

FREE
2024

STARS
AND
STRIPES®

~ EUROPEAN ~ CHRISTMAS MARKETS





Discover Europe's largest outlet*

Only 30 minutes from Stuttgart

Discover more than 170 premium and luxury brands in fashion, beauty, sports and home & living with discounts of up to 70%** all year round and a variety of restaurants and cafés. Starting with a Lights On event on 8 November Outletcity Metzingen will be enchanted with a festive flair for the perfect Christmas shopping.

OUTLETCITY
METZINGEN

BOSS / BURBERRY / CALVIN KLEIN / COACH / COLUMBIA / DOUGLAS / KATE SPADE / LE CREUSET / LULULEMON / MICHAEL KORS / NIKE / OAKLEY / PANDORA
PLAYMOBIL / POLO RALPH LAUREN / SWAROVSKI / THE NORTH FACE / TOMMY HILFIGER / TORY BURCH / UNDER ARMOUR / WMF / WOOLRICH and many more

*By sales area or size - Market report "Outlet Centres in Europe", p. 27 (September 2024) produced by ecostra GmbH, www.ecostra.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/outlet-centres-europe_2024-09.pdf
**In comparison to the Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price, where applicable.

*'The Joy of driving...
to Christmas Holiday!'*



Euler Group Military Sales would like to wish
all our Military Members a Happy Holiday Season
Merry Christmas & Happy New Years!

EULER GROUP
military sales



Autohaus Euler
Kaiserslautern GmbH
Merkurstr. 5
67663 Kaiserslautern
Tel.: +49 (0)631 /534 810 9

Location Baumholder
Kuseler Straße 20
55774 Baumholder
Tel.: +49 (0)6783 /18507-10/11

Location Landstuhl
Bruchwiesenstr. 38-40
66849 Landstuhl
Tel.: +49 (0) 160 /1635 394

Location Hofheim
Nordring 15-21
65719 Hofheim
Tel.: +49 (0) 162 /6677 661

Location Spangdahlem
Beillinger Str. 1
54662 Herforst
Tel.: +49 (0) 6562 /974 6584



/eulergroupmilitarysales

euler-militarysales.de

COMMANDER

Katie R. Fidler, LTC, U.S. Army

BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER EUROPE

JOHN RODRIGUEZ

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, MANAGER

CARRIE FARRELL

WRITER-EDITORS

TAMALA MALERK, KAT NICKOLA,
KATIE WELLS

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

DANIELA GAMMON, RYAN JOYE
KEVIN GERACI

ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

LEAH GEIER

MARKETING COORDINATOR

KRISTEN THOENNES

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR

AL GREEN

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, MANAGER

DOUG DOUGHERTY

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, CONSULTANTS

SEAN ADAMS, HEIDI BAYFIELD,
KANDACE BLEVIN, NATE JAMISON,
CAPRI ROE, JEFF TEESELINK

ADVERTISING SALES ASSISTANT

DANNY PADRO

COVER PHOTO

Wernigerode, Germany

ADVERTISING OFFICE

Unit 29480, APO, AE 09211

Postfach 1980, 67607

Kaiserslautern, Germany

+49(0)631-3615-9000

or email: dougherty.doug@stripes.com

WASHINGTON OFFICE

PUBLISHER

MAX D. LEDERER, JR.

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

LAURA LAW

REVENUE DIRECTOR

SCOTT FOLEY

ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR

CHRIS VERIGAN

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, DIRECTOR

MARIE WOODS

CONTACT US:

Telephone: +49 (0) 6631-3615-9111

or DSN: 314-583-9111

Email: memberservices@stripes.com

Visit our website for more information

at www.StripesEurope.com

©2024 Stars and Stripes. All rights reserved.
All information current as of November 2024.

FOLLOW US ON



@STARSANDSTRIPSEUROPE



WHAT'S INSIDE ~

- 6 | Sankt Wendel
Medieval Christmas Market
- 8 | Steam Your Way to
the Markets
- 10 | Collecting Christmas
Market Mugs
- 12 | A Dog's Favorite Castle
Christmas Market
- 14 | Visit the Cave Markets
& Christmas Town
- 16 | Dash Away to a Dickens
Christmas in England
- 18 | Holiday Whimsy at Hyde
Park Winter Wonderland
- 20 | Europe's Best Christmas
Markets Map
- 22 | Iconic European
Christmas Market Treats
- 24 | Top 10 Things to Do at a
Christmas Market
- 25 | Classic European Christ-
mas Decorations
- 26 | A Magical Weekend at the
Kraków Christmas Market
- 28 | The Differing Names of
Christmas Markets
- 30 | Markets to Visit in the
New Year
- 32 | Enjoy the Mountain Vibe at
Bruneck's Christmas Market
- 34 | Christmas Alley in Naples
- 36 | Your Mug Submissions
- 38 | Staff Picks

EDITOR'S LETTER



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

If this is your first winter in Europe, then welcome! You are in for a treat. There are so many fun cultural events and new, local holiday traditions across the continent. Sometimes it is difficult to choose from all the options, so our European Christmas Markets magazine is here to help you sort out where to go, what to do and how best to immerse yourself in meaningful holiday experiences.

