

The artists Don't put too much stock in the band's name: It's not composed of dried-up Summer of Love stoners, and there are only 13 members, not 17. In Berlin, from whence this unclassifiable acoustic motley-folk crew hails, the term *hippie* is lobbed indiscriminately at anyone half succeeding at an idealistic pursuit—and it fit the band's earliest incarnations and fluctuating membership. Head Hippie Christopher Blenkinsop—whose ukulele may conjure Tiny Tim, but whose Irish bouzouki does not—formed the group in 1995, six years after the Berlin Wall had crumbled and flooded West Germans with a torrent of new music from Eastern Europe that hadn't made it to the West during the Cold War. Never mind Berlin's pedigree as a hothouse for rock and techno—17 Hippies became a singular success with its insane mash-up of Romanian melodies and Turkish meters; lyrics sung in German, English and French; and instruments from banjos to euphoniums.

Hear it *Heimlich* (Hipster, 2007). The group's new disc, out Tuesday 18, includes a Turkish take on "Apache," the ubiquitous instrumental originally recorded by Brit group the Shadows in 1960, and since adopted and endlessly sampled by hip-hop artists. 17 Hippies does Nas ("Made You Look") one better, and throws in a ukulele and Persian hammered dulcimer for good measure.

Taste it For an idea of what it would've been like

if you'd had a German mom busting out grub in the kitchen, give the authentic cooking at **Laschet's Inn** a try. We recommend the *rouladen*, a flavorful house specialty made of thin beef rolled with bacon, onions and pickles. Wash it all down with a crisp Jever or Spaten pilsner. 2119 W Irving Park Rd (773-478-7915).

Buy it German shoe store **Salamander** has an outpost in Lincoln Square, and while some of the women's styles resemble

orthopedic kicks, the adorable array of imported, multicolored-suede kids' shoes and lace-up beginner walkers for tots are hard to match. For adults, Deutsche brands that yield to both form and function include Gabor, Ara, Wörishofer, and even a few *trachtenschuhe*, which are the preferred folky footwear of dirndl-donning damsels. 4740 N Lincoln Ave (773-784-7463).

GERMANY

17 Hippies

Sunday 16, 9:30pm at Hideout;
 Tuesday 18, noon at Daley Center;
 8pm at Martyrs'

Learn it If you don't have the legs for lederhosen, you can still become an insider on the German scene. Learn the language with a class in general German, business German or literature at the **Goethe-Institut Chicago** (classes run between \$140 and \$380). Or bone up on Teutonic art at DANK-Haus' **Rough Space Gallery**, featuring up-and-coming German, German-American and European artists. *Goethe-Institut: 150 N Michigan Ave, suite 200 (312-263-0472). Rough Space Gallery: Sat 11am-3pm; 4740 N Western Ave (773-561-9181).*

