

Frankfurt Street Food Festival

It's summer, I'm hot, and this foodie is ready to ride up to the Frankfurt Street Food Festival.

Germany's food truck scene was virtually non-existent until a short time ago. Basically all I could find was a brat and bun truck, a French crepe and Nutella truck, or the occasional vendor selling roasted chestnuts during the holidays. Jeez, what the truck!

I'm not sure why, but food trucks hadn't quite hit the Germany scene except in large progressive cities like Berlin. The rest of the country's food truck scene was basically sitting on the Autobahn in a *Stau*—it just wasn't moving like in other countries like the U.S. and Thailand.

This weekend it's a different story in Frankfurt, Germany the multi-cultural economic capital of Europe. The engines are revved up in Frankfurt as over 30 vendors will be rolling out their favorite foods as the city celebrates the first Frankfurt Street Food Festival.



Street food market during the Yasothon Rocket Festival.
Wiki photo by Takeaway.

Head to the *Hauptwache*, the baroque building that was a former guard-house and the *Zell* or just follow your nose. The food trucks are lined up, have their coals burning, and are ready to tantalize your taste buds with some mind-blowing unique foods.

To capture the real essence of street food you have to go beyond the norm and offer the people something different and you'll find it at the Frankfurt Street Food Festival.

Considering this is Frankfurt's first street food festival, there's quite a good assortment of trucks offering some savory mouth-watering treats. Black Calamari sandwiches, 24-hour cider marinated beef steak, Surf & Turf burger to name a few. Fancy an Arepa? [Maria Maria Arepas](#) makes delicious gluten-free flat bread pocket is filled with naturally raised meat or veggies.

For a global array of food and beverages from artisans head to the [Frankfurt Street Food Festival](#). It runs Friday, July 31 (12:00 – 22:00), Saturday, August 1 (12:00 – 22:00), and

Sunday, August 2 (9:00 – 20:00).

Bon appétit my foodie friends!

Once in a Blue Potato Salad

Once in a blue moon you have to do something different and eat blue potato salad

Tomorrow an additional moon or “blue moon” will appear, so I’m celebrating the rare event by making a [blue potato salad with roasted garlic, topped with blue cheese and dried rosemary.](#)

The moon was last full on July 2 and will be full again Friday, July 31. The second of two full moons in a calendar month is called a blue moon when a full moon, which doesn’t quite sync with the months in our calendar.

Is the Moon Really Blue?

Just because it’s called a blue moon, doesn’t mean it will take on a bluish hue except under certain atmospheric conditions. When a volcanic eruption or large fire leaves dust particles in the air, this causes the moon to appear slightly blue-colored.



(C) Dr Klaus Schmitt, Weinheim, Germany

Blue Moon. Copyright photo by Dr. Klaus Schmitt (www.uvir.de)

Are There Really Blue Potatoes?

Yes Virginia, there really are blue or violet-blue-colored potatoes and you can make a delicious blue potato salad with them.

Native to South America, blue potatoes are common near the mountains in Peru and Bolivia where they are often used to make blue potato salad and potato cakes. There are also varieties in France (*Vitelotte*, also called *Vitelotte noir*) and the United States (Adirondack Blue).



Violet-blue potatoes. Wiki photo by user Stephane8888

From a nutritional standpoint, blue-hued potatoes have a high concentration of antioxidants, mainly anthocyanin (water-soluble vacuolar pigments that may appear red, purple, or blue depending on the pH). The pretty pigmented potatoes are also high in fiber and potassium and low in cholesterol. No need to get blue eating these taters—they're a totally heart-healthy treat.

How to Cook Blue Potatoes

You prepare and cook blue potatoes like any other potato. Peel em. Cook em. Prepare em. Don't eat them immediately because right out of the boiling water blue potatoes are hot as blue blazes.

Flammkuchen and the Pursuit of Happiness

Flammkuchen, the Alsatian dish that always puts a smile on my face.

A few days ago I received some bad news; I didn't receive the job I had applied for. For about 10 minutes I was feeling down, but then decided there's something better out there. I quickly made the decision to just get on with it. After a nice stroll to the tree-lined city center of my quaint German town, I sat down at my favorite French Bistro and thought about Flammkuchen and the Pursuit of Happiness.



Flammkuchen (Tarte flambée)

Does food make me happy? Sometimes, it does indeed. Flammkuchen, the Alsatian cult dish always puts a smile on my face. Thin bread dough topped with sour cream, onions, and bacon baked to a crispy perfection. My taste buds say “Ooh-la-la , très bien”.

As I was reveled in the beauty of the day with my Flammkuchen, glass of wine, and husband by my side, a foreign man stood amongst the empty tables of the bistro patiently waiting for someone to notice him. As I’m a regular at the bistro, I asked the man if I could help him and he replied, “Can I sit wherever I like?” I replied with a nod and said “Yes, sit

wherever you like.”

The waitress brought over the German/French menu and the visitor looked a bit confused. I decided to help him translate the menu to English which seemed to give him some relief considering his knowledge of German was limited.

Being that Flammkuchen or Tarte flambée as it's called in France is one of my favorite foods. I recommend the visitor order the classic Flammkuchen and he did. He also ordered a Weizenbier (wheat beer) in German which was impressive.

Flammkuchen, What's it all about?

Flammkuchen (or Tarte flambée in French) is an extremely popular Alsatian dish made of thin bread dough which is smothered with crème fraîche, then covered with onions and bacon bits. Because of its pizza-like, inexpensive, and super quick to make, it's a very popular dish among locals and tourists.

