

# DUSSELDORF

Jessica Basi steadily works her way around the microbreweries of this Rhine-fringed German city, fills up on its hearty cuisine and explores the extraordinary pink palace

**Why go?** It's a space for artists. It's a city for history nuts. Most importantly, it's a place for anyone who appreciates good food. The local fare in Düsseldorf may not be 'delicate' – in fact it's unashamedly hefty – but a bun filled with blood sausage and buttery red cabbage is just what's required as you amble along the Rhine, looking out over the purple crocus fields on its banks.

**What to do** Frank Gehry, the architect behind Bilbao's Guggenheim, sealed Düsseldorf's reputation as an art hub in 2007 with his Neuer Zollhof, a curious cluster of glinting chrome buildings overlooking the media harbour – both office space and architectural spectacle. North along the river, the Rheinkniebrücke bridge leads to a stretch of beach where families fire up portable barbecues at the first sniff of spring. Whether it's modern sculpture or Picasso pieces that appeal, K20 art gallery houses a vast collection of European and American artwork ([kunstsammlung.de](http://kunstsammlung.de)). A shuttle service links it to sister gallery K21, where you can see panoramas of the city from the glass-dome roof. Once holiday home to Elector Palatine Charles Theodore and his wife, the 18th-century Benrath Palace, a tram ride from the city centre, is a homage to design ([schloss-benrath.de](http://schloss-benrath.de)). A labyrinth of perfectly symmetrical rooms, trap doors and twisting gardens, the three-winged pastel pink palace is filled with intricate silk tapestries and antiques throughout. The wooden floors are so fragile, guests must don oversized slippers and slide their way from room to room, but it's all part of the appeal. Back in the centre, Carlsplatz market is crammed with local farmers and confectioners peddling their wares. The Schumacher op'm Carlsplatz stall is a good spot to rest from the bustle with a bowl of goulash and some flat, pan-fried pork and veal *frikadeller* meatballs.

**Where to stay** Every room is unique at boutique hotel Sir and Lady Astor (00 49 211 173 370, [sir-astor.de](http://sir-astor.de)). Options include a black velvet and gold-gilded 'Coco Chanel' boudoir, the Africa room (think wooden carvings and zebra print) and a music score-covered Clara Schumann suite. A little further out, contemporary

## Travel information

Currency is the euro. Düsseldorf is one hour ahead of GMT and a one-hour flight from London airports.

**Getting there**  
**British Airways** ([ba.com](http://ba.com)) operates regular flights from London Heathrow to Düsseldorf Airport.  
**Easyjet** ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)) flies from London Gatwick to Düsseldorf. The airport is a ten-minute train ride from the city centre.

### AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min °C	0	1	2	5	8	12	13	13	11	7	4	2
Max °C	3	5	10	14	18	21	22	23	19	15	8	5
mm	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
ABOVE THE PINK BENRATH  
PALACE; VIEW OF CITY TOWER;  
ROSENMEER HOTEL  
RESTAURANT, BAR AND  
EXTERIOR; DUSSELDORF'S  
MAIN PARK; ZUM SCHLUESSEL  
BREWERY; ALTBIER; FRANK  
GEHRY ARCHITECTURE;  
ACROSS THE RHINE; WALKWAY  
IN PARK; SPICED CHEESECAKE;  
HAUS DES KARNEVALS  
MUSEUM; BOOK SALE ALONG  
KÖNIGSALLEE BOULEVARD

Rosenmeer Hotel has vibrant decor and a sleek lounge area (00 49 216 146 242, [rosenmeer.net](http://rosenmeer.net)).

**Where to eat and drink** Come mid-morning, tea and cake shops heave with people getting their *kuchen* fix. As well as cake, Gut & Geme Schokolade café (00 49 211 863 996 96, [schokoladenfachgeschaef.de](http://schokoladenfachgeschaef.de)) makes six varieties of hot chocolate, from an incredibly sweet white concoction to its thick, 100 per cent dark offering, all served in soup-size mugs and best enjoyed with a wedge of *käsekuchen* (spiced cheesecake) or *haselnusstorte* (hazelnut torte). There are several microbreweries dotted about Old Town still producing Düsseldorf's famous *altbier* using original 19th-century methods, each claiming the best beer around. Specialities such as *rheinischer sauerbraten* (braised beef with squidgy potato dumpling and raisin sauce) and *eisbein* (pork knuckle) are served up on beds of tangy sauerkraut at Zum Schuessel, where the brew is just smooth enough to convert the hitherto beer-shy (00 49 211 82 89 55, [zumschuessel.de](http://zumschuessel.de)). More hardened drinkers frequent Uerige ('grumpy old man') for a heavy altbier that really coats the tongue (00 49 211 866 990, [uerige.de](http://uerige.de)). Herby local liquor Killepitsch has a distinctly medicinal kick and is best downed in shot form at Et Kabüffke on Flingerstrasse (00 49 211 133 269). Nearby Em Poetzke (00 49 211 326 973 [jazz-em-poetzke.de](http://jazz-em-poetzke.de)) is open until the early hours and hosts a live jazz band that busts tunes with gusto. A combination of chanting and bell clanging signals each beer round – just cover your glass with a mat if you've hit refill capacity. For something less raucous, try Monkey's Plaza; three restaurants, including Michelin-starred Monkey's West, each offer different world cuisines (00 49 211 649 637 29, [monkeysplaza.com](http://monkeysplaza.com)).

**Time running out?** Visit Loewensenf Senfladen, a tiny ABB mustard shop and museum where you can taste this local speciality and find out how it's made ([loewensenf-senfladen.de](http://loewensenf-senfladen.de)).

**Trip tip** Buy a Düsseldorf welcome card from the local tourist office for discounted access to most city galleries and museums.

**Resources**  
**Düsseldorf Tourism** ([duesseldorf-tourismus.de](http://duesseldorf-tourismus.de)) has information on accommodation, restaurants and attractions around the city.

**Further reading**  
**The Düsseldorf School of Photography** by Stefan Gronert (Thames & Hudson, £55). A volume of images based on a photographic movement inspired by Düsseldorf artists.

