortuna, Düsseldorf's location, airport and transport links, plentiful hotel stock and impressive arenas have allowed it to stage major events. First the **Rheinstadion**, then its replacement, the **Düsseldorf Arena**, in a leafy expanse of north Düsseldorf, got the nod to host the 1974 World Cup, Euro 1988 and Euro 2024.

Previously, Fortuna played in the **Paul-Janes-Stadion**, named after their most revered player. Here, supporters still convene in the Bar95 and the club shop.

The **Euro Fan Zone** is at **Burgplatz**, with scenic **public viewing** on the Rhine.

### Getting around

**Düsseldorf Airport** is 7km (four miles) north of the centre. For **Düsseldorf Hbf main station** in town, use the **S11 S-Bahn**, the only line served by the **Terminal station (Düsseldorf, D-Airport Terminal A/B/C)** downstairs in the airport building. Trains run every 20-30mins.

Note that the SkyTrain monorail to **Düsseldorf Airport train station**



All pix Alan Deamer

**(D-Flughafen Bf)** is handy for onward journeys beyond Düsseldorf.

Although the stadium is under 10mins from the nearby airport by taxi, by public transport, it's easier to head to the main station in town and out again to the stadium.

Düsseldorf Hbf is south-east of the city centre. Central Altstadt is a short ride by the **Rheinbahn tram network**, the stadium way north.

**TaxiRuf Düsseldorf** (+49 211 71 41 41) should charge around €30 from the airport to town.

### Where to drink

Traditional Altbier bars, Irish pubs and cult Kneipen ensure that Düsseldorf's central **Altstadt** is always buzzing. Here, **Sutton's Irish Pub** on Hunsrückstraße has poured pints and shown matches since Euro '88. A couple of doors down, the **Irish Pub bei Fatty** has tables outside. On the corner with Mutter-Ey-Straße, **o'reilly's** is the Düsseldorf branch of this mini-chain of Euro Irish pubs.

Towards the river, the **Brauerei Kürzer** has made a popular nightspot out of a bare-brick brewbar. Its beer is also served next door, at cult spot **Schaukelstühlchen**.

Opposite, **McLaughlins** focuses on football and live music.

### Where to stay

**Visit Düsseldorf** ([visitduesseldorf.de/en](http://visitduesseldorf.de/en)) has a **hotel database and booking service**.

Beside the stadium on Arenastraße, the **Tulip Inn Düsseldorf Arena** has 280 guest rooms, some with Rhine views. Nearby, on the riverbank, the **Hotel Schnellenburg** dates back to the 1400s, the current structure to the 1920s. Today's guests are treated to comfortable lodgings, plus free parking.



Hotels dot the Altstadt, also the bar quarter. **Alt-Düsseldorf** is right next door to an Irish pub on Hunsrückstraße and two doors down from another. Behind, the **Hotel St Georg** has its own cocktail bar.

For something a notch above, stylish **Das Carls** sits close to Benrather Straße tram stop, with a chic hotel bar.

At the prestigious address of Königsallee 1, the five-star **Steigenberger Icon Parkhotel** welcomes visiting teams and top-paying guests with a 24-hour gym, Michelin-star restaurant, cigar lounge and sauna. **LG**





## Düsseldorf Arena

The construction of the **Düsseldorf Arena** was carried out in 2004 when its regular tenants Fortuna were at their lowest ebb. Düsseldorf was even overlooked when Germany's 12 host cities were selected to stage the 2006 World Cup.

For controversial city mayor Joachim Erwin known for his grand projects including this one, announced in late 2001, this wasn't such a great look.

But, little by little, fortunes and Fortuna

All pix Alan Deamer



picked up. In 2005, Germany and Argentina played an entertaining curtain-raising friendly in front of a full house of 52,000, and by 2010, Fortuna were attracting Bundesliga gates of 46,000.

Given proximity to the airport and an on-site hotel, the stadium lends itself to international friendlies on neutral ground, so far involving Portugal, Greece and Japan, among several other national teams. Internazionale won through to the final of the Europa League here, in that strange

period of empty stadiums and pandemic conditions in 2020.

And now there's Euro 2024, half a century after the predecessor to the Düsseldorf Arena, the Rheinstadion, staged five games at the 1974 World Cup. This summer, three group matches and two knock-out ties take place here, including a quarter-final.

Capacity for the Düsseldorf Arena at Euro 2024 is just over 46,000. Two steep banks of tiering, thinly sandwiched by VIP boxes, rise up close to the pitch. Fortuna fans

usually occupy the Süd-Tribüne. Seats in the Ost-Tribüne lining the long sideline should provide the perfect view.

Outside, looking towards the Rhine, stands a statue of former Fortuna keeper Toni Turek, hero of West Germany's first World Cup triumph in 1954.

### Getting here

The easiest way to get to the stadium is with the **U78 Rheinbahn line** from the main station, **Düsseldorf Hbf**,

via **Heinrich-Heine-Allee** in the city centre, to **MERKUR SPIEL-ARENA/ Messe Nord** by the Tulip Inn hotel, the stadium just behind. Services run every 10mins daily, the journey of 14 stops taking 20mins. Trains leave platform 1 from the main station.

### Where to drink

There are two main drinking hubs in the run-up to any game at the Düsseldorf Arena, neither nearby. **Bar95** at Fortuna's old stadium, spiritual home and HQ of the **Paul-Janes-Stadion**, displays Fortuna's history on its walls, including one of Paul Janes from 1940.

If you're getting Rheinbahn U78 to the stadium, you can do as many local fans do and stop off at a couple of Fortuna kiosks on the way. A short walk down Scheibenstraße from the **Nordstraße** stop, the **Fortuna-Büdchen** beer kiosk at Joseph-Beuys-Ufer 27 has a river view, plus a fair range of beers alongside the popular Füchsen Alt. Decent bar snacks, too.

