



## The History of naturism in Germany

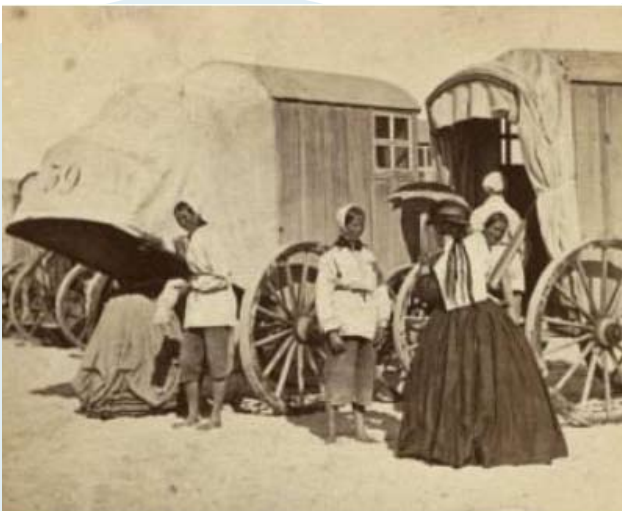
Source: TRAVELBOOK | 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017

*From time to time naturism is still being pushed into the grimy corner, but anyone really dealing with the subject, will soon realize that there is much more behind naturism than just being naked. TRAVELBOOK reveals how naturism was created in Germany.*

Once upon a time ..... it was normal to swim naked. In the Middle Age, for example, people hopped naked into rivers and lakes or enjoyed wellness in bathhouses according to ancient or oriental models. Around the year 1300 there were about 15 such public bathhouses in Lübeck. The banishment of nude bodies from the public only began in the early modern history. First only the upper class was prude. The ordinary people continued to splash all nude till the 19th century.

### INHIBITED BIEDERMEIER

During the Biedermeier period nudity was considered very indecent. People wore swimwear, which covered almost the whole body, also for men. Yet, even in this veil public bathing was offensive. Already around the year 1800 there were the first bath carts: wooden dressing cabins with wheels driven into the sea, to protect bathers from the sight of others.



**Prudery on the beach of Norderney: bath carts protect high-necked clothed people from the public eye.**

Foto: dpa picture alliance

### IN 1898 THE FIRST NATURIST CLUB IN GERMANY WAS FOUNDED IN ESSEN

For the first followers of naturism in Germany around the year 1900 it was not about bathing in a more comfortable and less cumbersome way, but about revolutionary social changes: the "way of life" wanted to break out of the unhealthy and non-natural conditions, which prevailed in the industrial cities.

In 1898 the naturists founded the first naturist club of Germany in Essen. Berlin, too, was a pioneer of the new movement. For the followers at that time nudity was a political message. Either it was about liberation from the social differences, which was also seen in the clothing, or about original Germanism according to the motto "nude and German", with more or less latent anti-Semitism.

Health often played a role, the overall concept then included, for example, also hardening, vegetarianism and renunciation of alcohol and tobacco.

### KARL WILHELM DIEFENBACH WAS MOCKED AS THE "KOHLRABI-APOSTLE".

Even before the turn of the century, painter, vegan and social reformer Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach was an early pioneer campaigning for the nudity as part of a new philosophy of life.

He was mocked as the "Kohlrabi-Apostle", the police obstructed his meetings and public lectures, so that he left his adoptive city of Munich and lived in an abandoned quarry. Then he fled to Egypt and founded a sect-like commune in Vienna, before he died on the isle of Capri in 1913.

Perhaps the most prominent ancestor of the German naturism was Richard Ungewitter, who in 1903 published the brochure "Wieder nacktgewordene Menschen" (People naked again) and who founded the second naturist club in Germany in 1908.





