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Mary Del Rosario  
Lead-Writer Editor  
Stars and Stripes Europe

# It's Christmas Once More

**A**fter yet another crazy few months, the most magical time of the year has finally returned. Despite all the uncertainty 2021 has brought us, I still waited in anticipation for this season to make its way here because there is something so enchanting and welcoming about the holiday season, especially in Europe.

In this magical edition, we'll get you believing in the true meaning of the holidays again by shedding some light on the histories behind two special Christmas truces. This magazine will also feed your inquisitive mind and answer questions such as "Who is Krampus?" and "What New Year's traditions do Europeans believe in?" Curious to know what German dish will hit the Christmas table? Read on page 16 to find out.

If you want to make your house resemble a Christmas market hut, we've got some German Christmas decorations for you to snag. We also have step-by-step instructions on how to make adorable handprint Christmas wreaths your little ones will love.

For those who love to eat their way through the holidays, we feature a gingerbread recipe you'll have to try. And, what goes better with gingerbread than a nice Christmas cocktail (or two)? We have recipes for a few cocktails that will ensure your days are merry and bright.

We know this year has not been what we've expected, but it's time to make the most of it by seeing what makes Christmas special in the "City of Light." And, if you're like us and have missed the highly sought-out Christmas markets, we've listed a few happening near you! Though they may not be what you're used to, these markets still create the magic of Christmas in Europe and will be an experience not to be missed. If you're new to Europe, I strongly encourage you to see what the fuss is about. You will not be disappointed.

Whatever the holiday season looks like for you this year, we hope our magazine captures the spirit of the best time of the year. From all of us at Stars and Stripes Europe, we wish you and yours a jolly holiday season and a healthy, prosperous New Year!



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# Holiday Favorites

By Stripes Staff

We all experience the holiday season differently, but whatever we are celebrating with family or friends, music and food seem to go hand-in-hand with putting us in the holiday spirit. We asked our staff what their go-to songs and foods are to put them in the Christmas spirit. What's on your playlist or your holiday menu this year?

## Our Favorite Christmas Memories

"I don't spend Christmas in Germany too often, as I mostly go back home to visit family in New Jersey. But one of my fondest Christmas memories was a few years ago here in Germany. It was my first Christmas without my family, and instead of being blue, I decided to make the best of it. On Christmas Eve, we made a nice Christmas goose dinner with all of the fixings, baked an apple pie for dessert and finished the night off watching a few Christmas movie classics. On Christmas morning, my boyfriend and I exchanged gifts under our quaint tree while eating banana bread and sipping on hot cocoa. That afternoon, we made glühwein, poured it in a thermos and headed out to the woods for a brisk Christmas hike. We've carried out this tradition anytime we stay in Germany during the holidays."

**Mary Del Rosario**  
*Lead Writer/Editor*

"A few years ago, my husband and I decided to drive to the Darmstadt Christmas market directly after work. The parking in the center of Darmstadt is largely underground. So when we rode the elevator up to street level, we weren't sure where we would emerge. When the elevator doors opened, we were in this beautiful courtyard. Snow was gently falling, and a string quartet was playing "Silent Night" on a covered stage. I felt like we were in a movie scene. We both agree it was one of our most favorite Christmas market memories."

**Carrie Farrell**  
*Lead Graphic Designer*

"My first Christmas away from home was because of COVID-19, but the season was still very merry. My landlord invited me to play saxophone in an impromptu Christmas band, where we played outdoor concerts of German Christmas songs every Sunday night, all around the village. Bundled up with a headlamp on to see my sheet music and extra warm from a mug of glühwein, I was happy to be part of this new tradition and spread some holiday cheer."

**Anna Leigh Bagiackas**  
*Writer/Editor*

"Growing up with four other siblings with quite an age gap, the holidays have always been a fun time at my house. The most memorable holiday I had was when the whole family came together here in Germany. Thanks to the German side of my family, we experienced twice the holiday fun. We spent Weihnachten with Oma and Opa on the 24th, then Christmas day was spent at home with an early morning gift exchange in pajamas followed by the prep-work for a large—and delicious—dinner. Food really brings everyone together around the table, and the hearty winter feast we eat never disappoints. In more recent years, all that we have been missing is snow."

**Rygan Joye**  
*Graphic Designer*



## ***Our Christmas Playlist***

- **"Someday at Christmas"** – Stevie Wonder
- **"Cold December Night"** – Michael Bublé
- **"The Christmas Song"** – Nat King Cole
- **"I'll be Home for Christmas"** – Bing Crosby
- **"O Tannenbaum"** – Vince Guaraldi Trio
- **"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year"** – Andy Williams
- **"Sleigh Ride"** – Ella Fitzgerald
- **"River"** – James Taylor
- **"Auld Lang Syne"** – Pink Martini
- **"A Mad Russian's Christmas (Instrumental)"** – Trans-Siberian Orchestra
- **"Happy Xmas (War Is Over)"** – John Lennon
- **"Now Behold the Lamb"** – Kirk Franklin & The Family
- **"Joy to the World"** – Pentatonix
- **"Merry Christmas Baby"** – Bruce Springsteen
- **"Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"** – Amy Grant
- **"Hallelujah"** – Carrie Underwood and John Legend
- **"Santa Tell Me"** – Ariana Grande



## ***Our Favorite Holiday Food***

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cornbread casserole</li><li>• Macaroni and cheese</li><li>• Penne with prosciutto and vodka sauce</li><li>• Apple pie</li><li>• Peanut Butter Cup cookies</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homemade Chex Mix</li><li>• Spaghetti and meatballs</li><li>• Roasted duck or Cornish game hens</li><li>• Collard greens</li><li>• Potato salad</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spritzgebäck</li><li>• Sauerbraten with red cabbage</li><li>• Mashed potatoes</li><li>• Green bean casserole</li><li>• Wine poached pears ■</li></ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|





By Stacy Roman and Mary Del Rosario



The famous Christmas carol “Silent Night,” is the quintessential Christmas song, filled with hope and peace. Images of singing this holiday tune with a piping cup of hot cocoa in hand may come to mind. What is now a feel-good holiday hit was a saving grace between German and British troops during World War I in 1914.