For those of you who have been here a while, well, you know the drill! Plan your weekends now. This edition of our annual guide to Christmas markets is chock full of traditional favorites and brand-new off-the-beaten track ideas.

Ready to hit the ground running? The center spread includes a bucket-list map of the top European Christmas markets. Bring it with you on your adventures!

If you would rather take a more Hygge approach, then relax by the fire with a mug of glühwein and leaf through all the pages until you find the best match for your perfect European winter holiday. Perhaps you want to visit a castle market (with my dog, Slim Jim), check out the Presepe (Italian Nativity scenes) or start a collection of market mugs.

This is your holiday season; revel in the merriment and embrace the quiet moments wherever they may find you.

From the entire Stars and Stripes Europe team, we wish you a very festive holiday.

Kat Nickola

Writer-Editor
Stars and Stripes Europe

**“Embracing
Hygge and
other European
traditions of
coziness”**





Sankt Wendel Medieval Christmas Market

By Katie Wells

Beating drums, curley-toed shoes, flaming batons twirling in the air and roars of laughter captivated my dad, spouse and I as we stood mesmerized by the Forzerello Duo performing at the Sankt Wendel Christmas market. The self-deprecating humor and imaginative use of props like a scraggly stuffed rat and yellow-rubber chicken had the crowd whistling and clapping for more. When I talk to my dad on the phone about his trip to visit us during Christmastime, this is the market he mentions most.

The **Sanktwendel Weinachstmarkt and Mittelaltermarkt** is only an hour from Kaiserslautern, and worth the day trip. When we attended, we marveled at a large wooden Christmas pyramid gently spinning in the center of the historic square, then followed our noses straight to the main market where my spouse and I stood in line to try *flammlochs*, or blazed salmon, cooked on a plank over an open fire.

My dad, not a fan of fish, went his own way and came back with a smoking, cinnamon *baumstriezel*, or chimney cake, he graciously shared with us while we waited. With each bite, steam billowed from our mouths on the icy December day. I felt like a dragon which was fitting for the other section of the market and its medieval theme.

We picked at the delicious *flammlochs* and a second *baumstriezel* as we made our way around the charming town. Signs pointed us towards the medieval market and we heard the commotion of bells and jesters putting on a show. While the **Forzerello Duo** performed only in German, the humor translated easily, and we couldn't help but feed off the excited energy of the crowd. There were other shows and musical performances lined up throughout the day as well.

After the performance ended, we explored more than 150 uniquely-decorated huts selling hand-made items like pottery, beeswax candles, medieval lanterns and so much more. We even found an all-natural dog treat stand, where we bought our two pups marrow bones, rabbit ears and other tasty morsels for their stockings. Other demonstrations for visitors to participate in included archery, candle dipping and soap making.

Despite it being freezing the day we went, the market had plenty of open fireplaces and hot mead to fit the theme and keep us warm. We wanted to try the free toboggan slide, but at that point in the day, the line was long with eagerly waiting *kinder*.

Instead, our attention was captured by an ethereal, blue, winter fairy gliding around on stilts and blowing bubbles.

Although we only stayed for the afternoon, the market had plenty more to offer such as a forest of holiday-themed miniature displays called "The World of the Imps." Each night at 7 p.m. a watchman with a halberd, horn and lantern makes his rounds and concludes the market in a memorable way with a surprise.

