



Libori

P A D E R B O R N



Church

Culture Celebrations

www.libori.de



“Beer fountain”
outside the Town Hall



Liborius fountain
on the “Kamp”



Church | Culture | Celebrations

Each year, at the end of July, the historic flair of Paderborn comes into its own when the whole city celebrates a traditional festival that traces back to the year 836: Libori.

One of the oldest and largest fairs in Germany it owes its fascinating atmosphere to a unique mixture of ecclesiastical ceremony and worldly festivities, passed down through generations to the present. Impressive ceremonies and processions bring history to life and a vibrant hustle and bustle with a multitude of cultural highlights invites revellers to celebrate for nine days. Libori is Paderborn's "Fifth Season".

Libori altar
with Libori shrine 1952



The Story of the Funfair

Funfairs have their origin in the celebrations remembering the consecration of the church. Since the 9th century the anniversary of church consecration was also celebrated with a secular festival with markets and popular entertainment. Religious celebrations and worldly markets and funfairs traditionally belong together.

The Libori funfair dates back to 1521, when the “Magdalene Market” was first established. In 1857 the fair was moved to the “Liboriberg”, but to this day the “Pottmarkt” is still situated around the cathedral.

The Story of Libori

The Libori festival has a religious origin: church and municipality commemorate the anniversary of the death (the birthday of going to heaven) of St. Liborius (23rd July), patron saint of the cathedral, the bishopric and the town.

In 836 Badurad, bishop of Paderborn (815 – 862), with the help of his friend bishop Alderich of Le Mans, arranged for the saint’s bones to be moved to Paderborn from Le Mans in France where they had been interred. Badurad’s intention was that the veneration of saints would help strengthen the unstable Christian faith in his fledgling bishopric. The gift of Liborius’ bones was the foundation of the “bond of love of eternal fraternity” between the two churches. The city partnership between Le Mans and Paderborn is the oldest, still existing, in Europe and even the world.

The cortege with the remains of St. Liborius travelled for four weeks and arrived in Paderborn at Whitsun in 836. Contemporary sources report of signs and wonders, such as healing of the sick, which had allegedly accompanied the procession.

Paderborn welcomed the relics with much rejoicing, and after a ceremonious entry they were laid to rest in the cathedral. It was hoped that the saint would protect the city and also bring prosperity from the many pilgrims that were expected.



“Onkel Jüppis”
swing boats
at Libori 1956

Saint Liborius

In the 4th century Liborius was bishop of Le Mans in the Roman province of Gaul. He came from a distinguished Gaulish family and was influenced by Roman culture. Not much is known about his life. He is said to have died between 397 and 401, and he was a contemporary and friend of St. Martin of Tours. Soon after Liborius' death wondrous healings apparently occurred near his grave.

The saint's name and image appear in many places in the city, Liborius is easily recognisable: he balances stones on his Bible as he is said to be the intercessor and aide for problems with kidney, gall and bladder stones, and you can often spot his heraldic animal, the peacock.



Silver bust of St. Liborius

Libori procession
through the city centre



The Legend of the Peacock

According to legend a magnificent looking peacock flew ahead of the cortege on their way back home. Whenever the pilgrims would stop for a rest, so did the peacock, and when they set off again, the peacock would also rise. In 836, on Whitsunday, it set down on top of the spire of Paderborn Cathedral. As soon as the convoy had entered the church with the relics the peacock fell to the ground dead, its heavenly mission accomplished. To this day a peacock frond is carried ahead of the shrine during the festivities. The peacock was, and still remains, the symbol of the Libori festival.



The Worldly Libori Festival

The worldly Libori festival is opened by the mayor in front of the Historic Town Hall. Three gun salutes and the traditional tapping of the beer barrel indicate that Paderborn's "Fifth Season" has begun.

The festival, with its unique combination of church, funfair and culture lasts for nine days and attracts around 1.5 million visitors to Paderborn every year. The "Funfair Mile" in the city centre, with more than 150 fairground attractions on the "Liboriberg" and more than 140 stalls on the "Pottmarkt", is about 3 kilometres long.

The "Pottmarkt" is reminiscent of the times when merchants and traders from near and far would offer their goods around the cathedral during the festival. Quaint and useful wares in equal measure make up the unique atmosphere of the "Pottmarkt".