### THE UNOFFICIAL CHRISTMAS TRUCE

The goose bump-inducing tale states that on Christmas day, a German soldier emerged from his trench and started to sing the famous song as he entered “No Man’s Land.” He first sang “Silent Night” proudly and loudly in German and then in English. After many ears tuned in to hear the angelic voice, the shooting stopped and since the British also knew the song, they sang back, causing a temporary ceasefire. Humbled and moved, soldiers wrote to their families about this touching moment.

## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

On Christmas Eve in 1944, a young boy named Fritz Vincken and his mother Elisabeth were staying in a small cabin in the Hürtgen Forest, mere miles from the Belgian border. Waiting anxiously for his father's return for the holiday, he heard a loud knock at the door. Instinctively protective, his mother blew out the candles in the front room and pushed him aside to answer the door. Standing before her were two American soldiers, with a third laying severely injured in the snow nearby.

Not understanding English, the elder Vincken froze in the doorway. Noting the Americans were armed, yet did not force their way into the cabin, she relented and told the men to come in. Although none of the soldiers spoke German, one spoke enough French to communicate with their hosts. After getting separated from their battalion, the three troops were left wandering the forest for days. Hypothermia, exposure, hunger and battle wounds were taking their toll. Realizing the poor condition of the men, Vincken sent her son to fetch the rooster and potatoes she had been saving for a special Christmas meal as she began bandaging up the injured man.

As the younger Vincken prepared the table for their guests, there was another loud knock at the door. Expecting more Americans, he flung the door open and saw four German soldiers standing before him. His mother quickly went outside to defuse the situation. The quartet had also lost their regiment and were seeking shelter. When asked if they could stay, she told them they were more than welcome; however, there were three others inside who were not considered friends of Germany. Because it was Christmas Eve, she explained there would be no bloodshed in her home. As the incredulous Germans stood speechless, she instructed the men to leave their weapons outside and join them for dinner.

She hurried inside and explained the situation to the American GIs. They handed their weapons to their host, which she placed outside. When the Germans walked in, an air of tension and suspicion filled the room. Vincken began dishing up what food she could, while one of the German men looked at the wounded American. Speaking in English, he explained the young man's injuries were not infected and he needed rest. The tension in the room was replaced with tentative trust and weariness from the war.

At dawn, realizing they would all be departing around the same time, the Americans were trying to find their way back to the allied lines. When asked if they should head toward Monschau, the Germans advised them to go elsewhere as it had been recaptured by the Germans. As they began to leave, Vincken handed the men their weapons and gave motherly advice to stay safe and return to their respective homes. She watched as the men set out in opposing directions toward their battle lines, none chasing after the other.

While not quite on the same scale as the Christmas Truce of 1914, this small offering of peace meant the difference between life and death for these seven men and the Vincken family. ■







# *Merry & Bright* WITH GERMANY'S FAVORITE *Christmas Decorations*

By Karen Bradbury

O Tannenbaum! When evergreen branches sing out for seasonal decor, Germany's got them covered. For centuries, the country's craftsmen have cleverly managed to turn even the simplest of materials into objects that spin, sparkle and delight on and around the Christmas tree.

The practice of decorating Christmas trees existed in northern Europe as far back as the 1500s. The glass bulbs still commonly used as decorations are a German invention, and some credit the practice of placing lit candles on the branches of an evergreen tree to the Protestant reformer Martin Luther, who, legend holds, was inspired by the shimmer of starlight as he trudged home through the forest on a cold winter's night.

Fast forward through time and the tradition of decorating one's tree, home and hearth at Christmastime remains as popular as ever. Some German families proudly display items passed down through the generations, while others eagerly snap up the latest trends. Traditional or contemporary, the choices of seasonal decor are as wide as a sky full of twinkling stars. These items will add tradition and flair to your home and tree this season, as well as evoke memories of time spent in Germany in the years to come.

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## Weihnachtskugeln

Christmas tree bulbs began replacing more traditional decor such as nuts and apples, and later baked figures such as gingerbread, in the mid-19th century. According to legend, a glassblower from the town of Lauscha in Thuringia blew the first glass orbs back in 1847, when he found the nuts and apples sold to decorate trees prohibitively expensive. True or not, the custom caught on, and the area became a center for the production of these colorful baubles. Unique, mouth-blown glass ornaments are still made in the area today.



## Nussknacker

While the nutcracker's practical use has been all but forgotten, these carved wooden figures of soldiers, policemen and all the king's men continue to stand sentinel in windows and over countless Christmas tables. Note the stern expressions on their faces. A possible explanation is that humble craftsmen portrayed authority figures unflatteringly as a means of protest against their elite and powerful oppressors.



## Räuchermännchen

These small figurines known as smoking men come in various guises, from bearded grandpas to smiling centipedes. Usually made of wood, or less commonly crafted of metal, their distinguishing feature is an internal, metal-lined compartment designed to hold an incense cone. Once the incense is set alight, smoke wafts out from the figure's mouth, pipe or other orifice as a pleasant fragrance fills the room.



## Pyramide

These multi-tiered carousels are topped with a propeller. The heat generated by a single burning candle is just enough to nudge this contraption constructed of light wood or delicate metal into action, causing angels, reindeer, snowflakes or other symbols of the season to twirl around in perpetual motion.



## Zinnfiguren

Plain or painted pewter ornaments depicting Christmas-themed scenes are perfect for hanging on trees or in windows. Made by Bavarian-based craftsmen, it's common to see figures inspired by a few of their favorite things, from beer steins to maypoles and pretzels.