## GERMANY'S FIRST NATURIST BEACH

In the wild '20ties naturism became more and more popular among the alternative intellectuals or the leftist workers. In 1920 Germany's first naturist beach was opened on the island of Sylt. On 5th May 1931 the first public naturist swimming gala took place in Leipzig. When in the same year nude bathing outside of closed club grounds was banned, the naturist clubs drew more and more people. At the end of the Weimar Republic they had about 100.000 members.

In the "Third Reich" these clubs were dissolved or incorporated into National Socialist organizations, like sports clubs into the "Bund für Leibesziehung" (League for physical education). In 1942 the prohibition for nude bathing was reduced, nudity was permitted when away from other people. Yet, nudity was not free of racist-germanising ideology. The comments by Hans Surén and the pictures by Leni Riefenstahl were well known.

## FREE BODIES IN EAST AND WEST

There were trends in the two sides of the divided Germany for naturism, although nude bathing was considered as "typical East-German". In 1949 the "Der Deutsche Verband für Freikörperkultur" (German Federation for Naturism) was founded in Kassel and was registered in the register of associations in Hannover in 1953, in the same year also the "fkk-jugend" (Naturist Youth).

After further naturist resorts had been established, among others, in France during the '50ies, textile-free swimming became more and more popular also in the Federal Republic of Germany. During the 68-movement nudity was considered as liberation from the shackles of petty bourgeoisie. Anti-authoritarian parents let their children play all nude in everyday life. Sylt experienced a renaissance as 'Naturism Mecca': "There is a nude bum in every wave", commented Romy Schneider after her visit on the island in 1968.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF NATURISM IN THE GDR

Artists and intellectuals in the GDR started nude bathing in the early 50ties in Ahrenshoop. When conflicts came up between clothed and unclothed swimmers, nude swimming was banned in May 1954. The naturist fans protested, among them also celebrities, till the ban was lifted exclusively for Ahrenshoop. In other zones in the GDR nudity was not permitted, though.

There were riots in which clothed bathers, who were suspected of being critics, were insulted, tied up or even stripped by force. After a wave of protest letters and public appeals at the GDR government, it decreed "The Order of settlement of public open-air swimming pools". This permitted nude swimming in designated areas. During the 70ties nude swimming in the GDR became free to the general public – a little freedom in a dictatorship, as some sociologists believed.

## THE SEX INDUSTRY HAS HIJACKED THE TERM NATURISM

Today the naturists in Germany simply want to enjoy the physical feeling of liberty, without connecting a mental attitude with it. "As child I always was at the naturist beach with my parents, at those days this was quite normal in the GDR", says naturist fan Anne. Still today I like enjoying the beach without uncomfortable and wet clothes."

Similarly Elmar from Herrenberg, a long-term fan of the naturism movement and initiator of the forum [www.fkk-freun.de](http://www.fkk-freun.de) (in German only), describes the appeal of nude swimming and sunbathing: "A feeling of freedom, feeling good, feeling the wind, the heat or also the cold on your whole body, no wet swimsuit sticking on the body." Like many other naturists he complains of the tendency to sexualize nude swimming and to put it into the 'dirty corner': "The sex industry has hijacked the term of naturism, in order to present itself in a better light", he says, "this has made it a lot more difficult to show naturism as something positive."

## MORE ACCEPTING FOR NATURISM, BUT CLUBS ARE LOSING RELEVANCE

The fact that naturist clubs have difficulties to find young people does not necessarily mean that nude swimming as such is 'out'. "Fewer and fewer people are willing to commit themselves in a club", thinks Elmar, "other than that I clearly observe the trend that naturism has also gained acceptance in non-designated areas. Nude hiking and nude biking are 'in' and there are more and more naturist zones in the public lidoes."

Wolfgang Weinreich, a former President of the International Naturist Federation, notices a trend towards travels abroad and to luxury among the naturist holidaymakers. "It could be that clubs are losing memberships because they are lacking young people, but that is not the case in tourism", he says. Enjoying people, elder than 50, and young families - both are booking naturist holidays. "Naturism is still interesting."