By the stop for **Reeser Platz** further up the track, **Trinkhalle** on Kaiserswerther Straße provides outside tables and sunshades for you to plonk down your bottle of Altbier and get supping.

At the stadium, the only option is the **Backstage Bar** at the **Tulip Inn Hotel**, which closes its stadium view terrace in the run-up to kick-off but might be handy earlier on match day. **LB**

## Frankfurt

Germany's financial centre straddling the Main river, the self-styled 'Mainhattan' of skyscrapers and banking headquarters, is a surprisingly passionate football hub. Fittingly, its **Fan Zone** for **Euro 2024** is set on the riverbank, **Mainufer**.

In 2022, flagship club **Eintracht** won their first European trophy since 1980. Three years after another memorable run in the same competition, the Europa League triumph marked the 22nd Euro trip since 2018 for fans who follow the Eagles in serious numbers.

**Frankfurt's** most memorable World Cup moment came in 1974, and West Germany's de facto semi-final with Poland, played on a waterlogged pitch. A sponge roller from that day is displayed in the Eintracht Museum at the club's stadium set in forest south-west of town. The **Waldstadion**, as many still call it, is soon to celebrate its centenary.

### Getting around

**Frankfurt airport** is 12km (7.5 miles) south-west of the city, with two terminals connected by a free, frequent, two-minute monorail. Its rail station by terminal 1 is part of the German national network.

You can reach **Frankfurt (Main) Hauptbahnhof** in 11mins by ICE high-speed train or 15mins by **S-Bahn S8/S9**, which also call at **Frankfurt (Main) Stadion**



near the stadium. The city transport system otherwise consists of an U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams and buses.

A taxi into town should take about 25mins and cost €20-€25. Try **Main Taxi** on +49 60 73 30 30.

Ryanair uses **Frankfurt (Hahn) Airport**, 120km (75 miles) from Frankfurt. A **bus** (€20 single) takes 2hrs 10mins to reach Frankfurt (Main) Hauptbahnhof via Frankfurt Airport Terminal 2. Hahn has no rail link.

### Where to drink

Diagonally opposite the station, **O'Reilly's** shows games, serves pints and

offers pub food. Within the station itself, **Zapfhahn** displays classic photos of Eintracht's 1959 title-winning team, while at street level you find sports bar, **Uddin's**.

Also near the station on Kaiserstraße, Australian-themed **Kakadu's** shows sport on four screens and offers daily happy hours.

Traditional **Alten Limpurg** dates back to 1495 and provides TV sports in the small indoor bar, while its terrace overlooks the focal square of Römerberg.

US-style **Champions** attracts sports fans to the lobby of the soaring Marriott Hotel



while nearby UK-style **Fox & Hound** is where expats gather for games.

The city's bar zone is **Sachsenhausen**, particularly Kleine Rittergasse, home of sport-friendly pub **Anglo-Irish**.

### Where to stay

**Visit Frankfurt** (frankfurt-tourismus.de/en) has a hotel database. By the

stadium, **Lindner** offers a gym, spa and suggestions for leisure time in the nearby forest.

Near the tram stop for the stadium, the stylish, mid-range **Leonardo Hotel Frankfurt City South** has a 24-hour gym, bar and restaurant.

In town near the main station, the **Manhattan Hotel** taps into Frankfurt's urban business culture, with a 24hr bar, while classy **Fleming's** is not as expensive as it might first seem.

Nearer the city centre, with the **Champions** sports bar downstairs, the **Frankfurt Marriott** takes advantage of being Germany's tallest hotel by offering skyview rooms while facing it, the **Maritim** has a decent spa complex, with a panoramic pool on the eighth floor. **LE**





## Frankfurt Arena

Still mourning the death of club icon Jürgen Grabowski, in 2022 **Eintracht Frankfurt** won the Europa League against Rangers on penalties, having gone to Barcelona, Betis and West Ham and won each time. The triumph came after an unexpected run to the semi-finals of the same competition in 2019 – this time, the Eagles flew through the entire thing unbeaten, only to lose to Chelsea on penalties. As well as the mass movement of Eintracht fans to Nicosia, Marseille

and Rome, the campaign saw Frankfurt's **Waldstadion** burst into life.

Referred to as the **Frankfurt Arena** for Euro 2024, the 'Forest Stadium' is set in woodland south of town towards the airport. It was opened in 1925 as the 35,000-capacity centrepiece of a sports complex that also featured a golf course. After the war, capacity was increased to over 80,000.

The next major development came for the 1974 World Cup, the large grandstand demolished and capacity reduced to a

half-seated 62,000. Frankfurt staging the opening match, as well as the infamous 'Wasserschlacht', the group decider between West Germany and Poland played on a near unplayable waterlogged pitch. The sponge rollers frantically used to alleviate the situation can be seen on display in Eintracht's excellent club museum.

The Waldstadion also staged rock concerts but when it came to rebuilding for the 2006 World Cup, football took priority. With its signature steel-cable inner roof, and retractable outer one, avoiding a repeat of



1974 was obviously paramount – although still water overflowed from above during the Confederations Cup final of 2005. But with the running track removed, few fans were complaining.

The 2006 World Cup saw some big names here – England, Brazil, France, Argentina – but few goals. For Euro 2024, local fans have five games to enjoy, including a knock-out game. Looking ahead,

Frankfurt will host the Europa League final in 2027. For big international fixtures, capacity is just over 48,000, some 10,000 less than at domestic matches, for which there are standing spectators.

### Getting here

Two lines serve the stadium: the **Stadion Straßenbahn** stop, terminal of the **21** and the **20 trams** north-east of the arena; and to the north-west, S-Bahn station **Frankfurt (Main) Stadion**, that serves the **S7, S8 and S9 lines** and regional trains. All run from the Hauptbahnhof: the S8 and S9 run to and from the airport one stop away.