My spouse and I are excited to return this year and stay for all the market has to offer. The Sankt Wendel market has a limited season. In 2024, the dates are set for Dec. 6 – 15. You can find more information at visitsaarland.co.uk. ■



© KEVIN SULLIVAN

44. Trierer Weihnachts Markt



Fotos:
Werner Haritz / Thomas Vothauer /
Trierer Weihnachtsmarkt

Up to December 22nd, 2024

Unique romantic atmosphere in the heart of the city

Now in its 44th year, the Trier Christmas Market will again be one of the loveliest in all of Germany. Set on the medieval Main Market and in front of the imposing backdrop of Trier Cathedral, the attractively decorated booths offer a fitting framework for this wonderful event. Delicious regional specialties, festive arts and crafts attracts will invite visitors to stroll in the cozy atmosphere of Trier's Old City. Guests from Germany and abroad enjoy the genuine "vintner hot mulled wine" from the Moselle and the "hot mulled Vierz" (apple wine) from apple trees in the Eifel hills. The one and only "Mulled Wine Queen" in Germany resides solely in Trier, as an ambassador for the popular hot drink. It's worth a visit this year to Main Market and the Cathedral up to December 22nd, 2024!



Mon. to Thu.: 10:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Fri. and Sat.: 10:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Sun.: 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

trierer-weihnachtsmarkt.de

STEAM

YOUR WAY TO THE MARKETS

By Kat Nickola

Whether you are a fan of the nostalgia in “The Polar Express” or the comedic mishaps of “Plains, Trains and Automobiles,” wintertime often conjures images of chugging across snowy terrain. What better way to dip into the feels than by riding a scenic steam engine in the wintry forest wonderland of Germany's Harz Mountains?

The **Harzer Schmalspurbahnen** (HSB) offers numerous scenic rides on a fleet of 25 steam locomotives along their 140-kilometer historic narrow gauge railway network. Train enthusiasts can visit the historic **workshop in Wernigerode**, which is still used today to maintain the company's fleet.

The HSB has three unique train routes in the Harz Mountains.

The **Harzquerbahn** travels from Wernigerode through the steep Dräng Valley, across the Benneckenstein plateau and down into woodlands on its way to the city of Nordhausen. The Christmas market of Nordhausen is a large event with over 1,000 wooden stalls stretching through the area from the Rathaus to Nikolaipplatz. It includes a fun model railroad based on the local train system and a walk-in witch's house, reflecting regional legends.



**NORDHAUSEN'S CHRISTMAS MARKETS ARE OPEN
NOV. 29 TO DEC. 21, 2024.**

The **Selketalbahn** is the longest route and traverses the rugged rocky foothills of the mountains and the small villages along the way. The beauty of this route is that it connects you to numerous other villages; many have single-weekend Christmas markets which make great destinations. Throughout the season, it's worth taking the entire trip to the other end of the line in Quedlinburg, a UNESCO World Heritage town, known for its 2,100 half-timbered 800-year-old homes. On the first three Advent weekends, a selection of homes open their courtyards to host unique micro-markets. The Selketalbahn acts as a spur route and is accessed from a station halfway along the Harzquerbahn.



**THE QUEDLINBURG MARKET RUNS ON WEEKENDS
FROM NOV. 27 TO DEC. 22, 2024.**

The final **Brockenbahn** route is the highlight of many people's visit to the Harz Mountains. Circling the snow-covered mountain on a bright red train conjures images of travelling to Santa's workshop. At 1,141 meters high, there are expansive views across the mountains from the Brocken peak. There is a visitor center, restaurant and high-altitude hotel at the top. This out-and-back train route from Wernigerode is a beautiful day out and gives you plenty of time to visit the village's Christmas market when you return to the valley. Wernigerode has a festive atmosphere as the colorful, pristine medieval buildings and hilltop castle are decked out in twinkling lights and greenery. Two markets are joined by a pleasant pedestrian-only shopping street, one in the central Marktplatz and a second in Nicolaipplatz.



**IN 2024, THE WERNIGERODE MARKETS WILL BE OPEN
FROM NOV. 22 TO DEC. 22.**

The HSB also has special experiences like a Santa Claus train, a ride up the Brocken for Christmas brunch, whisky or chocolate tasting trips and special New Year events. These are limited, so it's best to visit the website at www.hsb-wr.de to book ahead. ■



In Germany we say:

"HÖREN BEGEISTERT!"

auric
HÖRGERÄTE



Phonak Audéo Sphere Infinio Hearing Aids

Being in the moment has never been easier. Offering exceptional speech clarity from any direction, Phonak Audéo Sphere Infinio filters out noise from speech, allowing you to engage with friends, family members or colleagues even in the noisiest environments.

