

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

WEIHNACHTSMÄRKTE—CHRISTMAS MARKETS

market: der Markt, die Märkte

Christmas market: der Weihnachtsmarkt, die Weihnachtsmärkte

Nürnberg / Nuremberg

spirit. The huge Main Market Square boasts its greatest grandeur during the Christmas season.

With its numerous red-and-white striped booths—there are about one hundred eighty—the market welcomes some two million visitors each year from around the world to stroll among its wooden stalls. This is the reason why Nuremberg’s Christmas market is occasionally called a “Little Town of Wood and Cloth.” Here, some two hundred vendors present their traditional goods: sweets, gingerbread, toys and Christmas decorations, including Christmas tree balls, golden angels, wooden boxes, crèches, and honey candles. However, it is not just what they sell that attracts the curious visitors. Since 1981, the vendors have paid attention to the decoration of their stalls, as those with the most tasteful eye-catching presentation of the Christmas goods are rewarded. My attention was drawn by Gabi Ulrich’s stall right in front of the *Frauenkirche*, with the label bearing the inscription in gothic letters “*Altdeutscher Christbaumschmuck*.” Under the roof was a splendid collection of Christmas tree decorations. Gabi Ulrich, a vendor and an owner of this small Christmas booth, is very proud of her business, which has existed for over forty-five years now. She explained that most of the items displayed in her stall are traditionally hand-made out of natural material such as wood, straw, and feather and therefore represent an outstanding collection of Christmas toys at the Nuremberg Christmas market. I asked Gabi where she got ideas to create such beautiful Christmas items. “To produce nice



A variety of hand-made nutcrackers on display.

Christmas decorations is not simply a matter of taste; new inspirations also play a big role. Therefore, I always ask the customers if they have any special Christmas wishes or ideas. This helps us to create something special,” explains Gabi. Well, I would give her an award.

In terms of food, gingerbread is apparently the most unique and traditional item at the Nuremberg market, because wherever you look there are piles of it. Made of ground almonds, it has been a staple of the Nuremberg Christkindles market for centuries. The finest of all gingerbreads is, however, Elise Gingerbread. It has the most exquisite taste and those familiar with the secrets of its historic recipe are unlikely to reveal it. While gingerbread remains the most traditional food at the market, the Nuremberg grilled sausage has evolved into a real culinary delight. This world-famous speciality weighs exactly twenty-three grams and is about seven to nine centimeters long. It tastes excellent with sauerkraut or potato salad, or just with one or two other sausages in a roll. And, of course, what would a visit to the Christkindles market be without a taste of the mulled wine? The blueberry wine, spiced with cinnamon, cloves, cardamom and anise seed, is particularly popular there. When I tried a mug, it turned out to be the tastiest hot mulled wine I had ever had. Whether it is Nuremberg spicy gingerbread, sausages, or mulled wine—everything tastes good and is eye-catching at the Christkindles market.

For children, visiting Nuremberg’s Christmas market is an absolute delight. Riding nostalgic carousels and