For the tram from the Hauptbahnhof, the stop is right outside the station, before you cross over to O'Reilly's. It's a 17-minute journey of ten stops.

The stadium is a signposted ten-minute walk along the main road, to the right as you exit the tram – past the Fan-Treff Waldstadion bar/kiosk.

### Where to drink

Arriving by tram, you'll find two bars by the Straßenbahn Stadion stop: the **Fan-Treff Waldstadion**, more of a kiosk but bearing the proud eagle of Eintracht – and local Biring Adler beer.

Next door is the more conventional bar belonging to the **German National Alsatian Dog Association**, and displays a mural of panting canines and Eintracht badges. **LB**



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## Gelsenkirchen

**Gelsenkirchen** is the post-war pairing of Gelsenkirchen-Altstadt, rebuilt as a compact and pedestrianised commercial centre, and the residential green-belt suburb of Buer. In between lies the district of **Schalke**, after which the populist football club is named, their stadium the **Arena AufSchalke**. It sits in Germany's industrial heartland and football hotbed of the Ruhr, whose traditional clubs have large fan bases.

Towards the stadium, the Schalke Mile is dotted with bars, murals and landmarks linked to the club's history, including its

legendary old ground, the **Kampfbahn Glückauf**. Public viewing set up here for the 2006 World Cup inspired one fan to run his own themed walking tours, Mythos Schalke ([mythoschalke.de](http://mythoschalke.de)). For Euro 2024, the **fan zone** will be at **Nordstern Park**, north-west of the city centre.

### Getting around

The nearest airport is **Dortmund**, 53km (33 miles) east. An hourly **Airport Express bus** runs to **Dortmund Hbf main station** (25min journey time). From there, the **S2 S-Bahn** or a **regional train** runs every 15-20mins to **Gelsenkirchen Hbf main station**, journey time 30mins. Hopping around by regional transport run by **VRR** is facilitated with its **eezy app**.

A **Dortmund Airport Taxi** to Dortmund Hbf should cost €35, all the way to Gelsenkirchen €80. A local **Gelsenkirchner-Taxi** (+49 172 617 6767) may charge less going to the airport.

Gelsenkirchen Hbf is just south of the pedestrianised city centre a short walk away – the stadium is way north, accessed with the **VRR regional tram network**.

### Where to drink

Up from the station, cosy **Friesenstube** on Ahstraße wears its Schalke heart on its sleeve, decked out in blue and white, down to the huge tap of Frankenheim Alt dominating the bar counter.



Football-watching blends in with the friendly natter around the pocket-sized **Posthörnchen**, where Weberstraße meets Sellhorststraße, a traditional Gelsenkirchen haunt that closes at 10pm daily. For late-night fun, the **City Pub** rocks it on Ringstraße until late at weekends.

The northern end of the city centre is traditional Schalke territory. The **Kleine Kneipe No.1** on Von-Oven-Straße is a classic gathering place for the Königsblauen fraternity, while **Traber Kneipe Sportsbar** on Hansemannstraße combines late-night partying with match-watching.

### Where to stay

**Visit Gelsenkirchen** ([visit.gelsenkirchen.de/en](http://visit.gelsenkirchen.de/en)) has a basic list of local accommodation. Funky **stays by friends Gelsenkirchen** lays on an impressive

breakfast spread, access to a gym and parking, right next door to the Arena AufSchalke.

Near the stadium on Willy-Brandt-Allee, the **Arena Hotel** provides comfortable mid-range lodgings. At the northern, Schalke end of the city centre, near the tram for the stadium or station, the **PLAZA Premium Gelsenkirchen** basks in greenery, with views of the lake at City Park alongside. The pool and pub should be reopened for the summer of 2024.

Right in town on Munckelstraße, the 18-room **St Petrus** is run by the Tapalović family, the father who came to Gelsenkirchen in the early 1970s and fell in love with Schalke, and his two sons who played for the club as youngsters. The in-house **Restaurant Dubrovnik** serves up Balkan flavours of the homeland. **LE**





All pix Alan Deamer

## Arena AufSchalke

**Schalke 04**, die Königsblauen, enjoy legendary status in the German game. Although modern-day honours have been confined to the remarkable UEFA Cup victory of 1997 and the odd domestic cup, the club's reputation stems from the glory days before the formation of the Bundesliga.

As their name suggests, Schalke were founded in 1904, as Westfalia Schalke, changing their colours to royal blue after World War I. Adopting a tactic of short

passing and fluid movement, the so-called 'Schalker Kreisel', a team starring brother-in-laws Fritz Szepan and Ernst Kuzorra made nine all-Germany finals between 1933 and 1942, winning six of them.

FC Gelsenkirchen-Schalke 04 would draw 70,000 crowds to the **Kampfbahn Glückauf**, where they never lost a league match for 11 years. The locality, renamed Ernst-Kuzorra-Platz, remains a hub of classic Schalke bars today, halfway between Gelsenkirchen city centre and the club's contemporary stadium, the **Arena AufSchalke**.

The stretch of Kurt-Schumacher-Straße between Berlin Bridge and the pre-war ground is known as the Schalke Mile. **Themed tours** (mythos1904.de) take in the landmarks related to the club's most successful era.

Replacing the old ground before the 1974 World Cup, the **Parkstadion** alongside the Arena AufSchalke is today home to Schalke's reserve and youth teams. A stage for the World Cup 2006, a Champions League final and Euro 2024, the contemporary arena has a capacity of 62,000 for Schalke games. This can be converted for international matches by



replacing the 16,000 places in the home Nordkurve with seats for an overall gate of just under 50,000.