# „Famous Dutchman presented the magazine BLOOT“



The NFN has presented the magazine Bloot (Nude) on 4th October 2017. A famous Dutchman has presented the magazine Bloot (nude) together with the director of the NFN and, of course with the staff of the NFN.

Moderator and actor Koert-Jan de Bruijn graced the cover of the first issue of the magazine Nude (Bloot) from the NFN ! As the name of the magazine suggests, Koert-Jan de Bruijn posed nude.

Bloot (Nude) is aimed at people who like to relax nude, such as Koert-Jan. „I'm one of those 2 million people who enjoy at least during the vacation to go to an naturist camping“.

Koert-Jan notices that in the Netherlands, there still are many prejudices about exposing recreation. Some people think that naturists wear woollen socks or that they are erotic clubs. „ I am a living example that this is just not true, it is simply about enjoying nude recreation.“

Koert-Jan hopes that the magazine of the Naturist Federation Netherlands will reach the wavering group of people who want to recreate all nude. The paper gives information and tips on places where you can do this.

This magazine Bloot is now available in ordinary bookstores.





## 5. International Nude League in Portugal



With more than 80 runners and walkers the 5th International Nude League took place at Meco Beach, Portugal on 16th September.

The event started at 10:00 a.m., in a windy and cold morning with a temperature around 18 ° C.

The winner was Vasco Marta aged 25, who took first place on the podium with a time of 25 minutes and 11 seconds. He did not win the previous two participations and next year he will try to improve his score and win again this competition.

Almost 90% of runners are non-naturists as we can see by the lot of white stripes on photos.

The event is organized since 2013 by José Sousa, who always run the five kilometers in the sand. „It’s a way to promote self-esteem and naturism in Portugal,“ said the 45-year-old organizer. „We just have not been able to do the event yet in the Summer beach season,“ he said.

With five editions, this event is the only naked run in Portugal but unfortunately women did not apply to run as we would like. This year only two women had run.

A lot of media published information about Nude League and naturism every year and some runners travel more them 300 km to participate.



Near the Alps, at 25 km from the center of Turin, 20 minutes from the airport Caselle. Caravans, plots for Recreation Vehicles and tents, completely equipped bungalows, caravans with chalet. Pool, solarium, jacuzzi and sauna. Clubhouse restaurant, petanque, mini-tennis, table tennis, Volleyball. Mountain bike circuits and trails in the Park Mandria

**Sights:** Venaria Royal Palace and Park, St. Michele Abbey, Rivoli Castle, Mole Antonelliana, Egyptian Museum, Piazza S. Carlo, Basilica of Superga.

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## Events December

**03.12.2017 WORLD NATURIST DAY 2017**  
(Southern Hemisphere)



## Info Focus February

**Deadline to remit articles: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
**Release of Focus latest: 05<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

## Events January

**06.01. 2018. INF FNI Wintermeeting, AUT**  
Naturistenpark Lobau, Vienna, Austria  
**Contact:** [info@thailandnaturist.com](mailto:info@thailandnaturist.com)



**More informations:**  
Check EuNat Downloads for information and registration

**Contact:** [naturism@inf-fni.org](mailto:naturism@inf-fni.org)





# „FPN – Facebook strategy“

Facebook has become the primary choice for social network of entities, associations and clubs linked to naturism.

Being an easy and free tool, it has its biggest disadvantage in the fact that many of its associates or potential clients do not follow the information provided because they could be absent from this social network.

However, there is a risk of focusing the information on Facebook, relegating to the background or even abandoning other means of communication that are more comprehensive or used by a greater number of target people.

On the positive side, Facebook allows the advertising of events and news about naturism in an easy and accessible way, with a strong reach beyond the naturist community, allowing a greater reach in spreading the philosophy of naturist lifestyle.

The available tools allow users to see the geographic and demographic reach, allowing a free analysis of the dispersion by age, gender and regions.

With the obtained data, it is possible to choose and target the spread of content through objective strategies, whose results are easily measured and corrected when necessary.

