

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Culture and society

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A Kneipe is not a restaurant or a bar – a Kneipe is like a pub. A typical Kneipe (or Kneipen in the plural) is rustic and down to earth and mainly serves beer. It usually offers snacks like peanuts or meat patties. Regulars who seem to have known each other for ages sit at the bar. In the past, there was a Kneipe like this on almost every corner of Germany. It was like a public living room for everyone who wanted to meet friends, acquaintances or colleagues for a beer. Nowadays, trendy cafes, bars and clubs shape cityscapes. The number of rustic pubs in Germany has declined steadily in recent years. Many traditional Kneipen may become a thing of the past.

Nonetheless, Kneipen are still an important meeting place for both old and young people. On weekends, people like to watch soccer or play foosball there. Kneipen are also part of student life. Before the beginning of the semester, student councils usually organize a "Kneipentour" (pub crawl) to introduce new students to the nightlife of the university town. Today, a "Stammtisch" in pubs is not necessarily – as was once common – a meeting of older gentlemen discussing politics over a beer. Many Stammtische simply bring people with the same interests together on a regular basis so they can share their experiences. At a "Sprachenstammtisch," for example, people meet to practice foreign languages together – with or without beer.