Both pitch and roof are retractable. As well as huge video screens, the stadium features a superb club museum and a 5km pipeline of beer that dispenses 50,000 litres on match days.

For domestic fixtures, visiting supporters are allocated blocks V and W at the corner

of the Südtribüne and the Osttribüne. The press area is in the premium Westtribüne, above the business seats – the stadium manages to be both corporate and passionate.

### Getting here

**S-Bahn 302** leaves the lower level of Gelsenkirchen station every 10-15 mins from platform 1 (right at the bottom of the escalator), direction **Buer Rathaus**. It's 12 stops to the **Arena** and takes 15 minutes. Once you arrive, cross over the high walkway and veer right.

### Where to drink

Two classic spots sit along Kurt-Schumacher-Straße at Ernst-Kuzorra-Platz, near the old **Kampfbahn Glückauf** ground four tram stops from the stadium. **Auf Schalke** at No.119 is party central pre-match, a DJ spinning booming club songs to two packed rooms bedecked with Schalke imagery.

Further up at No.143, officially located at Ernst-Kuzorra-Platz 1, the traditional **Vereinslokal S04 Bosch** offers a taste of the pre-war days, with related imagery decorating the wooden interior. This really was the post-training local for Ernst Kuzorra and his team-mates – a small plaque marks his regular table or Stammtisch.

At the stadium, the best choice is **Charly's Schalker** by the training pitch on Ernst-Kuzorra-Weg, with a tasteful display of Schalke history on the walls and a terrace overlooking the training-ground turf. **LB**



## Hamburg

The largest port in Europe and the richest city in Germany, Hamburg can provide the perfect football break. Its Reeperbahn district where the Beatles cut their teeth still has plenty of late-night attractions.

This is where you'll find cult club **St Pauli**, promoted to the Bundesliga in 2024. Here also is **Heiligengeistfeld**, the city's showgrounds and site of the Hamburger



All pix Jim Wilkinson

DOM funfair – as well as the **Fan Zone** during the Euros.

Up in the north-west district of Bahrenfeld, St Pauli's traditional rivals **HSV** play at the **Volksparkstadion**. It famously witnessed East Germany beating West in the World Cup of 1974 – and Holland dramatically overcoming the hosts in the semi-final of Euro '88.

Fulham fans will remember the Europa League final here of 2010, and defeat to Atlético Madrid. As a Euro 2024 venue, Hamburg stages five matches, including a quarter-final.

### Getting around

**Hamburg airport**, 8.5km (five miles) north of the city, is on **S-Bahn line 1**, 25mins from the main station. Trains run every 10mins. It dovetails with the network of U-Bahn lines and buses.

**Hansa Taxi** (+49 40 211 211) offers electric vehicles (+49 40 211 255), and an airport pick-up service (+49 40 211 1799). You should be paying about €30 to reach town from the airport, €35 the train station, €40 the Volksparkstadion.

The **main station** (Hamburg Hbf) is a ten-minute walk east of the city centre.

**Stellingen**, the S-Bahn station for the Volksparkstadion (S3/S5) north-west of town, is 15-20mins direct from Hamburg Hbf.

### Where to drink

For nightlife, **St Pauli** is the traditional hub – albeit a lurid one. The local beer is Astra, usually sold in little brown bottles.

Many bars here fill with fans on match days at the Millerntor. **Café Miller** ('Breakfast café and football bar') and **Kleine Pause** are less partisan and have TVs.

At Hamburger Berg 7, late-opening **Rosi's** has hardly changed since the Beatles days.

From the same era, live/party venue **Große Freiheit 36** is still going strong at that same address.

The other side of the Reeperbahn, on and around Hans Albers Platz, the **London Pub** and **Molly Malone's** attract football fans, although **Zum Silbersack** ('since 1949') is more authentic. Nearby **Gerhardstraße** is the so-called 'HSV Party Meile'; bars such as the **Sportpub Tankstelle** and **Kiez Klause** the key spots.

### Where to stay

**Hamburg Tourismus** (hamburg-travel.com) has a **hotel database and booking function**.

The nearest lodging to the Volksparkstadion, the **Arena Hostel Hamburg** offers en-suite doubles with a balcony along with regular dorm beds. You'll find it just across from Eidelstedt S-Bahn stop, one up from Stellingen. The stadium is a 15min walk away. On the other side of the stadium on Albert-Einstein-Ring, bright four-star **Mercure Hotel Hamburg am Volkspark** overlooks the racetrack a 25min walk from the football stadium. Affordable on-site parking is a plus.

Conveniently for transport, **Hotel Hafen Hamburg** sits near the port and the **Hotel Fürst Bismarck** by the station, where you'll also find the **Generator Hostel** for doubles, singles, dorms and regular entertainment. **LE**



## Volksparkstadion

Though the clock at the **Volksparkstadion** home of Hamburg club **HSV** has had to be reset since the club's relegation in 2018, the stadium continues to welcome near capacity crowds for second-tier football.

The **Volksparkstadion** opened in 1953. It stands on the site of the old Altoner Stadium, used for occasional German internationals and exhibition games from 1925 onwards.

At the time, HSV were playing at the Sportplatz am Rothenbaum, near Alster Lake closer to town. When the Volksparkstadion emerged, literally, from the rubble in the early 1950s, it was clear that HSV would be the club to move in permanently. In those days, the Volksparkstadion could hold 70,000-plus for an occasion such as Hamburg's European Cup semi-final against Barcelona in 1961.

Far from the city centre, and featuring a running track between pitch and crowd, the Volksparkstadion was looking its age when hosting Euro 88 – new roofing and extra seating installed for 1974 had reduced its capacity to 61,000.

Well before the 2006 World Cup, the venue was demolished and nearly €90 million spent to make it more fan-friendly. The new arena was rotated a quarter-circle to take in more sunlight and provide



optimum views for all. The running track was removed to increase intimacy. The capacity of 57,000 is reduced to 51,000 for all-seated international games – the traditional Nordtribüne home end has standing sections otherwise.

