

"Bei uns ist immer was los!"

ADVENTSSITTEN / ADVENT CUSTOMS ADVENTSSITTEN IN BAYERN / ADVENT CUSTOMS IN BAVARIA

At no other time of the year in Bavaria do significant and colorful customs abound as in the Advent season before Christmas. Though this season no longer implies the strict ban on dancing and wedding celebrations of an earlier time, its devout nature still characterizes the country observances.



On each of the four Advent Sundays, "Rorate" services feature fine performances of sacred music. The "Klopfel" nights begin on November 30, the feast of St. Andrew, when the children go from house to house expecting gifts.

Unmarried girls look forward to St. Barbara's Day, December 4. It is an old custom for the girls to gather cherry and peach tree boughs and to put them in water, hoping the flowers will blossom by Christmas. For those who succeed, they are promised a husband within the year.

The famous feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, is the day Santa Claus visits the children, bringing gifts of fruit and nuts for the well-behaved, and paddlings for the naughty ones.

The feast of St. Thomas, December 21, is the shortest day of the year. Since it is also the longest night of the year, age-old superstitions have grown up around this night when "spirits" are abroad. In many regions of Old Bavaria, the people try to foretell the future by means of various quaint practices, such as reading the designs made by molten lead poured into water.

On this day the women bake a special Christmas bread called "Kletzenbrot," made of nuts and figs and dried pears or "Kletzen".

The Advent customs lead to the varied observances of the Christmas festival, which prepare for the coming "Rauhnächte", or "Severe Nights" during the long winter months.

Visitors to Bavaria at this holiday season will be well-rewarded and will come away enriched with unique experiences.

Christmas time

We have compiled lots of information about the Bavarian christmas customs, christmas markets (Christkindlmärkte) - St Nicholas Day - "Klausen-Treiben" in the Allgäu - Gun salutes in the Berchtesgadener Land - "Raunächte" - "Perchten" and "Holzmandl" - Christmas biscuits