- World's first hearing aid with dedicated deep neural network (DNN) chip
- Expand the listening range from all directions
- Agile universal connectivity that can keep up with you
- Swiss engineering at its best, designed for reliability

 **auric Hörcenter in Kaiserslautern**
Pfaßplatz 10 · Tel: (0631) 6 24 64 58
E-Mail: kaiserslautern@auric-hoercenter.de

 **auric Hörcenter in Kaiserslautern Mitte**
Eisenbahnstraße 13 · Tel: (0631) 41 41 88 16
E-Mail: kl-mitte@auric-hoercenter.de

**Make an
appointment!**

PHONAK
life is on

www.auric-hoercenter.de



Garmisch
Partenkirchen



Enchanted winter season in Garmisch-Partenkirchen

♥ GaPa

Discover Garmisch-Partenkirchen: Spend the day skiing or enjoy a long snow hike in the mountains. When the sun sets, you can immerse yourself in the most idyllic Advent atmosphere: Enjoy a cup of mulled wine or a bag of hot chestnuts at the Christmas market. Look for Christmas gifts in the pleasant little shops or admire the different nativity scenes ("Krippen") from oriental to traditional Bavarian in the Partenkirchen shop windows.

On a stroll through the Michael Ende park during „winter in park“ at the center of Garmisch from December 27 to January 5 you will be enchanted by the fantastic light installations. And have a snack or a drink at one of the many foodtrucks with family and friends.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Garmisch-Partenkirchen this Advent!

For more information contact our holiday advisors under +49 8821 180 700, info@gapa-tourismus.de, gapa-tourismus.de

Discover your true nature.



Collecting CHRISTMAS MARKET MUGS

By Katie Wells

“Einen weißen glühwein bitte.”

I dropped my coins into the hands of a vendor and a warm mug of steaming, sweet glühwein replaced them in my hands. The vendor informed me I could bring the mug back when I was finished for the return of my small deposit fee (*pfand*). How cool, I thought, *a more sustainable way to sell drinks in the chaos of holiday crowds*. But, after holding the charming, little, red mug with our city's name on it, I knew I would keep it. As my spouse and I ventured to more Christmas markets across Europe, I quickly got caught up in collecting mugs as many markets have a specialty mug each year. After the top shelf in my cabinet became full, I realized I needed to pair it down and keep only the extra special ones – a tough choice indeed.

One of the highlights of Christmas markets for many attendees is collecting market mugs. So much so, that there are groups dedicated to sharing mug information and avid collectors even fly from the states in a race to obtain the newest styles. With unique designs like heart-shaped handles, boots or snowmen, it's easy to see why

people keep adding to their kitschy collection. The mugs often have the city name and year printed on them, so they make for a nice souvenir with a built-in collector's stamp. Metal ornament trees help collectors hang and display their mugs during the holidays.

New yearly mugs may be limited in the future due to the collective effort in Germany and other European countries trying to reduce waste while maintaining the tradition and fun of new designs. It is highly encouraged to bring your own mug from home and reuse it while at a market.

Take note that vendors often sell different mug designs, so if you see someone with a particular pattern while strolling along, you may need to search for it elsewhere in the market. Leftover mugs from previous years are often available at Christmas markets, so if the newest one sells out, you can still add to your collection. The mugs may not be as prevalent or special in other countries. For example, many markets in France and the U.K. have reusable plastic cups.



A LITTLE HISTORY

Through wars and the Industrial Revolution, Christmas markets date back to 1296 in Vienna, Austria when Duke Albrecht authorized 140 day fairs in December. In Germany, Dresden proclaims the title of having “the oldest Christmas market in Germany” which started in 1434.

The staple drink, glühwein, gets its origin from the Romans who, as they traveled across Europe, cushioned their conquering by bringing hot alcohol. Glühwein roughly translates to “glow wine” and was named this because of the red, hot iron traditionally used for mulling. Today, there is red, white and flaming glühwein to try. Such a popular drink needed an easy and measurable way to be served, thus the tradition of mugs started, coming in a standard .2-liter size.

As markets grew across Germany, so did the desire for mugs. Köln (Cologne) is a mug collectors’ hotspot because the city is divided into six themed markets. The Gnome Market features 12 different cute gnome mugs to choose from, while the Markt der Engel (Angel Market) has a new angel design featured each year. There is even a Christmas train that you can take to each market.

Big cities like Munich, Germany and Strasbourg, France are also collector hot spots; however, some of the prettiest mugs I’ve found have been from smaller markets. My first heart handle mug was gifted to me by a friend who attended the Heidelberg market, and I got a light purple mug from Speyer one year. Kaiserslautern almost always has snowman-shaped mugs and ones with heart handles.



A FEW UNIQUE MUGS TO COLLECT:

Dresden, Germany

What better mug to add to your collection than one from the market that supposedly started it all? The Striezelmarkt mug often has a small mitten sculpted onto the handle and features a limited edition each year.