Seating in sectors 1 to 28 is arranged in three tiers – the home Nordtribüne comprises the higher numbered sectors. The best seats are in the Osttribüne, where you'll also find the press and VIP areas. The ticket office, museum, fan

shop and restaurant are between the Nord- and Osttribüne. Seats between sectors 16 to 20 in the Westtribüne should provide an excellent view for the neutral.

### Getting here

The ground is set in the wilds of Stellingen, on the **S3 and S21 lines** from the main station to the **Stellingen (Arenen)** stop. Both run every ten minutes. The S21, direction Elbgaustraße, takes 14 minutes; the S3, direction



Pinneberg, takes 20. From Stellingen, follow the signs for 'Arena', turn left at the bottom of the steps, then out past the forecourt to a foot tunnel.

On match days, a **free shuttle bus** sets off from here – immediately to the right as you leave the foot tunnel – three hours before kick-off. Otherwise, it's a good 15-minute walk, along a concrete

path lined with blue markers, through the woods and over a footbridge.

### Where to drink

A cluster of outlets has sprung up for match-day trade opposite Stellingen S-Bahn. **Tankstop** is the smaller outpost of the popular Tankstelle sports bar on Gerhardstraße in town, while alongside, the modest **Shuttle-Imbiß** trades in beer and sausages.

In the nearby forecourt, the **UnabstiegBAR** defiantly refused to change its name ('the Unrelegated Bar') even when the inevitable happened in 2018. Décor refers to fan friendships with Hannover and Bielefeld, and scorn of Bremen, in scarf form. There's local Holsten on draught – though regulars opt for brown stabbies of Astra. **LG**

## Leipzig

Around Germany, successful **RB Leipzig** are derided for their links to a major energy-drinks company, which circumvented the usual 50+1 rule of communal ownership to climb the league pyramid. In the early 2000s, Dietrich Mateschitz, the brains behind Red Bull's global sporting arm, sought advice from Franz Beckenbauer as to where to locate his investment in Germany. Der Kaiser had only one answer: Leipzig.

This wasn't only because of the city's soccer heritage. In 1900, the German FA was founded at the Mariengarten restaurant, Büttnerstraße 10, marked by a plaque today. By chance, it's close to **Augustusplatz**, location for the Euro 2024 **Fan Zone**.

As chairman of the organising committee for the 2006 World Cup, Beckenbauer had overseen the inclusion of Leipzig and its Socialist-built **Zentralstadion** as a host venue. National stadium of the GDR, the Zentralstadion had attracted attendances of 110,000 for major fixtures. Mateschitz duly converted it into the Red Bull Arena, referred to **Leipzig Stadium** for **Euro 2024**.

### Getting around

**Leipzig/Halle Airport** is 27km (17 miles) north-west of Leipzig. An S-Bahn or inter-city **train** runs every 15-20mins



to **Leipzig Hauptbahnhof** main station (15-20min journey time). A frequent train from **Berlin** takes 1hr 15mins. Leipzig Hauptbahnhof is close to the city centre a short walk away and well connected for trams, including regular services to the stadium. Long-established **Löwentaxi** (+49 341 98 22 22) offers transfers from the airport to town for around €40.

### Where to drink

The local beer is **Ur-Krostitzer**, the local bar hub is pedestrianised **Barfußgässchen**, just off the main square of Marktplatz. On one side, **Barfusz** is an all-purpose nightspot open until 3am at weekends, on the other, the **Kildare City Pub** pours pints and screens matches.



Round the corner on Klostergasse, the **Café Madrid** dedicates its Siesta Bar to TV football, providing German Paulaner on draught and leaving the Spanish beer for the fridge. Offering a taste of Bavaria on the main

square, **Augustiner Am Markt** sits behind a large terrace. On nearby Reichsstraße, German-Irish pub **Dhillons** brings in the crowds for match action.

### Where to stay

**Leipzig Travel** (leipzig.travel/en) has a **hotel database and booking service**. The nearest lodging to the stadium is on Waldstraße, the upper mid-range **Arena City Hotel**, with a sauna, bar and restaurant.

Leipzig station is ideally located for both stadium and town. Opposite, the bright, modern **Park Hotel** has its own sauna, whirlpool, gym and restaurant. Alongside, the **Marriott** contains a panoramic

restaurant and the **Champions sports bar**, open to non-guests.

On the stadium side of the station, the **Best Western** is a contemporary makeover of the classic railway hotel, the Lion, which dated back to 1913. Behind, the towering **Westin** offers prime views from its 400-plus rooms and relaxation in its spa centre. Back on the main road, the five-star **Fürstenhof** has a century of hospitality behind it.

If you're visiting Lokomotive Leipzig, the nearby pub and guesthouse **Brauhaus Napoleon** is where Prussian and Russian officers lodged before overcoming the namesake French emperor. **LB**







## Leipzig Stadium

Created, literally, in 2009, **RB Leipzig** have been extraordinarily successful. From jumping into bed with Markranstädt, fifth-flight non-achievers from outside Leipzig, the German arm of this global Red Bull franchise has leapfrogged up the divisions on the strength of the licence gained from an original transaction of a few hundred thousand euros.

When RB Leipzig moved into what was the **Zentralstadion** in 2010, the place was too vast for their modest needs as a Regionalliga side with 4,000 crowds. By the time they bought the renamed, revamped **Red Bull Arena** in December 2016, there were plans in place to increase capacity from 42,558 – now reached for every home game – to 57,000.