## Schwibbögen

These carved wooden arches recall a common scene in the mining region of Saxony from which they originate. After a long shift, miners would emerge from the shafts and hang their lanterns above the underground entryways, creating rainbow-shaped arcs of shimmering light. A traditional version of this item would hold candles; nowadays, electric lights make a safer alternative.



## Weihnachtssterne

This Christmas market staple catches the eye once darkness falls and the vendor's stall is transformed into a glittering sea of stars. Constructed of heavy paper, these stars are often imported from India, where they are painstakingly worked by hand, making each one a unique work of art. The electric light bulb glowing from within is usually purchased separately.



## Lichthäuser

These small, many-windowed ceramic houses depict charming half-timbered dwellings straight from the Middle Ages. While even a single house looks sweet on its own, purchasing a new one each year results in an ever-expanding Old Town square.



## Teelichthalter

Tea light candleholders come in many different shapes and sizes. "Porzellanlichter" are domed lights made of a pale monochromatic biscuit porcelain, molded or perforated to allow flickering flames to create a play of shadows. "Leuchtgläser" are vibrantly colored tea light candleholders in patterns resembling half-timbered squares, spangled elephants and other fantastical scenes.



## Glühweintassen

Many consider mulled wine mugs the ultimate Christmas market gift. Emblazoned with the name of the city and the current year, these mugs are best purchased filled with the brew they're meant to hold, a warming, spice-laden mulled wine. Once the contents have been imbibed, one can forgo the few euros' deposit initially paid and keep it as a souvenir of a moment frozen in time: the coming together of friends and family in a beautiful setting at the most wonderful time of the year. ■



# Naughty or Nice Krampus is Coming

By Stacy Roman

When my kids were younger, they had a penchant for exhibiting some of their less than desirable behaviors right before Christmas. I would pick up a phone, hold a conversation with Santa and explain why he didn't need to stop at our house. Apologies from my kids inevitably followed. In Germany, one doesn't need to threaten a phone call to Santa. You just need to mention one word to keep them on the straight and narrow: Krampus.

## Who or what is Krampus?

Krampus is the cloven hoofed, half-man-half-goat, horned wingman to St. Nicholas. Believed to be the son of the Norse god Hel (caretaker of the underworld), this demonic being is the deliverer of evil to the children on Santa's naughty list. The sole purpose of Krampus is to scare these unsuspecting little ones into good behavior. Depending on the degree of mischief, Krampus will either smack them on the legs with a bundle of birch branches, whip them into shape or, in the worst-case scenario, bundle them up into a sack and drag them back to his lair in the underworld.

The legend of Krampus pre-dates Christianity as a pagan myth. Because of his controversial tactics and where he resides, many attempts have been made to banish him from society. During the 1300s, the Catholic church tried to outlaw Krampus celebrations, as they felt Krampus was akin to Satan. In the early 20th century, the ruling conservative party in Austria tried to get rid of him to no avail. Today, Krampus is alive and well. Thanks to the 2015 movie "Krampus," his reach extends beyond the European borders and has catapulted him into global fame.



## Krampuslauf

You may be asking, "When does Krampus make an appearance?" Krampus usually celebrates during Krampuslauf on Dec. 5, on the eve of St. Nicholas Day. This spectacle occurs through city centers and consists of a gaggle of Krampuses in varying states of inebriation parading through the streets. They'll often chase or sometimes whack spectators with branches to get their message across. If you offer Krampus a shot of his favorite beverage (schnapps), you just might gain favor with him. Krampuslauf celebrations are popular throughout Germany and Austria, especially in Bavaria and the Tyrol region.

When the little ones head to bed, they leave out a shoe or sock in hopes of St. Nicholas filling it with treats and goodies. With visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads, St. Nicholas and Krampus tag team and get to work. If they are on the nice list, the odds are high that St. Nick will fill them with trinkets and sweets. Those on the naughty list will likely find a shoe or stocking full of coal or twigs courtesy of Krampus, which is honestly a better option than being dragged into the underworld.

If your children start acting up, give them this subtle reminder: "You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why," Krampus is coming to town. ■



Terry Dickerson is an  
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## EMBRACING GERMANY

By Stacy Roman

# Christmas Goose

One of my favorite things about the holidays is the food. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, a whole smattering of deliciousness usually reserved for special occasions appear on dinner tables and in restaurants. As Americans, we're almost automatically programmed to see a nice roast (or deep-fried) turkey with all the usual trimmings and sides—stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and pie. Here in Germany, however, traditional holiday fare takes on a different taste with “Weihnachtsgans” or Christmas goose.

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*continued from page 16*

### *A Little History*

The origins of “Weihnachtsgans” are fairly straightforward and date way back. Ancient Greeks are said to have feasted on geese as an offering to the gods for an abundant harvest in the coming months. From before the Middle Ages, geese have been a farmyard staple in Germany. During the harvest months, the birds would flock to the fields and eat the leftover bits of grain and maize that would inadvertently fatten them up. A hardy bunch, geese were able to ward off avian diseases and survive harsh weather conditions. Because they were plentiful in numbers and inexpensive to maintain, the goose became a popular mainstay on holiday tables.

### *A Tasty Difference*

From the outset, geese and turkeys are very obviously different birds. Turkeys are often raised solely for the purpose of consumption and are usually imported as they are not native to Germany. They don’t have as much fat, which results in a leaner meat that can have a tendency to dry out during the cooking process. On the other hand, geese are native to this part of Europe and have a lot more insulation, or fat layers, than their counterpart. This lends itself to a more flavorful and juicy bird. However, the end result is also much richer than turkey—a little can go a long way.

### *Preparation & Presentation*

If you’re going full gusto and making “Weihnachtsgans,” the preparation is similar to any roast fowl. You’ll want to remove the giblets, neck, wing tips and any excess fat. Pierce the skin and sprinkle a healthy dose of seasoning (salt and pepper) all over the bird. Place the roast breast side up in the oven and cook until done. To get a crispy, golden skin, crank up the oven for the last 10 to 15 minutes. Traditional side dishes include potato dumplings (“Kartoffelknödel”) and red cabbage (“Rotkohl”).