Nuremberg, Germany

The Nuremberg mugs often take on a signature shape. They are taller with a slightly wider bottom almost resembling a stein.

Köln, Germany

You can collect six mugs, one from each market. The angel is highly sought after. Pick your favorite from Gnome Village or collect all 12.



Bruges Market Mugs, Tela Lee Royston

Vienna, Austria

Vienna is known for its red boot-shaped mug and in recent years has had heart-shaped mugs as well.

Bruges, Belgium

Another highly sought-after mug is the Nutcracker, which Bruges has had for multiple years in the past. ■

Nuremberg Christmas Mug, Gary Brown





A DOG'S FAVORITE CASTLE CHRISTMAS MARKET

By Slim Jim



As we dash through the castle gate and cross the moat, I run headfirst into a wall of fragrance. I stick my nose in the air and catch a warm grilled aroma—*stockbrot* (stick bread). Yum! I sneeze from the excitement of a smoky fire. A little further on there is the odor of something sharp and wild—leather and animals! I can tell already that the *Burgweihnacht* (castle Christmas) at Burg Satzvey is going to be a new favorite.

"Slim Jim, slow down!" Boss-Mom gives my lead a gentle tug. I glance at her, tongue lolling with excitement, and slow my pace to an eager trot.

My family strolls around looking at the tents full of crafts that people handmade to sell at the market. Boss-Mom buys me a woolen ball that I can't wait to rip apart. I help Girl-Child pick out some Christmas gifts; she chooses a nice little clay vase and a cool light made from bark that I will make a point not to chew on.

As we circle the castle, I watch both kids try their hands at archery. Then, Boy-Child holds a real hawk! I want so badly to chase it, but I sit still like a good boy.

As a reward, we head to the food area behind the castle which is full of smoke-filled stalls and tasty treats cooking over fires. Boss-Mom gets some mead to warm her up while Boss-Dad and the kids wander into a restaurant tent. No one needs to convince me to go along, and they share bits of charred meat and crispy potato, hot off the stick.

It starts to get dark, and I curl up under the table. Suddenly, I notice trumpets playing and a donkey braying. I sit up and look at Boss-Mom with a head tilt. What is that? She reaches down to give me a gentle scrub behind my cocked ear. "I think it's time to head over to the Nativity pageant."

We walk to a field past the tasty food and a new earthy exotic fragrance wafts over me. I pull hard on my leash to see the creatures standing beside a tent. I give a low conversational growl. Hello camels.

"Slim Jim don't growl at the three wise men," says Boss-Mom. I sit and wag my tail. Sorry. I hadn't noticed the men in the tent. They wear long robes and crowns – way less interesting than the fuzzy camels. Soon another man in a black cloak approaches.

"Die Hörte mein gemeine, bei die Große und die Kleine," he rhymes.

I don't understand his High German and I don't think all the people do either, but it doesn't seem to matter. We wander along a trail while the cloaked man speaks, and we watch a couple of humans travel from place to place. Soon we are at a farmyard and there is a tiny baby in some hay. More importantly, there are some miraculous scents! I make my way past all the human legs to the fence where I see the donkeys, sheep and horses. I whimper. They are so cool.

It is getting crowded, and soon we walk around the moat toward the castle gate. I take a big sniff of all my favorite Christmas market smells—farm animals, old things and food on a fire. Now I can add camels to the list. ■

Burgweihnacht at Burg Satzvey in 2024

Nov. 30–Dec. 22, 2024

Saturdays noon–8 p.m. | Sundays noon–7 p.m. | Not open weekdays
Book tickets ahead for a discount or family rate.

www.burgsatzvey.de

Changing Smiles, Changing Lives



- Now offering Ceramic Implants: Biological alternative in highest quality!
- Aesthetic Dentistry
- TMJ/Facial Pain Treatment
- Certified Dental Hygienist
- Preventative Care and Periodontal Therapy
- Orthodontics/Invisalign
- Implants
- Oral Surgery



Dr. Charles A. Smith, DDS is an American trained dentist providing expert dental care with the newest and most successful techniques. Dr. Smith and his Team are proud to provide for your entire family, from infants to geriatrics, treatment to cover all of your dental needs. Our Team is available in two locations and we **now have new extended evening hours in our Böblingen office!** We look forward to your visit!



