

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

WEIHNACHTSMÄRKTE—CHRISTMAS MARKETS

market: der Markt, die Märkte

Christmas market: der Weihnachtsmarkt, die Weihnachtsmärkte

Christmas in Germany

Germany's Christmas markets

Twenty-five years ago, the famous "Christkindlmarkt," or Child Christ Christmas market, in Nuremberg was the undisputed main attraction of the Christmas season in Germany. These days, however, it has plenty of serious competition.

Every year, the centers of around 100 German towns and cities are filled with the alluring aroma of mulled wine, gingerbread cakes and roasted almonds. Rows of little wooden booths line the historic squares — each of them offering tasty seasonal snacks or handmade gifts.

Christmas markets start up just before the first Sunday in Advent, and most of them remain open until Christmas itself. They have become a major magnet not only for Germans, but for visitors, too.



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While bigger cities have the most well-known Christmas markets, almost every German town boasts a smaller, and perhaps even more charming market, each with its own traditions and regional specialties.

Germany's Christmas markets, or *Weihnachtsmärkte*, are world famous for their seasonal cheer. Musical programmes, parades and the unique traditions in each city make the German *Weihnachtsmärkte* more than just a place to buy gifts and enjoy Yuletide treats — they are long-standing cultural events, some dating back centuries.

Christmas markets typically open the last week of November and stay open until just before Christmas. Almost all markets serve *Glühwein*, or mulled wine, perfect for warming chilly fingers on cold winter nights. Vendors sell regional food specialties, as well as classics like the gingerbread-like *Lebkuchen*, roasted chestnuts, spiced almonds and sausages.

One of the most memorable experiences for anyone living in Germany is savoring the winter holiday season at one of the country's myriad Christmas markets. The colorful fairs are held in most towns and cities during the four-week Advent season leading up to Christmas.

The scent of roasted almonds, gingerbread cookies and savory snacks like fried bratwursts and potato pancakes intermingles with the steam rising from mugs of hot spiced mulled wine as people stroll through the cozy markets choc-a-bloc with cute wooden booths and stalls. Locals and tourists alike shop in these "cities of cloth and wood" for Christmas ornaments and traditional handicrafts - from nutcrackers, wooden figurines, straw stars and smokers, to textiles, cards, cookie tins, glass balls, toys, and tin tree ornaments.