The Ecclesiastical Libori Celebrations

The ecclesiastical celebrations start on the first Saturday of Libori week when the relics are ceremoniously raised and displayed in the precious Libori shrine by the cathedral's altar, to be revered by the worshippers. During the year the relics are kept in an ebony casket in the crypt. Since 1836 the Libori fanfare is played during the raising of the relics. In 1896 the shrine bearers' gowns were modelled on the uniforms of the Vatican's Swiss Guards. On the first Sunday of Libori week the shrine is carried in a procession to the Historic Town Hall. The display of the shrine in the cathedral, the Triduum, ends after three days on the Tuesday of Libori week. Following a procession across the "Domplatz" in front of the cathedral the bones are then once again interred in the crypt.

Nowadays the Libori celebrations are an opportunity for the world church to meet: many ecclesial dignitaries, clergy and religious members from all over the world visit Libori. A popular place with visitors is the garden of the Konrad-Martin-Haus behind the cathedral on the "Kleiner Domplatz". It is a welcome haven for Libori guests to enjoy the restfulness, relax under the old trees, have a coffee and savour the famous waffles.

Big wheel on Liboriberg



“Kulturbrunnen” stage
in front of the Town Hall



The Entertainment Programme

One of the daily attractions of the secular festivities is the “beer fountain” combined with a colourful entertainment programme in front of the Historic Town Hall. The thirsty reveller receives a special Libori tankard which is then filled by the “Jubelhennes” with the famous “Paderborner” beer.

Other popular venues are the cosy locations where international food and drink is on offer, wonderful beer gardens that are only open at Libori, or the large marquee tent on Liboriberg with live music and an exciting party atmosphere each night. The entire city centre is the stage for a diverse and first class cultural programme with more than 100 music, comedy and cabaret events and performances. The grand finale of every Libori festival is the magnificent fireworks display after sundown on the last Sunday of Libori.



“Platz der Kleinen Künste” –
Cabaret square

Libori Calendar

The nine-day Libori festival always starts on the Saturday after the 23rd July, the anniversary of the death of St. Liborius – with two exceptions: If the 23rd July is a Saturday, then the festival will begin on that day. If the 23rd July is a Sunday, then the festival will begin on the Saturday prior to that date, on the 22nd July.

The Autumn Libori festival always starts on the Saturday prior to the last but one Sunday in October and also lasts for nine days.



Libori and Europe

Since the transfer of the remains of St. Liborius the city partnership between Le Mans and Paderborn is the oldest still existing one in Europe and the world. During Libori the European idea is of special significance.

Each year at the Libori banquet in the Historic Town Hall a well-known national or international speaker will give a talk on the subject of Europe before invited guests. The Libori banquet was launched in 1955 by the Libori guild, an association of distinguished Paderborn citizens, and follows a 15th century tradition.

The meal traditionally consists of bread, sausage, beer and a "Westfalian Korn".



Libori banquet 1974



Libori shrine inside
the cathedral



Closing celebrations
fireworks display



Autumn Libori

In 1622, during the 30-Year War, mercenary soldiers of Christian, Duke of Brunswick, known as "Toller Christian" - wild Christian - , stole the cathedral's treasure and the shrine with St. Liborius' remains. The Protestant military commander had the shrine melted down and coins printed from the metal. The so-called "Pfaffenfeindtaler" - clerics' enemy thaler-, was imprinted with the words: "Gottes Freundt, der Pfaffen Feindt" - The Lord's friend, the priests' enemy -.

Five years later, at the end of October 1627, the relics returned to Paderborn after payment of a hefty sum of money. To commemorate this event the festival of Autumn Libori is since celebrated on the 25th October (or the last Sunday in October) for one week. In 1627 the artist Hans Krako created a magnificent new gilded silver shrine for the relics of St. Liborius, and in memory of the old shrine some "Pfaffenfeindtaler" were incorporated. To this day the Krako shrine holds the saint's relics during the festivities, while for the rest of the year the shrine is on display in the Archbishopic Diocese Museum next to the cathedral.



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Opening times:

Apr-Oct: Mon-Fri 10.00-18.00 & Sat 10.00-16.00 hrs
Nov-Mar: Mon-Fri 10.00-17.00 & Sat 10.00-14.00 hrs

Special Libori souvenirs are available here.

Notes

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Decorated cathedral
during Libori





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