Heidelberg Dentistry
Römerstr. 1
69115 Heidelberg
Tel: (0)6221 651 6090
info@heidelbergdentistry.com
www.heidelbergdentistry.com

Böblingen Dental
Charles-Lindbergh-Str. 11
71034 Böblingen
Tel: (0)7031 205 6062
info@boeblingendental.com
www.boeblingendental.com



**CHARLES A. SMITH, DDS
& ASSOCIATES**
Specialists for Aesthetic Dentistry

Visit the Cave Markets & Christmas Town

IN VALKENBURG, NETHERLANDS

By Katie Wells

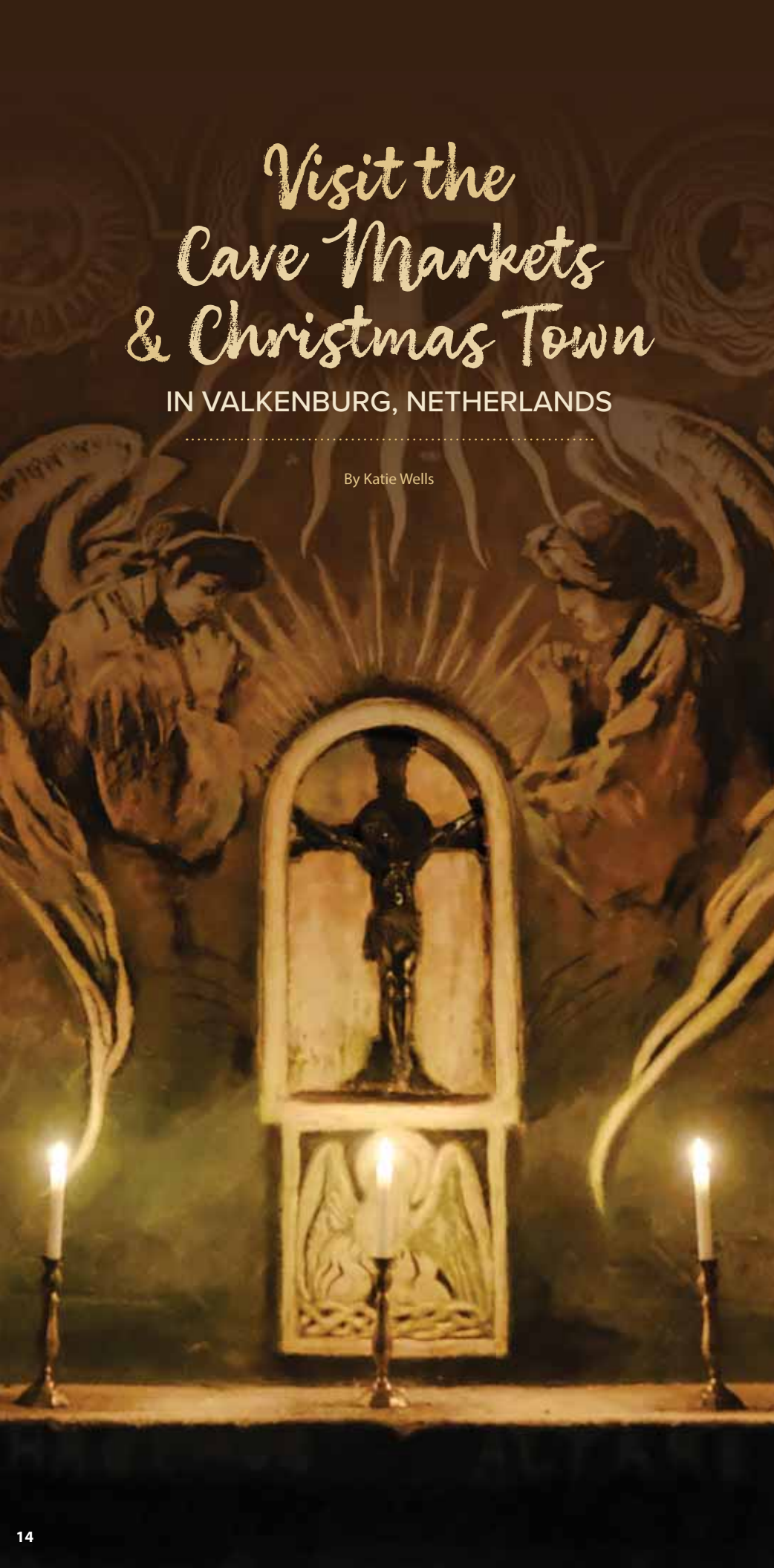


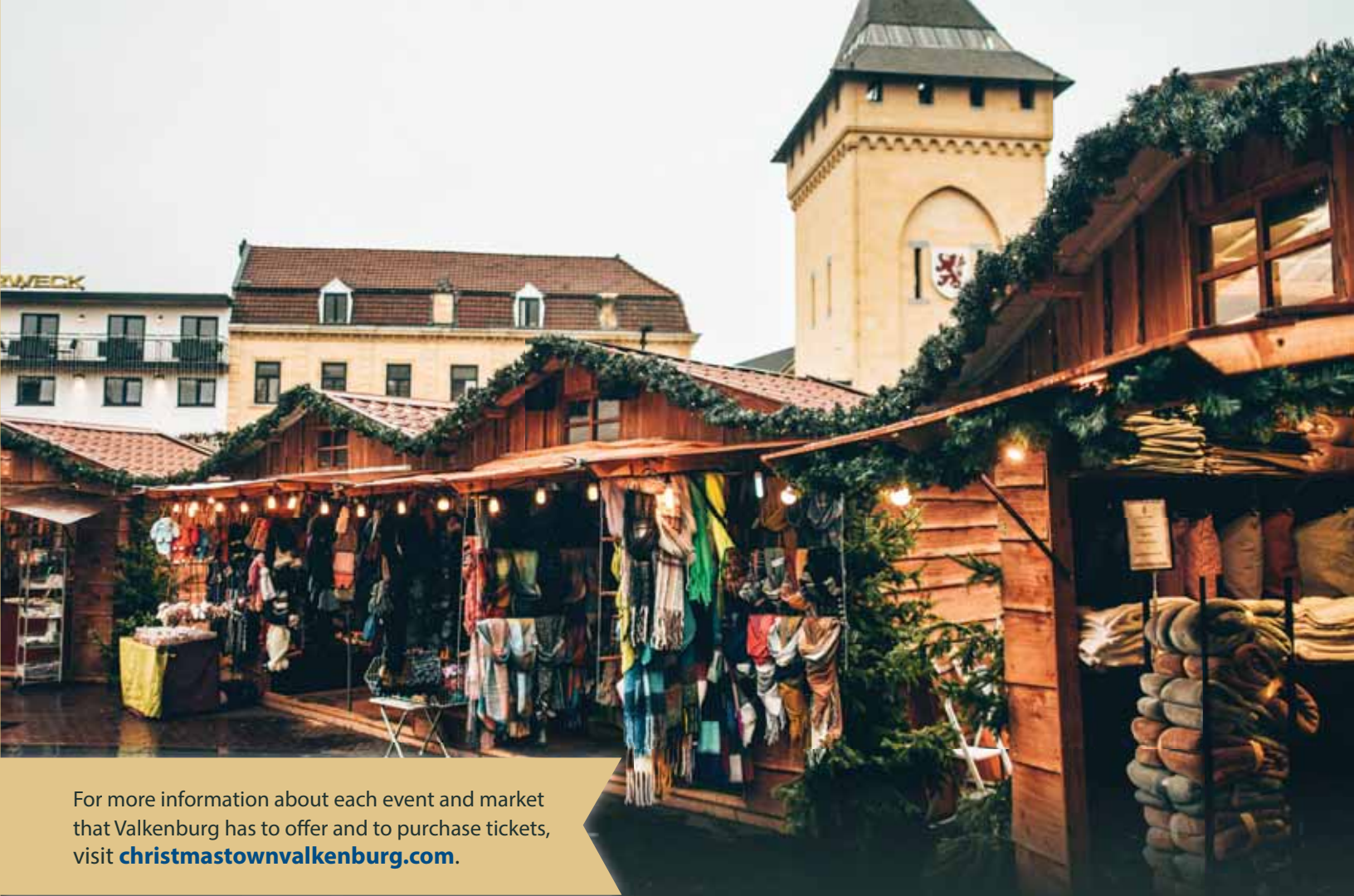
©Kerststad Valkenburg

Ranked 10th in 2023 as one of “Europe’s Best Christmas Destinations,” Christmas Town, Valkenburg is back and happening from Nov. 15, 2024–Jan. 5, 2025. Valkenburg has multiple markets glimmering with holiday spirit, including unique and atmospheric ones held in caves where you are bound to experience moments of magic.

Above ground, there is a large market throughout the historic city, Santa’s Village where you can explore the Route d’Amuse (a culinary walking route), Christmas Crib Walks which feature dozens of Nativity scenes, various musical and theatrical performances, and a newly added Sparkle Trail featuring enchanting light sculptures. Santa and his helper, Professor Dr. Falckenstein (who sports a fun purple hat) will be in attendance collecting wishes.

Twice a week, every Wednesday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. the Landal Christmas Parade passes through the old town with a procession of holiday-themed floats and groups of dancers in spirited costumes. After enjoying the fairytale-esque festivities, head underground for more yuletide charm.