While it can be fun to try it yourself, sometimes it’s best to leave the cooking to the professionals. “Weihnachtsgans” typically begins appearing on menus after St. Martin’s Day (Nov. 11) through the end of the year. Brought to you on a silver platter with all the accoutrements, it’s a fantastic way to eat and be merry with loved ones. Because of its popularity, most restaurant bookings and reservations will need to be made in advance.

While turkey is most definitely an American institution, step outside the box and embrace the delicious German culinary tradition of “Weihnachtsgans.” ■





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# A European *New Year's Eve*

By Stripes Staff

5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1... **Happy New Year!**

New Year's is one of the only holidays celebrated by nearly every country and is almost universally a time for family, friends and festivities. For most, the traditions that usher in the new year are fairly simple: a hug/kiss to loved ones and a toast of champagne to the year ahead. Fireworks have always played a large part in New Year's celebrations in Europe, and today many larger European cities host their own magnificent displays. While most European countries follow the same simple rituals, they are often accompanied by other traditions specific to their country.

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*continued from page 20*

## Germany

German New Year's Eve is also referred to as Sylvester. Named after a fourth-century pope, the Feast of Saint Sylvester falls on December 31st. Saint Sylvester left a memorable mark in history after allegedly healing from leprosy and baptizing the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great. At midnight, the skies erupt with fireworks. Everyone from young kids to grandparents can be seen setting off their own private show. A traditional menu for staying in and entertaining may consist of serving carp or herring, along with cabbage and carrots to bring in financial stability. Meat and cheese fondues are other popular options. Customary drinks of the evening are "Sekt" (sparkling wine) or "Feuerzangenbowle" (flaming fire tongs punch).

## United Kingdom

London boasts one of the most distinctive displays of fireworks, centered on Big Ben and the London Eye. In Wales, it is believed that all debts must be paid off, or you'll be in debt the whole year. Similarly, your behavior on New Year's Eve indicates how you'll behave next year, such as waking early foretelling that you'll be an early riser. In England, Scotland and Wales, the song "Auld Lang Syne" can be heard throughout the streets as friends and families stand in a circle and cross hands.

## Scandinavia

In Denmark, chipped and unwanted dishes are smashed against the front doors of friends' homes in the evening. According to tradition, the larger the pile on your front door, the more popular you are. The reading of a New Year's verse is also a tradition for some countries. In Finland, the poem "Hymyilevä Apollo" ("Smiling Apollo") by Eino Leino is recited on the radio after midnight, and in Sweden, Lord Alfred Tennyson's "Ring Out, Wild Bells" is read.

## Portugal & Spain

Madeira, an island off Portugal, is also well-known for New Year's festivities, recognized in the Guinness World Records for having the largest fireworks show in the world. In Spain and Portugal, 12 grapes or raisins are eaten with each second in the countdown to midnight (starting from 12 seconds until midnight instead of the more common 10). Traditionally, each piece of fruit is said to represent prosperity each month of the new year, although the custom may have originated from the grape growers in Alicante in 1909 who wanted to find a way to cut down on their surplus.







## Amsterdam

This city's reputation as "party central" is confirmed each New Year's Eve. Oudjaarsavond, or Old Year's Evening, is celebrated throughout the city. Clubs, bars and restaurants host parties, often with themes and special menus. Advance tickets are usually required, so plan ahead. The heart of the city's celebration is a free fest at Museumplein, featuring live music and fireworks. Watch the fireworks display over the Amstel River from Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge).



## Edinburgh

The Scots call New Year's celebrations "Hogmanay," but to tell you why is a convoluted story. The term's history is a bit fuzzy after a few hundred years of partying. Thousands of revelers with torches, led by a crew of Vikings and Scottish highlanders, will march from St. Giles' Cathedral to Calton Hill, creating a river of flames and concluding with a firework display. The procession and firework display are free for spectators; tickets are required to carry torches.

No matter where you choose to celebrate, have fun, be safe and spend time with those you love, or party with total strangers! Make plans, ponder possible New Year's resolutions and let the countdown begin.



## Feeling lucky? Check out these European New Year's superstitions

In Italy, Spain and Turkey, red undergarments are to be worn for good luck, although it's debated whether they should be a gift and/or thrown out afterward.

In Hungary, "onion-calendars" are made by cutting onions in half, peeling off 12 layers, arranging them in order by month and sprinkling salt on them. If the salt melts on a layer, then the corresponding month will be rainy.

In Germany, chimney sweeps are considered lucky, and it is encouraged to have one rub soot on your head. Other lucky charms include four-leaf clovers, ladybugs and marzipan pigs.

In Ireland, loaves of bread are banged on doors and walls to chase out bad luck and protect against hunger in the New Year. ■





*Christmas Craft  
for Kids*

# Handprint Christmas Wreath

By Shereece Spain

Keeping children's minds off of the carefully wrapped presents under the tree and the smell of fresh-baked Christmas cookies can be extremely difficult. I have two toddlers, so I know the struggle is real! However, I have found that crafts are a nice distraction from it all. Not only will you have wonderful new decorations for your home, but you also create lasting memories.