Still ringed by heroic statuary from when the ground was constructed, brick by

brick, by Leipzig citizens in the mid-1950s, the former Zentralstadion will soon lose its neo-classical look of the Soviet days. Back then, 100,000-plus crowds filled the arena for major East German internationals. For the 2006 World Cup, a new ground was built with the exterior of the old one, with walkways connecting the two.

The sectors are still named A-D as would be the case across the former Soviet



Union. Sektor B is the home end, still all-seated. For Euro 2024, the arena is officially called the **Leipzig Stadium**, its capacity capped at 46,635.

### Getting here

From **platform 3** outside the **train station**, **trams 3, 7 and 15** run four stops to **Sportforum Süd** (7mins), right by the stadium grounds.

For away fans, there's also a **shuttle bus** that runs from the West Side of the main station from noon, then back from the stadium until 7pm if the game is on a Saturday afternoon.

### Where to drink

A hub of pubs awaits one tram stop before the stadium, at Waldplatz. On the corner of main Jahnallee and Waldstraße, **Mick's Pub** is themed around RB Leipzig and rock, opening its doors from 5pm. The tables outside offer a sunny pre-match spot in the warmer months. Guinness and local Ur-Krostitzer served on draught.

Nearby **Bull's Steak & Mehr** is more restaurant as its name suggests, its **Imbiss** alongside a handy stopover for beer and Currywurst. Further up Waldstraße, at No.29, the **Sky-Pub Leipzig** is ideal, a friendly little corner bar done out in football scarves (note the plentiful evidence of Celtic's visit), dotted with TVs.

A little further away, a stroll along Coblenzer Straße from main Jahnallee takes you to **Schreibers** at Aachener Straße 7, a great option in summer when the beer garden comes into its own. This lovely old building also operates as the **German Museum of Allotment Gardens**, if that's your thing.

At the stadium, RB fans gather at the match-day **Fan Treff**, a cubbyhole bar beside the steps leading up to the main entrance from Jahnallee, while the **Sportforum Eins** to the right of the stadium as you approach from the main road packs punters in for lashings of Ur-Krostitzer and sausages on match days. Outdoor tables come in handy on warm afternoons. **LE**

## Munich

**Munich** is the home of six-time European champions **Bayern**, based at the contemporary **Allianz Arena**, once shared by the city's second club, **TSV 1860**.

Groundbreaking in its multi-coloured, multi-panelled exterior design, the then newly opened Allianz hosted the opening match of the 2006 World Cup, the Champions League final of 2012, in which Chelsea overcame Bayern on penalties, and the quarter-finals of Euro 2020. Under the non-sponsored name of the **Fußball Arena München**, it will also co-host Euro 2024, including the curtain-raising fixture between Germany and Scotland.

Its predecessor, the **Olympiastadion**, hosts the Euro 2024 **Fan Zone** in the surrounding **Olympiapark**. The stadium was where Munich icon and Bayern's greatest ever player, Franz Beckenbauer, led West Germany to the 1974 World Cup by beating Johan Cruyff's Holland.

The boy from Giesing, a residential area south of town, who had snubbed his local club TSV 1860 after being slapped in the face by one of their players during a youth match in 1958, had triumphed in his own backyard.

Beckenbauer was born and grew up on Zugspitzstraße just after the war, ten minutes' walk from TSV's ground, the **Grünwalder Stadion**, then also used by Bayern.



All pix Alan Deamer

After his death in January 2024, candles were placed outside house No.6 where his family had lived. Back in the 1950s, Bayern were very much Munich's second team. The club had fallen from favour during the 1940s because their long-term president, Kurt Landauer, was Jewish. A plaque at the Allianz Arena honours his memory.

It was 1860 ('Sechzig') who joined the inaugural Bundesliga in 1963, prefacing their golden era. Bayern's came later that same decade, spearheaded by

Beckenbauer, goalgetter Gerd Müller and goalkeeper Sepp Maier. The trio won three consecutive European Cups in the early 1970s – and, of course, that World Cup in between.

### Getting around

**Munich Airport** is 28km (18 miles) north-east of town, connected by S-Bahn lines S1 and S8 that take different routes to the central stops of **Marienplatz** and **Hauptbahnhof main station** about 40-45mins away.

Although the lines pass through north Munich, location for the Allianz Arena by **Fröttmaning station**, you have to go into town and back north again to reach it. A **taxi** (+49 89 19410) from the airport to town should cost about €60, €40-€45 to the Allianz Arena.

The budget-air hub of **Memmingen** is about 90km (55.5 miles) from Munich. Five **Allgäu Airport Express** buses a day (€15, journey time 1hr 25mins) run to the city.



### Where to drink

Munich is a **beer capital**. Around the city centre are the flagship hostelries of the huge regional brewing companies, such as historic taverns, the **Hofbräuhaus** and **Augustiner**. Augustiner has several central outlets underscored by tradition, **Am Dom** on Frauenplatz, **Am Platzl** on Orlandostraße and the **Stammhaus** on Neuhauser Straße among them.

On the focal square of Frauenplatz, **Ned Kelly's Australian Bar** and **Kilians Irish Pub** share the same building, the same entrance, in fact, and complement each other in terms of which sports and channels they screen. The other side of Marienplatz at Platzl, the **Irish Pub Dubliner** is a big sports hangout with outdoor seating, while **Kennedy's** at Sendlinger Tor has a large HD screen and beer garden. Close to Münchner Freiheit U-Bahn, evening-only **Shamrock** was one of the city's first expat pubs, with TV sport and live music still major draws.

In the party area of Schwabing, the cult haunt of the **Vereinsheim** displays West ➔



Germany's 1974 World-Cup winning team as a paradigm of free-thinking creativity, also reflected in the type of entertainment now staged here.

For a solid-gold spot to watch the game, **Stadion an der Schleißheimer Straße** on the street of the same name won Germany's Football Bar of the Year shortly before the pandemic. Football viewing is extensively scheduled every week, best enjoyed with a house burger or sausages, alongside a large range of beer.