The Portuguese Federation Board has followed this trend by promoting naturism among a large number of people who are present in this network, thus contributing to enlarge the membership base of our affiliated clubs and associations.

The attached images illustrate the presence of FPN Facebook page in the last two years, with a growth from 3500 to 10700 likes.

In addition to the „likes“ achieved, more important is the fact that we have already reached about 7600 Portuguese.

The work carried out in this social network, with the use of very few resources, allowed FPN to obtain excellent results over the last years.

### As a curiosity, we can compare the FPN to other federations (data collected in June 2017):

- France – 4145
- Spain – 2465
- Canada – 2775
- Brazil – 1094
- New Zealand – 2013
- Austria – 1012
- Belgium – 599
- Czech Republic – 2179
- Germany – 2157
- Denmark – 433
- Finland – 59
- Croatia – 223
- Ireland – 2006
- Norway – 419
- Serbia – 1087
- Slovenia – 608
- England – 6409

### Note 1:

There is no relationship between „likes“ and joining Naturist Membership Card.

Despite the greater reach and greater dissemination, joining Naturist Membership Card has had a slight growth in recent years but has not tripled.

But without using Facebook tools the growth verified could be different.

### Note 2:

Federations data are not comparable because their Facebook approach strategies are not known and they could probably be very different from one to another.





# A lighthouse worldwide

The naturists at the lake of “Sonnensee” celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. By Mark Bode

When even the President of the World Federation of the Naturists, Austrian Sieglinde Ivo, arrives at the celebration for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Bund für Familiensport und freie Lebensgestaltung” (BffL) - Association for Family Sports and Freedom of Life – that says a lot. Because, according to her own saying, she usually does not visit other associations for their celebrations. But for this one she even has postponed her own holidays, her presence was that important to her. “Of course, this makes us very proud”, says Jan Schlegel, President of the BffL. Ivo was not sparing with praise during her speech. The BffL is “ a worldwide lighthouse and a flagship association”, Ivo said.

At the end of August the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in the full on the site at the lake of “Sonnensee”. District Mayor Klaus Dickneite was also enthusiastic about the offers by the association. It was his first time to be at the site, but surely not the last time. “It was very interesting to learn that the association is not only concerned about naturism, but that nature conservation also is very important”, he says.

## The association does a lot for the environment

The board with Schlegel is very involved in this field: “We compensate all CO2 emissions caused by the activities of the Family Sports and NaturCamp by projects of reforestation”, declares Schlegel. For years the members strive to reduce the consumptions and thus the emission of greenhouse gases on the club’s grounds by implementing various measures and thereby contribute to the climate protection. The climate-positive management has given the BffL the award for the best ‘ecoprofit’ measure for the past year. Except for one tractor, all other cars have been converted to electric vehicles. Guest from all over the world staying at the BffL (last year it were 2380 guests) can hire bicycles at the site for their excursions. “We are worried a lot about the future”, says Schlegel. **Our complete terrain is supplied by 100% natural hydroelectric power!**

## History of the association

After the end of the Second World War the former members of the “Bund für Leibesucht” (Association for Physical Education) and other naturist associations had been searched for a new foundation, on hand of a newspaper advertisement. In July 1947 the British Military Government provided a wasteland of 120.000 square meters. By year-long own works this terrain had been cultivated. During the construction of the motorway junction in 1960 the lake “Sonnensee” was created. By



means of leasing further plots at the lake had been purchased. In 1962 the “Sonnensee” was officially opened at the eighth Congress of the World Federation, the International Naturist Federation. The club experienced its wedding in the early 80ties with about 4000 members. Meanwhile the number reaches nearly 1400 – tendency rising. During the last four years more than 100 new members joined per year. At the beginning many of them are only interested in nature and not in the aspect of naturism. Anyhow, on the site there is only rule: Only in the water swimmers should not wear any textiles. On land this is optional for everybody.

[www.bffl-hannover.de](http://www.bffl-hannover.de)

