breweries and third Nordrhein-Westfalen with 131. These three states have almost 70% of all breweries in Germany. The number of breweries in Germany increased in 2013 by 9 although the overall production of 94.6 million Hektoliter was the lowest since unification in 1989. 79.7 hl were sold in Germany while the export of German beer increased, especially to the United States and China. Germany produces more than 5000 different types of beer. In per capita consumption, Germany is in third place with 107.8 Liters per person per year behind the Czech Republic (148.6 L) and Austria (107.8 L). In the US, people consumed 77.1 Liter per person on average.

Contrary to popular belief, the # 1 beverage in Germany is not beer but coffee. The Germans drink about 150 liters of coffee per person per year, about 50% more than beer.

**Das Reinheitsgebot**

In April 1516, a year and a half before the beginning of the German Reformation, the Bavarian state assembly convened in Ingolstadt under the leadership of Duke Wilhelm IV and decreed for all of Bavaria that only malt, hop and water (Gerstenmalz, Hopfen und Wasser) are allowed for the production of beer. Yeast (Hefe) was later added. This purity law is still in effect today for breweries in Germany thus making the *Reinheitsgebot* the oldest food law in the world. Before hop was used for aroma and conservation all different kind of herbs were used for flavoring the beer. Some were outright poisonous or caused hallucinations such as “Ochsenzunge, Wacholder, Gagel, Schlehe, Eichenrinde, Wermut, Kümmel, Anis, Lorbeer, Schaafgarbe, Stechapfel, Enzian, Rosmarin, Rainfarn, Johanniskraut, Fichtenspne, Kiefernwurzeln und Bilsenkraut”. Five hundred years later, this purity law has not lost any of its importance, especially with all the negative headlines about certain food items. German beer still contains no artificial flavoring or additives – only Malz, Hopfen, Hefe und Wasser. *Na dann - Prost!*
Matt continues his trek along the famous Brauereiweg in Aufseß in the Fränkische Schweiz, a 15 K walk among 4 different local breweries. He participates in the Hopfennte in the Bavarian Hallertau and immerses himself in the crazy Kölner Karnival, where people drink beer (Kölsch) from small whiskey glasses and anything goes, at least for a few days until alles ist vorbei on Ash Wednesday. Finally, he lands in Northern Germany, in Wildeshausen near Bremen, where he encounters an extraordinary Schützenverein that admits only men and tests the Trinkfestigkeit of any new Aspiranten with old traditions and unique drinking rituals. He returns to his Wahlheimatstadt Berlin with a trunk full of beer bottles and some insights into the variety and vitality of Germany’s national beverage.

**“Beerland” vs “Beerfest”**

This movie is not the first attempt by an outsider to observe and understand the German beer culture. In 2006, the American comedy group Broken Lizard came out with the movie *Beerfest* that was fairly popular with American audiences, especially younger ones. It grossed 20 million dollars and contained a Stiefel (Boot) full of clichés about the German beer culture with stolen recipes, comedic brawls and a drinking contest that of course ends in a glorious American victory when a single drop disqualifies the German team.

Matt concludes that there is no typical “German” beer culture but that each region expresses its own unique characteristics when it comes to the beer traditions and rituals. However, this seems a bit superficial and trivial for this complex topic. A balanced view would bear in mind the negative aspects of beer consumption, including under-age drinking, binge drinking, DUI related accidents and most importantly, alcoholism and other health issues.

Moreover, his description of the Munich Oktoberfest is certainly not typical; most people have enthusiastic and affectionate memories about their visit to the world’s most famous Oktoberfest.

It might be beneficial to include some facts about the Bierland Deutschland in this preview so that the viewer can get a more measured taste of the Bierkultur in Germany.

**Bierland Deutschland – Some facts**

There are 1349 breweries in Germany vs 2538 in the US. Most of the breweries are in Bavaria (623). In second place is Baden-Württemberg with 185