

The People Of Our Place

The Missouri Germans



Have you eaten a **bratwurst**, **sauerkraut**, apple **strudel**, hamburger, or pretzels? Have you heard a band dressed in **lederhosen** playing Oom-pah-pah music? These are evidences of the strong German culture in our state. German influence is especially strong in the Northern Ozark Border.

A variety of people from Old World German provinces came for the arable farmland and the landscape reminiscent of their homeland. With them they brought many traditions and skills.

Germans began the first **kindergartens** in the United States. Our Christmas tree originated with them as did the wooden nutcrackers. With an adult's help, try carving soap or balsa wood. For a challenge, try carving a Christmas nutcracker in the German tradition.

Towns like **Marthasville**, **Hermann** and **Westphalia** boast architecture that also tells us of the fine sense of German craftsmanship. A dominant characteristic of German architecture in Missouri is "**dentil molding**" a pattern of bricks right under the roofline. This pattern varies with the

builder and becomes his signature. Another identifying feature is the pattern of brick in an arch over the windows or doors.

By the mid-1800s, the first German-inspired brass musical ensembles began appearing. Eventually they became symbols of community picnics, patriotic observances and public concerts like today's concerts in the park. You can still hear traditional German music at festivals like **Strassenfest**, **Maifest** and **Octoberfest**.

The German language has provided some common words we use or hear frequently. Have you heard someone say **gesundheit** after a sneeze? It is a wish for good health. **Dachshunds** were originally bred in Germany, and their name means badger dog. Someone with **wanderlust** has a strong urge to travel.

Activities

Easy Apple Strudel

Ingredients: 1 can refrigerated biscuits, 1 can apple pie filling, 1 tube white icing

Directions: Separate biscuits onto baking sheet. Lay one tablespoon of pie filling on biscuit. Fold in half and pinch edges around filling. Follow baking directions on biscuit package. Remove from oven and let cool. Dribble icing over baked strudel and serve.

- Additional German foods include pumpernickel, frankfurters, and braunschweiger. Plan a German menu with a variety of foods and use newspaper ads to calculate the cost of a dish or complete meal. Look for restaurant ads in the paper, too!
- German Heritage: Missouri has many German place names. Use your local paper to see if you can find an article that relates to any of these cities or the German culture.
- Regional Differences: Compare German regions with Missouri to see why settlers moved here. Use latitude, longitude and weather and climate to start. Check the Missouri weather map in your paper first. Make a "compare and contrast" chart. Look for specific German cities in your comparison.

Social Studies Knowledge Standards: 2,5,6

Performance Standards, Goals 1:1,1:4,1:5,1:6,1:8,1:9,2:1,2:4

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