

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

ADVENTSSITTEN / ADVENT CUSTOMS

In a community, village, or neighborhood, people meet at somebody's window or door every evening between the 1st and the 23rd of December. Neither church membership, nor other social standings are important. The meeting point is in front of the window or door of the respective host or hostess. That window, or calendar “door”, is composed of the real window, displaying the date, lights, pictures and other elements. The hosts can then lead a short ceremony with carols, stories, reflections or prayers. Of course, serving Christmas cookies and Gluehwein or hot chocolate is also customary at these private ceremonies. On the 24th of December, the Holy Night, all the churches open their doors for prayers and reflection.

The need for closeness in times of wars and crises have possibly contributed to the continuation of people preparing for Christmas. Since the 1990's these traditions have been re-discovered and revived in many parts of Germany.



***“Ist die Weihnacht hell und klar,
hofft man auf ein fruchtbar Jahr.
Steckt die Krähe zu Weihnacht im Klee,
sitzt sie zu Ostern oft im Schnee.”***

*“If Christmas is bright and clear,
one hopes for an abundant year.
If the crow is standing in clover at Christmas,
she'll be sitting in snow at Easter.”*
– Traditional Bauernregel (“farmer's/country saying”)

Christmas Traditions: Advent in Germany, Austria and Switzerland

The Advent tradition is a religious celebration in preparation for the arrival, or “advent” of the Christ Child (*das Christkind*) on his “official” birthday, the 25th day of December. The Advent season and its celebration have changed over the years from a more serious, somber character (including giving up things, as for Lent) to one of a more joyous nature — including such treats as chocolate-filled Advent calendars. The four weeks leading up to Christmas Eve are a happy time — at least for those not too caught up in the increasingly hectic and commercial aspects of this time of the year.