Christmas wreaths make beautiful decorations during the holidays. We hang them on our front door, windows and some mirrors around the house. This year we decided to have our kiddos make and decorate their own holiday wreaths. You can search Pinterest to find numerous ways to make one. However, my children love to paint. That's why we chose the handprint-painted wreaths. Follow these step-by-step instructions to making your own:

*What you'll need:*

- Canvas or poster board
- Paint - Two shades of green and your choice of accent color.
- Decorations - We used snowflakes.
- Clear coat or Mod Podge
- Glue gun or heavy duty glue
- Bow or any other holiday accent



## Instructions:

1. On an empty canvas or poster board, draw a light circle in pencil. This will help children have a visual of the pattern they're making.
2. With two different shades of green paint - one for each hand - have your kids make their handprints all around the circle alternating hands.
3. Allow time to dry. Dip the tip of your paintbrush handle in your accent color. Dot the paint around the wreath to create holly berries.
4. Once all the paint is dry, add your choice of other decorations. You can use snowflakes, glitter, puff balls or any other festive decor you can get your hands on.
5. Spray your canvas with a clear coat or apply a coat of Mod Podge to protect your little one's fabulous creation.
6. Glue the bow or accent to the wreath. Don't be afraid to change things up, it doesn't have to go at the bottom. If you have more artistic talent than I do, you can also paint a nice bow as well.



PHOTOS BY SHEREECE SPAIN



Don't have your Christmas card ready yet? Now you don't have to! Take a good picture of the new art your kiddos just created. Using Amazon Prints or Snapfish, you can use it to make a fantastic Christmas card. All your family and friends will also get to enjoy your young one's creativity. *Happy crafting!* ■



# Gingerbread

THE HISTORY OF A CHRISTMASTIME FAVORITE

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

The kitchen is chilly and dark as I start a pot of coffee. I find my warm socks and slippers and notice that it's snowing out the window, the first real snow of the year! And then I remember it's Dec. 1, the first day of my Advent calendar, and suddenly, it feels like Christmas. So, I grab my ginger, nutmeg, allspice, flour and sugar and make my go-to recipe that celebrates the season: warm and spicy ginger cake—a great way to start a magical season.

## Ginger: The Magic Ingredient

After trips around France, Germany, England and the Netherlands—with each country making various claims to gingerbread treats—I wanted to dig a little deeper into the history of this seasonal favorite. As is often the case with unearthing the roots of a beloved dish or ingredient, the path is not straightforward; it's rather circuitous and sort of confusing, but that's part of the fun!

Ginger first made its way to Europe via the Silk Road Trade, and it is believed that it was first baked with in the 11th century. Some say that the very first recipe comes from Greece. The first “gingerbread” was known as “preserved ginger” because baking it was a way to preserve the spicy root, which was also known to have medicinal properties. In many baked creations around Europe, ginger was combined with a handful of other spices to create spicy and comforting treats.

What makes gingerbread so unique is that it has been transformed into so many different forms

with different names, depending on where you are in Europe. There are soft and spongy cakes, such as Parkin in England, crisp and crunchy biscuits like ginger snaps and even heart-shaped decorative cookies worn at Oktoberfest festivals in Munich. Gingerbread is also often used as a decoration, made into hanging Christmas ornaments. This works particularly well because of ginger's preserving properties, perfect for decorating your tree all season long. In the 17th century, France and Germany restricted who could bake gingerbread—only professionals—but that was lifted and it became a staple in many homes and bakeries.

When it comes to the gingerbread house, it is difficult to know exactly how it came about. In Germany, the Brothers Grimm fairytale “Hansel and Gretel” may have inspired the idea with its house made of candies and treats, but the gingerbread house may have also inspired the tale. In either case, Europeans have been building extravagant structures and Christmas scenes ever since.

*continued on page 28*







# CHRISTMASTIME IN FREIBURG

Lovingly decorated market stalls with Christmas delicacies, the scent of sweet cookies and handicrafts. The Christmas Market in Freiburg is one of the city's most beautiful winter tourist destinations, it consists of over 120 stands, where visitors are offered beautiful things every year.

[VISIT.FREIBURG.DE](http://VISIT.FREIBURG.DE)

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**Rothenburger Reiterlesmarkt (Christmas Market)**  
**November 26th – December 23rd, 2021**



The Reiterlesmarkt is open weekdays, Monday - Thursday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and weekends, Friday - Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
[www.rothenburg-tourismus.de](http://www.rothenburg-tourismus.de)





*continued from page 26*

Gingerbread's history in England is also worth sharing. It was reported that Queen Elizabeth I brought gingerbread men into popularity when she had the cookies decorated to look like visiting dignitaries. This also popularized decorating the cookies with white or "royal" icing, as well as edible gold leaf, making decoration an important aspect of gingerbread making. You can also find centuries-old block gingerbread molds in England, which created intricate patterns and illustrations on gingerbread.

If you're interested in visiting some of the centers of gingerbread in Europe, your list should include Nuremberg, Ulm and Pulsnitz in Germany; Torun in Poland; Pest in Hungary; Prague in the Czech Republic and Lyon in France.

Feeling inspired to bake your own gingerbread? Try this recipe!

## Lebkuchen



*Makes 32 bars*

*Start to finish: 1 hour*

### Ingredients:

- 1 egg, plus 1 egg white, divided
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil
- 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/3 cup molasses
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon Lebkuchen spice (see recipe below)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/2 cup mixed candied fruits and peels, finely chopped, plus additional for decorating
- 1 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

### Lebkuchen Spice Mixture:

- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon each of mace, coriander, cardamom and ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C) and grease a 15" x 10" x 1" baking sheet.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat egg and oil. Add brown sugar and beat until well combined.
3. Add honey and molasses, mixing well. In a separate bowl, mix flour, lebkuchen spice and baking soda. Add dry ingredients to egg mixture and beat until combined.
4. Stir in almonds and candied fruit.
5. Spread mixture on baking sheet, using the back of a greased spoon or spatula to spread evenly.
6. Bake for 15 to 25 minutes. When done, score bars with a sharp knife immediately after removing from oven, just cutting through the top crust.
7. Meanwhile, in a small bowl beat the egg white, powdered sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Spread icing over warm bars and decorate with candied fruit. Let cool completely before cutting fully and serving. ■

*This recipe was adapted from Just Like Oma.*





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\*Postmark by Dec. 20, 2021 and Santa may have time to send a note in return!



