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With news of Germany and other European countries slowly re-opening their economies, images spring to mind of public squares filled with throngs of people eating and drinking merrily, football stadiums crammed with thousands of cheering fans and parks packed with families picnicking or just out for a stroll. But the article from Deutsche Welle [here](#) about the likely cancellation of Oktoberfest this year is a sobering (pun intended) reminder that things are not going back to the way they were anytime soon.



For that to happen a vaccine is needed, and that is more than a year away. As it is, the toe-back-in-the-water approach of allowing small retailers including restaurants and hair salons to re-open with distancing requirements is what's on tap (ahem) for now. But we'll take it -this is more than a step in the right direction and it provides a model which Canada is likely to follow next month. Patience is being tested right now, but this news coupled with warming temperatures should put everyone in a festive mood, even if it's too soon to roll out the barrel.

As an aside, a few years back I was lucky enough to go to Oktoberfest, the history of which can be found [here](#), and can report that it is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. 6 million visitors come every year -6 million! and once you see it for yourself, you'll know why. To be sure, its not merely a celebration of beer, but of life. People of all ages, all backgrounds, all walks coming together in food, drink and song. Loved every minute of it! And yes, I was attired in Lederhosen -wenn du in Rom bist!

Oktoberfest will happen again, perhaps just not this year, so let's look at this news as more of a glass-is-half-full (I'm on a roll!) news story. I've attached [here](#) a link to one of my favourite Bierhalle songs Rosamunde, a timeless German polka that can be sung no matter how many steins of beer you've had.

Be safe, be well.

Prost!

Martin

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PS The best new German word I learned at Oktoberfest was Schlafmütz, which means "sleepy head" -a reference to Octoberfesters who had taken celebrating a little too far and were wandering around half-asleep. A goodie!