There are two Munches. On the one hand there’s the beer-sloshing heartland of traditional Bavaria, where dirndls (traditional dresses) and sausages fill the postcards and fairytale spires ornament the skyline.

On the other there’s Munich the economic powerhouse, a thrusting city full of gleaming towers and glittering car showrooms. The locals call this dual identity ‘laptops and lederhosen’, and witnessing how the city’s different personalities coexist can be richly enjoyable for visitors. Its history delights at times and disturbs at others – the wealthy Wittelsbach dynasty spared little architectural expense when shaping their capital, while on a more inglorious level the city also gave birth to the Nazi movement – but Munich itself is never less than fascinating.

And crucially, you don’t need to visit during Oktoberfest or the Christmas Markets to get a sense of being somewhere special.

James Ottery gets under the skin of Munich, a city of two halves.
**WHERE TO STAY**

**Mandarin Oriental Munich**
- A reliable high-end hotel.
- Prices are reasonable without breaking the bank.
- The hotel is located in the city centre, reflecting its location away from the heart of town.

**Splurge:**
- The smart new Hotel Lux in the city centre is a classy option for those looking for sharp design and quirky decor.
- The three-star Hotel Lux is a classy option.

**Save:**
- The no-frills Hotel Monaco in the city centre has affordable rooms.
- Bavaria’s famous Wirtelbach dynasty held sway over the region from Munich for well over 700 years. The sprawling, magnificent Residenz in the city was acted as their royal palace for much of that time, and has been well preserved despite sustaining damage in the Second World War. Highlights include a beautifully ornate theatre, a near-priceless art collection and the decidedly bling Palace Treasury.

**FAST FACT**

**DAY ONE**
- Take time to visit two notable attractions: the stringly designed Hitpunktsgärtchen, a poignant replacement for the synagogue destroyed here in 1938; and the unmistakable brick-encased bulk of Frauenkirche, the 500-year-old church whose twin towers are something of an unofficial city emblem.
- Following lunch, head to the eye-opening Municher Stadtmuseum to learn something of the city’s multi-layered history. The museum’s various buildings take you through the legacy of the medieval age and the forming of Napoleon’s Kingdom of Bavaria to the effects of Hitler’s Third Reich and the trials of the Cold war.
- Back towards town, visit the excellent Pinakothek der Moderne, a vast contemporary art gallery, notable for its sweeping, elevated design as well as for its eyebrow-raising collection, which includes works by Kandinsky, Picasso and Andy Warhol. And if you’re feeling particularly culture-hungry, located just a stroll away are Munich’s two other major galleries – the Alte Pinakothek, home of some great Old Masters, and the Neue Pinakothek, good for 19th-century European art.

**DAY TWO**
- BMW is one of the key brands behind Munich’s corporate success story, and you can marvel at precisely how much the car maker has embraced technology with a visit to the remarkable BMW Welt.
- On the doorstep of BMW Welt, meanwhile, join a guided walk of the Olympiapark, venue for the 1972 Summer Olympics. As well as the legendary exploits of competitors like Mark Spitz and Olga Korbut, the Games are remembered for the tragic deaths of eleven Israeli athletes – the Olympic Village apartment in which they were held hostage still stands nearby.
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**Sample Product**

Fred offers two nights’ B&B at the four-star Maritim Hotel Munich from £319 including flights from London. Fredholidays.co.uk 0808 159 5256

Stay three nights for the price of two with Kirker Holidays at the Torbrau Hotel from £468, including return flights, private transfers and breakfast. Offer valid on Friday arrivals between July 26 and September 7. kirkerholidays.com 020 7593 2283

Do Something Different’s Munich tours include a hop-on hop-off bus tour from £11, a Segway tour from £62, and a city tour combined with a visit to Bayern Munich’s stunning Allianz Arena from £22 dosomethingdifferent.com 020 8090 3890

Attraction World offers a range of excursions from Munich including a trip to Dachau Concentration Camp from £27, and to the Royal Castle of Herrenchiemsee, from £49 attractionworld.com 0871 700 8888

Cox & Kings offers three nights at the five-star Charles Hotel (pictured) from £825, based on an August departure and including flights from Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton or Manchester, coxandkings.co.uk 0845 564 7364

**80 Travel by rail**

**5.00** Munich remains synonymous with its bierkeller culture. The Hofbräuhaus might be the most famous of the beer halls, but there’s just as much in the way of atmosphere (and arguably a nicer tipple) offered by the Augustiner Brewery’s outlets.

**Tuck into a heartily Bavarian meal at the Augustiner am Dom restaurant – roasted pig’s trotters, anyone? – before walking a short distance up Neuhauser Straße to the cavernous Augustiner Grosstättenstätten, where litre-tankards, pegtopped waitresses and wood panelling are the order of the day.

**FAST FACT**

**This month’s BM regional launched routes from Bristol to Munich and Hanover, flying six times a week**

**Secure your Coach & Hotel holiday to Munich for £408**

**9.00** Tour the city on a Segway tour from £62

**11.00** Take a good look at the gothic drama of the Neues Rathaus (New Town Hall), a building that took more than 40 years to construct. On descending, wander around the adjacent Viktualienmarkt, an open-air food market complete with bestwurst stalls, decadent cheeses and a seemingly limitless supply of polkaich locals.

**12.00** Munich remains synonymous with its bierkeller culture. The Hofbräuhaus might be the most famous of the beer halls, but there’s just as much in the way of atmosphere (and arguably a nicer tipple) offered by the Augustiner Brewery’s outlets.

**16.00** The museum's various buildings take you through the legacy of the medieval age and the forming of Napoleon’s Kingdom of Bavaria to the effects of Hitler’s Third Reich and the trials of the Cold war. Munich was the “secret capital” of West Germany when the Berlin Wall was in place.

**20.00** Munich remains synonymous with its bierkeller culture. The Hofbräuhaus might be the most famous of the beer halls, but there’s just as much in the way of atmosphere (and arguably a nicer tipple) offered by the Augustiner Brewery’s outlets.