# *Christmas in Paris*

By Carrie Farrell

"It's the most wonderful time of year" is the song that always pops into my head as I begin to make plans for Christmas each year. This single, yet relatively short sentence evokes the promise of a magical winter and a joyous holiday season. Hearing it can conjure up the warmest of holiday spirits in most everyone—even Ebenezer Scrooge. Luckily, in Paris, Ebenezer is difficult to find. As with most of Europe, Paris magically transforms itself into a version of Christmas that family back home can only dream of experiencing.

*continued on page 32*





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## ***Illuminations***

Nicknamed “City of Light,” Paris dazzles with festive holiday illuminations to delight everyone, young and old alike. This is most noticeable as Paris’s famous landmarks slowly start to glow of yellowish light as the short days disappear into the night.

It’s nighttime that the true spirit of the season comes to life. From the Place de la Concorde stretching toward the Arc de Triomphe, thousands of lights sparkle during the holiday season. Still considered one of the most spectacular displays, the majestic Avenue des Champs-Élysées is flooded with fancy storefronts and unique lights that change hues. From this famous promenade, you can turn onto the Avenue Montaigne and find one of the most elegant light displays in the city. Known for its luxury boutiques, Avenue Montaigne is decked out in clusters of simple, yet diamond-like white bulbs. For a bird’s-eye view, make your way to Place de la Concorde and climb aboard the huge Ferris wheel for a dazzling view of the city lights and you’ll soon understand how Paris earned its nickname.

## ***Christmas Markets***

As the celebrated date approaches, the city’s various quarters begin to line their streets and squares with holiday fare. Like tiny villages, the holiday markets of Saint Sulpice, Saint Germain, Place de la Nation and Notre Dame, to name a few, offer Parisians and tourists places to browse for handmade goods and food specialties from every region of France. While you’re there, try a vin chaud—a warm red wine mulled with aromatic spices that would put a thaw on Ebenezer himself. Located opposite the Eiffel Tower, the Trocadéro Christmas Village has magical Parisian views and sometimes features a temporary ice-skating rink.

Christmas tends to bring out the kid in all of us, so whether or not you’re traveling with children, take a moment to enjoy all that Paris has to offer during the holiday season. Bring your family to the ice rink in the Christmas Village at Champs-Élysées, or for a special treat, head to the Eiffel Tower for a skating adventure you will never forget. Yes, you can actually ice-skate on the first level of the Eiffel Tower!





## *Modern to Traditional*

As with most major cities during Christmastime, there is a special energy about Paris with the hustle and bustle of shoppers, tourists and street vendors. Parisians seem to maintain a healthy balance of modern and traditional Christmas activities, and visitors can experience the best of both. If shopping is on your to-do list, there are plenty of retail stores trying to entice you with the latest must-haves from the world's fashion capital. Much like the extravagant window displays at Macy's and other famous stores in New York City, the glittering windows at Printemps and Galeries Lafayette are typically a magical part of Christmas in Paris and are worth visiting.

If a more traditional Christmas appeals, Paris has another side, too. Many churches throughout the city celebrate Christmas Mass—most notable are Église Saint Germain des Prés and Basilique du Sacré-Coeur. All celebrate with large-scale services that include concerts and choirs. Ornate nativity scenes, or crèche, are an intricate part of the season and can be found at many churches throughout Paris. Christmas Eve services will not be held at Notre Dame this year.

## *Getting There*

You can easily catch the spirit of the season by a polar express of sorts. The Inter-City Express or ICE for short is the Deutsche Bahn's high-speed train from Frankfurt, via Mannheim, Kaiserslautern and Saarbrücken to Paris' Est Station.

Should you find yourself in Paris at Christmas, be sure to bundle up and enjoy the atmosphere. The Christmas season in the City of Light is a delightful one, infused with great food, music, lighting and decorations that are sure to lift your spirits. For details about Christmas events in Paris, visit <http://en.parisinfo.com>. ■



# CHRISTMAS COCKTAILS

## THAT BRING HOLIDAY CHEER

.....

By Jessica Zen

Whether you plan on staying in this Christmas season or venturing out a little more than last year, here are some delightful Christmas cocktails that are sure to warm your insides and bring on the holiday cheer. From chocolate-based to fruity concoctions, there's a little something for everyone. Pick one recipe or give them all a whirl, but perhaps not all at once!

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## Christmas Sangria

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*Start to finish: 6 hours 10 minutes*

*Servings: 10*

### Ingredients:

750 milliliter Merlot or red wine of choice  
2 1/2 cups cranberry juice  
1 cup orange juice  
1/2 cup simple syrup  
1/2 cup blackberry brandy  
1/2 cup Chambord  
2 cups lemon-lime soda  
2 oranges, sliced  
1 cup cranberries  
6 cinnamon sticks  
Rosemary sprigs, for garnish

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients, except for the soda and ice, together in a large pitcher and chill in the fridge for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight. Add the ice and soda just before serving and garnish with rosemary sprigs for a festive presentation. ([www.sugarandsoul.com](http://www.sugarandsoul.com))

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## Tipsy Peppermint Mocha Cocktail

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*Start to finish: 5 minutes*

*Servings: 2*

### Ingredients:

3 ounces Kahlua Peppermint Mocha  
1 ounce vodka  
1 tablespoon chocolate syrup  
3 ounces heavy cream  
Ice  
Candy canes, crushed

### Directions:

Crush up a candy cane or peppermint candies into small pieces and spread on a small plate. Pour simple syrup on another small plate so that it is about 1/4-inch deep. Dip each cocktail glass into the simple syrup so that the rim is fully coated, then dip the rim into the crushed candy cane until it sticks to the glass. Allow to set. Fill each prepared cocktail glass with ice. Add all liquid ingredients to a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously for about 5 to 10 seconds. Strain and pour into your cocktail glasses. Enjoy immediately. ([www.thesoccermomblog.com](http://www.thesoccermomblog.com))