Can you believe there's a Flammkuchen legend? Yes there is and here it goes. Alemannic farmers from Alsace, Baden or the Palatinate would bake bread only once per week. A tarte flambée was used to test the heat of the wood-fired ovens. Due to the intense heat, the Flammkuchen was ready in 1 or two minutes and the crust forming the border nearly burned. Hence the name Tarte flambée meaning “baked in the flames.”

The Visitor's Flammkuchen Experience

He looked. He indulged. He smiled. The Flammkuchen project was a success!

I nodded and said “Oyasumi” (Good night in Japanese).

You see, it's not about a job, my happiness, but the happiness of a visitor in a different land, with different food. It's about the travel, the journey, and the true story of

Flammkuchen and the happiness of pursuit.

Hungry for more? Click here for a [simple Flammkuchen recipe](#).

Speculaas Cookie Recipe

Another dreary winter day in Germany, so today I got up early to fill the home with warm and toasty aromas. Last night I pulled out my crumpled Speculaas cookie recipe and made the dough. It's been chilling in the fridge overnight allowing the spicy flavors to infuse. Now onto baking and then eating them.

The Speculaas cookie recipe is simple and a fun activity for friends, family, or the kids. If you don't have a [Springerle mold](#) to emboss a design onto your dough, use cookie cutters or make your own shapes using a sharp knife. Once the cookies start to bake your home will smell like the holidays—warm and wintry.



Speculaas cookies and spiced tea.

Speculaas Cookie Recipe (Makes about 3 dozen cookies)

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cup (235 g) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (45 grams) finely ground almonds
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

- 1 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup (160 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 1 large egg

Equipment

- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Stand mixer (optional)
- Rolling pin
- Icing spatula
- Springerle mold, cookie cutters or sharp knife
- All-purpose flour for dusting

Directions: Using Cookie Cutters

1. Line the baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, finely ground almonds, baking powder, spices, and salt. With an electric mixer or hand cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Scrape the sides of the bowl with a large spatula and add the vanilla extract and egg and beating on medium speed until combined.
4. Scrape down the sides again and add the flour and beat on medium speed until combined.
5. Flatten the dough into a round and Split the cookie dough in half. Wrap the two halves in plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight (or at least an hour).
6. Using a plain (flour dusted) rolling pin, roll the dough onto a floured surface until 1/4 inch (0.5 cm) thick. If dough is too hard (cold) to roll, let it rest for about 5 minutes.
7. Use a cookie cutter to cut out the cookies and transfer to the lined baking sheet using an icing spatula. Roll

the last amount of the dough it small balls and lightly flatten.

8. Place the baking sheet in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes (so cookies hold their shape while oven is preheating).
9. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Bake the cookies in the oven for 8-10 minutes or golden brown on the edges.
10. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before moving them to a wire rack.

Directions: Using a Springerle Mold

1. Repeat steps 1-5 above.
2. Using a plain (flour dusted) rolling pin, roll the dough onto a floured surface until 1/4 – 1/2 inch (0.5 – 2.4 cm) thick depending on the mold.
3. Dust the Springerle mold with flour (be sure to brush away excess flour).
4. Gently press an appropriate amount of dough into the mold, removing any excess dough from the back of the mold and then carefully remove it onto the baking sheet. Sometimes I use a toothpick to start the unmolding process.
5. Place the baking sheet in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Bake the cookies in the oven for 8-10 minutes or golden brown on the edges.
7. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes before moving them to a wire rack.

Enjoy the cookies!

Get to Know Springerle and Speculaas

The Dutch call them *Speculaas*. The French call them *Spéculoos*. The Germans call them *Spekulatius*. I call the spiced holiday cookies simply delicious.

No matter how you spell them or call them, you'll find many families baking spiced biscuits near the Christmas season. In Holland on December 5th, just before the [Saint Nicholas celebration](#), Dutch families are busy baking Speculaas. In parts of German-speaking Europe, the Alsace region of France, and parts of Switzerland, families are rolling out lots of Speculaas dough.



(c) Photo by Andreas Bauerle (Wikimedia Commons)

The main ingredients in Speculaas are the spices of winter—pepper, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, cardamom, and nutmeg and when baked infuse the home with a warming wintry fragrance. The cookies are easy to make and if you use a mold, the impression forms a delicate looking cookie perfect for gift giving or enjoying with a cup of tea.

Springerle and Speculaas

Don't get your Springerle mixed up with your Speculaas.

- Springerle and Speculaas are both cookie dough types.

- Speculaas dough contains warm spices.
- Springerle dough contains anise and when baked they seem to “spring up”.
- The Springerle is not only a cookie, but a mold you can use to emboss designs on Springerle or Speculaas.

Once your Speculaas dough has been prepared, you can use a Springerle mold (press or a rolling pin) to emboss a design of choice on your cookie before baking.

Springerle History

Traditionally, the first Springerle mold designs were of horses and their riders. Hence the name “little jumper” or “little knight”. Many ancient molds have survived and can be found in museums such as the [Musée des arts et traditions populaires Musée du Springerle](#) in Alsace. The quaint folk art museum is devoted to the history of wooden molds and Christmas Springerle cookies. Now that sounds delicious.

At German Christmas markets you’ll find all types of Springerle impressions for sale from simple to intricate. The molds make lovely Christmas gifts that are functional for baking or can be used decoratively in your home. Keep in mind the more intricate the mold, the trickier they are to work with (at first).

After a bit of practice, you’ll have spicy Speculaas springing up all over the kitchen.