

Fun with a German accent at Plattduetsche

September 2, 2011 by JIM MERRITT. Special to Newsday



Maria Eberhardt is enjoying the [atmosphere](#) at the old-fashioned German beer garden in [Franklin Square](#) a few miles from home.

"It's nice to sit outside and talk to friends," says Eberhardt, 62, who lives in [West Hempstead](#).

Sitting at a picnic table under the trees, Eberhardt orders a Radler -- a half beer, half 7-Up mixed drink -- to sip on this warm Friday night and is considering a bratwurst on a soft pretzel roll. She's hardly alone.

On this particular Friday evening, about 350 people sit at tables or stand in the garden -- a smaller crowd than the usual 900 or so, perhaps because a storm is looming. They're filling up on hearty German food and drink served with traditional Bavarian cheer. It's not unusual to hear oompah music.

"German culture is known for its hospitality," says Matt Buck, general manager. A beer garden had been on this spot in [Nassau](#) County in the early 1900s; he revived it five summers ago.

Pretzels, beer and bratwurst

Dressed casually in flip-flops and shorts, Eric Hoffmann is looking to spend a few carefree hours with friends. "I'm meeting them for beer and bratwurst," says Hoffmann, 39, of Fresh Meadows.

The food comes from a stand at the north end of the sprawling complex, which includes a sit-down restaurant and fields for overflow parking. Tonight's Cans & Clams special offers domestic beer for \$3 (\$4 imported) and steamer clams for \$8 a half-dozen. You can also fill up -- and we mean fill up -- on a giant Bavarian pretzel, hot sandwiches with sliced leberkäse or grilled bratwurst, or the

bratburger with sauerkraut, [Swiss](#) cheese and bacon on a pretzel roll. Desserts include Black Forest cake, apple strudel and fried apple rings with fresh whipped cream.

Then, of course, there's the beer, with tongue-twisting names like Hacker-Pschorr [Munich](#) Lager. It's served in tall glass mugs (or a plastic cup, if you prefer) from an indoor bar adjacent to the beer garden. If you want to toast, say "Prost" -- it's good luck to rest your glass mug on the table for a moment before you quaff, Buck says.

"It's a nice [atmosphere](#)," says Lissette Hinojosa, 28, of [Williston Park](#). "I'm loving the music right now."

Peter Diercks, 28, a math teacher who lives in Woodhaven, has been here when the oompah band was playing. He says of the brass-heavy German sound: "It's not on my [iTunes](#), but when I'm here, I enjoy it."

The Beer Garden at [Plattduetsche Park Restaurant](#)

WHEN | WHERE 6-11 p.m. Fridays and select weekend days through Oct. 14,

1132 [Hempstead](#) Tpke., [Franklin Square](#)

INFO 516-354-3131, [parkrestaurant.com](#)

Upcoming special events

Friday

7 p.m.: Pig roast (\$18 a platter)

Sept. 18

Ompahfest & Schuetzenfest

11 a.m.: Live bands from Germany, vendors (\$8 admission)

Oct. 7 and 14

6-11 p.m.: [Munich](#)-style Oktoberfest (\$55 at the gate, includes open bar)