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## Rudolph Spritzer

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Start to finish: 10 minutes

Servings: 4

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup cranberries, frozen  
1 tablespoon granulated sugar  
Ice  
2 cups cranberry juice  
1 cup orange juice  
1 cup vodka  
1 cup Prosecco

### Directions:

In a small bowl, combine frozen cranberries and sugar. Fill four glasses with ice. Divide cranberry juice, orange juice and vodka between glasses. Top each glass off with Prosecco and garnish with sugared cranberries. ([www.delish.com](http://www.delish.com))

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## Winter Snowflake Cocktail

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Start to finish: 3 minutes

Servings: 1

### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon white chocolate chips  
1 tablespoon caramel sauce  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 cup skimmed milk (you can also use non-dairy milk)  
2 ounces Baileys Irish Cream  
*OPTIONAL:* Whipped cream and cinnamon for topping

### Directions:

Stir the chocolate, caramel, vanilla, milk and Baileys together in a microwave-safe mug or glass. Heat in the microwave for 60 to 90 seconds until piping hot. Remove from the microwave and stir to make sure all the chocolate and caramel have thoroughly melted. Top with whipped cream and cinnamon (if using) and enjoy! ([www.happyhealthymotivated.com](http://www.happyhealthymotivated.com))



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## Merry Mistletoe Cocktail

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Start to finish: 5 minutes

Servings: 1

### Ingredients:

1 cup vanilla ice cream  
1/2 ounce Creme de Menthe  
1 ounce Irish Whiskey  
4 to 6 ounces half-and-half or milk  
*OPTIONAL:* Green food coloring, peppermint extract, sprinkles or whipped cream

### Directions:

Mix ingredients in blender. If drink is too thick, add additional half-and-half or milk to thin. Pour into glass. Top with whipped cream if desired, serve immediately. ([www.whoneedsacape.com](http://www.whoneedsacape.com))

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## Christmas Cookie Jello Shots

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Start to finish: 2 hours 35 minutes

Servings: 12

### Ingredients:

1 cup water  
2 unflavored gelatin packets (Knox, store brand)  
1/4 cup Butterscotch Liqueur  
5/8 cup Bailey's Irish Cream  
1/8 cup Cointreau Liqueur  
Whipped cream for garnish

### Directions:

Place 1 cup of water in a bowl. Add the unflavored gelatin packets to the water; dissolve. Place dissolved gelatin liquid in a pot on the stove on low heat; stir until completely dissolved. Remove from heat; allow to sit 15 minutes. Add Butterscotch Liqueur, Bailey's Irish Cream and Cointreau Liqueur to the dissolved gelatin. Carefully pour into 2-ounce soufflé cups. Allow some headroom and do not fill to the top. Remove any bubbles that may form. You may cap your soufflé cups, or wait until the gelatin has set before capping. Place in refrigerator to set, approximately 2 hours. Garnish with whipped cream (and sprinkles) before serving. ([www.annsentedlife.com](http://www.annsentedlife.com))

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Shake things up a bit this year by serving some new cocktails at your holiday celebration. Sweet, sour, hot or cold, these cocktails are perfect for bringing the Christmas cheer to any party. ■



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& Happy New Year  
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# 2021 GERMAN CHRISTMAS

## BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

### Baden-Baden

Kurhaus Colonnades and Old Town  
Nov. 25, 2021–Jan. 6, 2022

### Breitnau

Devil's Valley Railway/  
Ravenna Gorge  
Nov. 26–28, Dec. 3–5, Dec. 10–12,  
Dec. 17–19

### Burg Hohenzollern

Hohenzollern Castle  
Nov. 25, 2021–Jan. 9, 2022

### Esslingen

Esslingen Marktplatz  
Nov. 23–Dec. 22

### Freiburg

Rathausplatz, Franziskanerstraße,  
Unterlindenplatz & Kartoffelmarkt  
Nov. 18–Dec. 23

### Heidelberg

Kornmarkt, Marktplatz, Univer-  
sitätsplatz, Anatomiegarten &  
Bismarckplatz (5 hist. squares)  
Nov. 18–Dec. 22

### Heilbronn

Marktplatz, Kiliansplatz  
and in the Sülmerstraße  
Nov. 25–Dec. 22

### Karlsruhe

Friedrichsplatz  
Nov. 25–Dec. 23

### Konstanz (Constance)

Markstätte  
Nov. 25–Dec. 22

### Ludwigsburg

Marktplatz  
Nov. 23–Dec. 22

### Mannheim

Kapuzinerplanken/Water Tower  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

### Schwetzingen

Schwetzingen Palace  
Nov. 25–Dec. 19

### Stuttgart

Schillerplatz  
Nov. 24–Dec. 30

### Tübingen

Old Town  
Dec. 10–12

### Ulm

Münsterplatz  
Nov. 19–Dec. 22

## BAYERN

### Augsburg

City Hall  
Nov. 22–Dec. 24

### Bamberg

City Center  
Nov. 23–Dec. 23

### Berchtesgaden

Advent Market, Old Town  
Nov. 25–Dec. 31

### Dinkelsbühl

Spitalhof Christmas market  
Nov. 25–Dec. 21

### Füssen

St. Mang Monastery  
Dec. 3–Dec. 12

### Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Richard-Strauss-Square  
Dec. 1, 2021–Jan. 10, 2022

### Lindau

Seepromenade  
Nov. 25–Dec. 19

### München (Munich)

Marienplatz and other areas  
Christkindlmarkt: Nov. 22–Dec. 24  
NEW! Neujahrsmarkt:  
Dec. 27, 2021–Jan. 9, 2022

### Nördlingen

Romantic Christmas Market,  
Old Town  
Nov. 26–Dec. 23

### Nürnberg (Nuremberg)

Hauptmarkt  
Nov. 26–Dec. 24

### Regensburg

Christkindlmarkt auf  
dem Neupfarrplatz  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23  
Romantischen Weihnachtsmarkt  
auf Schloss Thurn und Taxis  
Nov. 19–Dec. 31

