



# Germany's Biggest Festival is Free

*The Bluesfest Eutin/BluesBaltica has always been free*

*Photo by Helge Nickel*

**By Helge Nickel**

From the small beginning of 1,500 concert-goers in 1990, the Bluesfest Eutin/Blues Baltica festival grew to become the biggest blues festival in Germany with more than 15,000 visitors.

The festival is held every year for four days during the third weekend in May in the market square of Eutin in northern Germany. Additional parts of the festival are the night sessions (three days), an exhibition with blues photos from international photographers, and several club events and concerts at different locations.

But the heart of the festival is the wonderful atmosphere of the old market square with a big open-air stage, surrounded with local restaurants and coffee shops. This outstanding location, along with great musicians and a big and peaceful crowd, provides a unique blues experience.

The Bluesfest Eutin/BluesBaltica is well known as an international-oriented festival, which means the festival offers more first-class acts from other countries than most of the other festivals in Europe. For the first time in 2012, it featured acts from each continent. The festival has also presented American blues musicians such as Bryan Lee, James Harman, Dianna Greenleaf, Marquise Knox, Reba Russell, Zakiya Hooker, Moreland and Arbuckle and Lurrie Bell.

All activities around the Bluesfest Eutin are free of charge, made possible by a long list of generous sponsors and donors. To creatively help finance this free festival, local teenage girls walk through the crowd each day asking for donations. For one euro you get a colored sticker, and for a larger donation you get a free CD. By the end of the four days, most every attendee is wearing multiple donation stickers.

In 2015 the Bluesfest Eutin/BluesBaltica was awarded the great honor of a Keeping the Blues Alive award, International Festival by The Blues Foundation. For more information, visit [www.bluesfest-eutin.de](http://www.bluesfest-eutin.de)

*Promoter Helge Nickel, also known as Kreative+Kronkretm, founded the Bluesfest Eutin/Blues Baltica in 1990. The Bluesfest Eutin/Blues Baltica is The Blues Foundation's 2015 recipient of the Keeping the Blues Alive award for International Festival. This year's festival is May 14-17.*



**Helge and Barbara Nickel hold the Keeping the Blues Alive award for International Festival during January's ceremony in Memphis**

*Photo by Tim Parsons*