

VORWEIHNACHTENSITTEN (PRE-CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS)

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS LIKE A GERMAN

Write to the *Weihnachtsmann* or the *Christkind*



While St. Nicholas is still a beloved figure in Germany, *das Christkind*, meaning Jesus child, was set up as the main gift bringing figure of the festive season by Martin Luther in the 16th century, in place of the saint.

This sprite-like figure is usually depicted with angel-like wings, blonde curls and a crown and is said to be the incarnation of Christ as an infant or often a golden female angel. However, the *Weihnachtsmann*, or Father Christmas, a re-import from America based loosely on St Nicholas, is rising in popularity in Germany.

In Germany, the *Christkind* has three addresses at the *Weihnachtspostämtern* (Christmas post offices) in *Engelskirchen*, *Himmelpfort* and *Himmelstadt*. Meanwhile St. Nicholas has two, one in *Nikolausdorf* and one in *St. Nikolaus*, and the *Weihnachtsmann* has two - *Himmelsthür* and *Himmelpfort*.

Hundreds of thousands of children write to these figures each year and, as long as their letter arrives by **December 14th**, they are sure to get a reply before Christmas Eve.