### Lucrezia Markt

Nov. 26–Dec. 23

Adventsmarkt im  
St. Katharinenhospital:  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

### Rothenburg ob der Tauber

City Hall  
Nov. 26–Dec. 23

### Würzburg

Marktplatz  
Nov. 26–Dec. 23

## BERLIN & BRANDENBURG

### Berlin

Weihnachtszauber Gendarmenmarkt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 31  
Rotes Rathaus Weihnachtszeit  
Nov. 22, 2021–Jan. 2, 2022  
Alexanderplatz  
Nov. 22–Dec. 26

### Bremen

Innenstadt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

## HESSEN

### Bad Homburg

Schlossplatz  
Nov. 26–Dec. 19

Louisenstrasse  
Nov. 18–Dec. 30

### Darmstadt

Marktplatz  
Nov. 15–Dec. 23

### Frankfurt am Main

Römerberg, Paulsplatz and Mainkai  
Nov. 22–Dec. 22

### Kassel

Fairytale Christmas Market,  
Königsplatz and Friedrichsplatz  
Nov. 22–Dec. 30

### Marburg

Downtown  
Nov. 26–Dec. 23

### Michelstadt

Old German Market  
Nov. 26–Dec. 23

### Wiesbaden

Twinkling Star Market, Schlossplatz  
Nov. 23–Dec. 23

## NIEDERSACHSEN (LOWER SAXONY)

### Braunschweig

Around cathedral and Domplatz  
Nov. 24–Dec. 29

### Celle

Old Town  
Nov. 25–Dec. 26

### Goslar

Marktplatz  
Nov. 24–Dec. 30

### Göttingen

Marktplatz  
Nov. 22–Dec. 29



# MARKET DIRECTORY

## Hameln

Old Town  
Nov. 24–Dec. 30

## Hannover

City Center  
Nov. 22–Dec. 22

## Hildesheim

City Hall  
Nov. 22–Dec. 22

## Lüneburg

Historic Christmas Market,  
City Center  
Nov. 24–Dec. 31

## Osnabrück

In front of city hall  
Nov. 15–Dec. 22

## NORDRHEIN- WESTFALEN

### Aachen

Marktplatz  
Nov. 19–Dec. 23

### Bonn

Münsterplatz  
Nov. 17–Dec. 23

### Dortmund

Hansaplatz  
Nov. 18–Dec. 30

### Düsseldorf

City center  
Nov. 18–Dec. 30

### Köln (Cologne)

Weihnachtsmarkt am Kölner Dom  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

Heinzels Wintermärchen  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

Heavenue  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

Markt der Engel  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

Kölner Hafen-Weihnachtsmarkt  
Nov. 19–Dec. 23

Weihnachtsmarkt im Stadtgarten  
Nov. 18–Dec. 23

## Münster

Rathaus  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

## RHEINLAND-PFALZ

### Bernkastel-Kues

Old town  
Nov. 19–Dec. 19

### Cochem

Endertplatz/Castle Market  
Nov. 26–Dec. 19

### Deidesheim

Marktplatz  
Nov. 26–Dec. 19

### Kaiserslautern

Schillerplatz and Stiftskirche  
Weihnachtsmarkt: Nov. 22–Dec. 23  
Silvestermarkt: Dec. 27–Dec. 30

### Koblenz

Old town  
Nov. 19, 2021–Jan. 9, 2022

### Ludwigshafen

Berliner Platz  
Nov. 10–Dec. 23

### Mainz

Marktplatz  
Nov. 25–Dec. 23

### Neustadt a.d. Weinstrasse

Marktplatz  
Nov. 26–28, Dec. 3–5, Dec. 10–12,  
Dec. 7–19

### Trier

Hauptmarkt  
Nov. 19–Dec. 22

## Trippstadt-Johanniskreuz

Forest Christmas Market  
Dec. 11–12

## SAARLAND

### Homburg

Christian-Weber-Platz  
Dec. 5–Dec. 30

### Saarbrücken

City center/Castle  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

### Saarlouis

Kleiner Markt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

## SACHSEN (SAXONY)

### Dresden

Striezelmarkt, city center  
Nov. 22–Dec. 24

### Freiberg

Freiberger Obermarkt  
Nov. 23–Dec. 22

### Leipzig

Marktplatz  
Nov. 23–Dec. 23

### Marienber

Marktplatz  
Nov. 24–Dec. 19

## SACHSEN-ANHALT

### Halle (Saale)

Marktplatz  
Nov. 12–Dec. 26

### Magdeburg

Alte Markt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 29

### Quedlinburg

Marktplatz  
Nov. 26–Dec. 14

## Wittenberg

Marktplatz  
Nov. 22–Dec. 29

## SCHLESWIG- HOLSTEIN & HAMBURG

### Flensburg

Downtown  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

### Hamburg

Hamburger Weihnachtsmarkt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

Weihnachtlicher Gänsemarkt  
Nov. 22–Dec. 24

Weihnachtsmarkt St. Petri  
Nov. 22–Dec. 30.

Weihnachtsmarkt Osterstrasse  
Nov. 18–Dec. 30

### Kiel

City Center  
Nov. 22–Dec. 23

### Lübeck

Lübecker Rathaus  
Nov. 22–Dec. 30

## THÜRINGEN

### Erfurt

Cathedral Square  
Nov. 23–Dec. 22

### Weimar

Marktplatz  
Nov. 23, 2021–Jan. 4, 2022

**Disclaimer:** Scheduled events and dates are subject to change. Please research each market prior to travel; some markets require tickets or advanced registration and have limited capacity, in addition to COVID-19 rules and restrictions.



**EULER**   
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military sales



**Euler BMW & MINI Military Sales wishes you a  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

A special thank you to our military members overseas for their  
trust and business this year.  
We hope you all enjoy your holidays.

**EULER**   
**GROUP**  
military sales



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