Near the station, the **Fan Arena** (Arnulfstraße 16) displays classic Bayern memorabilia from the owner's personal collection in a small bar tucked down a passageway.

### Where to stay

You can book rooms through the **tourist office** ([muenchen.de/en/home](https://muenchen.de/en/home)). Near Kieferngarten U-Bahn stop, one down from Fröttmaning and the Allianz Arena, the **Hotel Arena Stadt München** is a pleasant mid-priced guesthouse 20 minutes' walk from the stadium.

On the same U6 line near Nordfriedhof, **Munich Marriott** features the Champions Sports Bar along with a pool, gym and sauna. It sits in a hub of other upscale chains handy for both the Allianz Arena and the nightlife options of Schwabing.

Cheaper is the **Hotel Pension am Siegestor**, near U6 Universität. Dead



central is the **Hotel am Markt**, with a range of rooms and prices. Close to Marienplatz, four-star **Platzl** on Sparkassenstraße complemented a new spa area in 2023 with fine dining and upscale hospitality provided by the Inselkammer family.

On nearby Promenadeplatz, the **Bayerischer Hof** epitomises luxury, with its panoramic spa, fine dining and individually designed rooms.

Within easy reach of the station, the classic, family-run **Hotel Jedermann** is affordable and convenient. Nearer the rail hub, the **4you** is one of a new generation of half-hostels, half-budget hotels, with a pool table and 24hr reception.

On the next street over, Arnulfstraße, the **Eden Wolff** exudes old-school style, catering to rail travellers since 1890 and providing a warming fire in the elegant bar in winter.

All pix Alan Deamer



Among the many hotels surrounding the station on or behind Bayerstraße, the **Bayernland** feels elegant despite its three-star status, while next door, the **a&o München Hauptbahnhof** comprises convenient singles, doubles and dorms in a hotel/hostel combination successful across Germany.

Parallel to the station on Paul-Heyse-Straße, the **arhotel munich** has decided to go the boutique route while charmingly still offering fax, postal, newspaper and even flower services.

By the Hauptbahnhof Süd tram stop, **Le Méridien Munich** offers the reliable comforts of a sauna, pool and gym while the **Sofitel** is an elegant five-star with



nearly 400 rooms. **Flemings Hotel München-City** provides the discerning urban traveller with the comforts of a sauna, gym and Weisswurst for breakfast. **LE**





## Fußball Arena München

Consecutive title-winners for over decade in recent seasons, **Bayern Munich** are now far more dominant at home than the great side led by Franz Beckenbauer in the 1970s. All but eight of their nine consecutive titles after 2013 were won by huge margins of victory, and though their run ended in 2024, Bayern remain Germany's most prominent club.

Opened in 2005 in time to host the 2006 World Cup, the pioneering Allianz Arena was custom-built for soccer, 'a true football stadium, at last', as Franz Beckenbauer put it. Huge but giving everyone a taste of the action – many can smell the turf from where they're sitting – it comprises 66,000 seats for major tournaments, when and stadium is referred to as the **Fußball Arena München** and the standing places for Bayern fans are replaced. These are distributed in three steeply rising tiers: Unterrang (sectors 101-136); Mittelrang (201-247), and Oberrang (301-348).

The Allianz was the first stadium in the world whose exterior changed colour according to event. Cocooning the whole arena were 2,874 ethylene tetrafluorotethylene, self-cleaning, fireproof illuminated panels.

### Getting here

The stadium is a ten-minute, well signposted walk from **Fröttmaning** U-Bahn station on the U6 line, direct from central Marienplatz, 11 stops and 15 minutes away.

If you're coming in from the **airport**, you're on the same side of the city as the stadium but a taxi would still cost around €70 and take 20mins to do the 30km journey. Frustratingly, the **S1 S-bahn line** from the airport passes just north of the terminus of the U6 line, meaning you have to ride it all the way to Marienplatz in the city centre, then back up on the U6. Allow 1hr-1hr 15mins.

### Where to drink

The only option in the vicinity of the stadium, the **Arena-Treff** serves a sports ground close to Kieferngarten U-Bahn, one stop towards town from Fröttmaning. Used by players and supporters of modest VfB München, who celebrated their record points total in the local Kreisklasse here in May 2024, it has a large screen for match broadcasts and a traditional kitchen. Hefty dishes include Schnitzel and Münchner Schweinebraten, roast pork in dark-beer sauce.

At the main stadium, according to the Arena One team that takes care of the catering, on any given match day 40,000 beers are glugged and 20,000 bratwursts devoured. Up to 1,300 Bayern fans can converge on each of the **Paulaner Treff Nord** and **Süd** beer halls at either end of the arena, open before, during and after the game, as well as on non-match days.

Done out with tasteful, black-and-white images depicting German football history – a close-up of Helmut Rahn's boot or the lace-up collars of the pre-Beckenbauer national shirt – the **Arena Bistro** in the Südkurve is open daily for affordable bar food. It's also open match days, with the same beer offer and prices.

Near the Bayern Museum, the **Café Gisela** is named after the original restaurant where the club was formed in 1900, its 21st-century iteration somewhat more sleek. **LE**



## Stuttgart

Germany's motor city of **Stuttgart** is home to **VfB Stuttgart**, five-time title-winning football power of south-western Germany. Their **stadium** is set in the old spa suburb of Bad Cannstatt, a leafy recreation area by a bend in the Neckar river that lent the venue the first of its post-war names.

This is where West Germany played their first post-war international in 1950 and, 40 years later, a celebratory match to mark Reunification, each time against Switzerland.

Euro 2024 will be the fourth major finals staged in Stuttgart, including the 2006 World Cup. Two European Cup finals nearly 30 years apart produced two winners, Real Madrid in 1959 and PSV Eindhoven in 1988.

