

## POST-CHRISTMAS SEASON / NACHWEIHNACHTZEIT

New Year's Eve: Silvesterabend (der 31. Dezember)

New Years Eve custom: Silvesterabendsitte

chimney sweep: der Schornsteinfeger, die Schornsteinfeger

## The Chimney Sweep

Another picturesque remnant from olden times is the hat worn by German chimney sweeps ("Schornsteinfeger" or "Kaminkehrer"). Most Germans believe meeting a chimney sweep or even touching him brings them good luck.



The chimney sweep is supposed to bring luck though. In big cities like Berlin and Hamburg, you could hire a chimney sweep for group photos since they were not to be seen at work on a public holiday.

## Germany dusts off chimney sweeping job

**For the first time in decades, Germany's chimney sweeps will face broad-brushed changes to their fabled profession in 2013.**

Norbert Skrobek, a rosy-cheeked German in a brass-buttoned jacket and black top hat, is the picture of good cheer on a blustery winter morning on a rooftop in Berlin.

But the new year will be bringing big changes to his tradition-steeped trade, as Germany overhauls the chimney sweeping market after years of resistance against pressure from Brussels.

Germany has since 1935 maintained a rigid monopoly of sorts for the snappily attired men of the order -- and the vast majority are still male -- when the Nazi regime set up a national network of district "master" chimney sweeps.

They will from January 1 face competition from roving entrepreneurs who can negotiate their own prices.

"It's not all bad -- clients will be able to decide who they want as a chimney sweep, and we for the first time will also have a choice," said Skrobek, 52, who also employs his adult son and two apprentices.