For Euro 2024, **Fan Zones** are being set up on major squares around the city, **Schlossplatz**, **Schillerplatz**, **Marktplatz** and **Karlsplatz**.

### Getting around

**Stuttgart Airport** is 13km (8 miles) south of the town centre, served by **S2/S3**

**S-Bahn trains** that leave from just below Terminal 1 for the main train station (every 15mins, journey time 30mins). A **taxi** should take 15mins and cost about €30.

The **city transport network** consists of U-Bahn trains, S-Bahn trains, trams and buses.



All pix Alan Deamer

### Where to drink

**Paulaner am alten Postplatz** attracts thirsty visitors to a pretty Baroque mansion dating back to 1747, where hulking portions of pork are devoured across an open courtyard. Nearby **Sophie's Brauhaus** is along similar lines, an honest pub with a maxiscreen for tournament summers.

Beside the Hotel Royal, the **Pils-Pub Alt Stuttgart** is a major football haunt, screening games and serving various beers, including a daily discounted one advertised outside. Alongside, **Biddy Early's** is the most central of the Irish pubs, with TV sport, live music and midweek karaoke. Across the main junction of Fritz-Elsas-Straße and Theodor-Heuss-Straße lies the main party vortex.

Nearby, on Rotebühlstraße, **Seekneiple** is a must on VfB days. Next door, **Sportcafé**

**Carambolage** encourages you to linger with its 13 Brunswick pool tables, eight dart machines, table football and TV screens.

Just off Rotebühlstraße, **O'Reilly's** is the best of the Irish pubs – draught Alpertsbacher can be found amid the Guinness and Kilkenny. Sport here means sponsoring the local hurling and rugby teams as well as screening matches.

### Where to stay

The **Tourist Office** (stuttgart-tourist.de/en) facing the train station can **book hotels**.

The stadium hotel is the **Hilton Garden Inn Stuttgart NeckarPark**, where teams stay – autographs and signed shirts are displayed in the lobby.

Nearby, the former spa resort and festival site of Bad Cannstatt is surrounded by



hotels and guest houses, a 10-15min walk from the stadium. Bright three-star **attimo** on Wildunger Straße contrasts with old-school options such as the **Hotel Geissler** on the next street over, Waiblinger Straße.

Nearer the Neckar, the **Krone** offers comfortable, mid-range accommodation while by Bad Cannstatt station, **Motel One** brings its hotel/hostel hybrid concept to Stuttgart's recreation zone.

By Hauptbahnhof U-Bahn on Kronenstraße, the four-star **Hotel Unger** provides travellers with a bright stay, balconies attached to many rooms and a lavish breakfast, steps from the station. **LB**



## Stuttgart Arena

Founding members of the Bundesliga in 1963, **VfB Stuttgart** rose to prominence under influential local politician Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, club president for a quarter of a century until 2000.

By then, the former Neckarstadion had gained the first of two long-term sponsors' names related to the city's automobile heritage.

Called the **Stuttgart Arena** for showcase tournaments, the stadium was first built in the early 1930s on the site of an old aerodrome and the city's beer festival.

This was where West Germany played their first post-war international the same year, 1950, as VfB won their first national title. The German FA gives the official attendance against Switzerland as 115,000, a record that will surely never be broken.

Facilities were gradually improved, terraces expanded and floodlights installed, before the Neckarstadion gained a new main stand to co-host the World Cup of 1974.

After staging the European Athletics Championships in 1986, Euro 1988, the renamed Gottlieb-Daimler-Stadion hosted the World Athletics Championships in 1993, for which improvements included converting standing areas to seated ones.



For the World Cup 2006, new video screens were installed and extra tiers added, giving an overall capacity of 60,000. For Euro 2024, Scotland face Hungary here, perhaps returning for the quarter-final two weeks later.

### Getting here

Operating on match days, the **NeckarPark (Stadion) U-Bahn** station on the U11 line from the Hauptbahnhof is just across Mercedesstraße from the stadium. The station is also served from Bad Cannstatt on the U19 line.

On the S1 S-Bahn/RE73 regional train line that goes both through Stuttgart main station and Bad Cannstatt, the **Neckarpark (Mercedes-Benz)** stop is behind the stadium on Benzstraße.

### Where to drink

Bars surround the recreation zone of Bad Cannstatt, a 10min walk from the stadium. Here, **Gaststätte Pfiff** ('Whistle') has been a popular pre- and post-match drinking and dining spot since it opened back in 1995.

On the other side of Wilhelmsplatz, by Motel One, **Sophie's Brauhaus** is the leafy, Bad Cannstatt branch of the successful traditional pub in town. Close by, **The Corner** screens games and offers darts, plus Stuttgarter Hofbräu on draught.

If you're staying along Wildunger Straße, **Holz-Klotz** might be a nice place to start your pre-match build-up, a quiet pub with a big screen.

Towards the stadium on Daimlerstraße, the VfB bar is **Karlseck**, on the corner of



Reichenbachstraße, lined with Cannstatter Kurve scarves, a giant image of Jens Lehmann and Old Warriors iconography.

Behind the Untertürkeimer Kurve, at Fritz-Walter-Weg 10, the cabin with the promising Stuttgarter Hofbräu beer sign houses the local **Police Sports Club**. Images of Greece (it's another of Stuttgart's Greek-run venues) mingle with VfB match pennants (including Napoli '89) and an impressive trophy cabinet.

Best choice is the excellent **VfB Clubrestaurant**, with its Swabian specialities, Stuttgarter Hofbräu beer and terrace. You can play guess-the-club as you take in the wall of pennants around the bar, special moments in club history now illustrated by a series of soundbite quotes. Reservation on match days is recommended, but there's usually elbow room at the bar. 