For more information about each event and market that Valkenburg has to offer and to purchase tickets, visit christmastownvalkenburg.com.

Velvet Cave (Fluweelengrot)

NOV. 16 – DEC. 29, 2024



Enjoy an ambient Christmas market underneath the Valkenburg castle ruins where you can promenade through centuries-old, warmly lit, yellow marlstone corridors. There are 50 decorated stalls against the backdrop of historic cave art and carvings.

- Tickets must be purchased online.
- Wheelchair accessible.
- Strollers allowed.
- Dogs are not allowed.

Municipal Cave (Gemeentegrot)

NOV. 16 – DEC. 29, 2024



The Municipal Cave hosts Europe's, "Largest Underground Christmas market." This maze of a cave transforms into an extensive market experience where you can shop hundreds of stalls for the perfect gifts for friends and family. There are also plenty of snacks, drinks and foods to try. Lit Christmas trees line the marlstone walls and Santa himself walks around.

- Tickets must be purchased online.
- Wheelchair accessible.
- Strollers allowed.
- Dogs are not allowed.

Christmas Cave Mergel Rijk

NOV. 16, 2024 – JAN. 5, 2025



Every year, this cave is dedicated to a 30-meter-long diorama of miniatures depicting biblical Christmas stories. There are glowing sculptures carved from marlstone and you can admire winter landscapes filled with people and animals. There are also 3D cave paintings.

- Tickets must be purchased online.
- Not wheelchair accessible.
- Strollers cannot be taken into the cave.
- Dogs are not allowed. ■

Dash Away to a **DICKENS CHRISTMAS** *in England*

By Tamala Malerk



Something about the spirit of England can turn even the curmudgeonly “Bah Humbug-er” into a cheer-meister singing Christmas carols at the top of their lungs and shouting along with Tiny Tim, “God bless us, everyone!”

Whether your love of the Victorian Era began with reading Dickens in history class, obsessing over the scandals on “Bridgerton” or, like me, watching “Mickey’s Christmas Carol,” the U.K. has several chances for you to experience a Dickensian Christmas.

THE GREAT CHRISTMAS FEAST

From Nov. 8, 2024, to Jan. 12, 2025, fully immerse yourself in the story of “A Christmas Carol” in a way you never have before, from the perspective of Charles Dickens himself, with this live dinner theatre show.

It’s Christmas Eve 1843: the lights dim, the piano and bell chimes crescendo and the audience is spooked by the words “You will be haunted by three spirits.”

Every year, Dickens prepares for his annual Christmas feast. Yet, this year is different; this year, he has been walking the streets late at night and locking himself in his study for who knows what reason. Tonight, you will discover exactly why as Dickens’ famous story comes to life while you feast on a traditional Victorian meal.

The three-course meal is sourced from archival records, Victorian cooking manuals and is tested for months in advance to ensure tasty flavors in conjunction with authenticity. This year, visitors can look forward to corn-fed chicken, confit Gressingham duck and for dessert, plum pudding ice cream. Dietary restrictions? Fear not, unlike the haunting spirits, those can be accommodated.

To learn more about this experience and to purchase your tickets, visit christmasfeast.thelostestate.com.

*“You will be
haunted by
three spirits.”*



DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

London is not the only place with Dickensian Christmas Flair. Make your way to Rochester, Kent from Dec. 7-8 if you want to experience a full Victorian era weekend event where the cobblestone streets are transported to the time of Dickens. Kent even has ties to Dickens as the writer lived in the area for several years during his childhood. He returned later and wrote some of his classics such as “David Copperfield.”

Prepare to be fully immersed as you walk the streets of Rochester. You might even run into one of Dickens’ many famous characters while scenes from his works are performed.

Each day of the festival begins with a procession at 11 a.m. along High Street, followed by a noon parade concluding at the Boley Hill Stage. Later in the afternoon, there is a candle-lit parade as the sun sets, ending in a Christmas choral concert.

While you don’t have to don a costume for this festival, isn’t it much more fun to get in on the action? You can purchase Victorian-style clothing at the festival. You can also shop at over 100 stalls and get a one-of-kind Christmas present for your favorite person (or yourself) at the **Rochester Christmas Market**, which takes place simultaneously. There is a Christmas village where children can meet Santa’s elves, or participate in story time, making decorations and baking.

While in the area, you can also check out Dickens’ Rochester chalet where he worked on “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” shortly before dying in 1870. Crowds are expected, so it is highly recommended that you use a “park and ride” service to get to the event, take the bus or, for the most ease and convenience, take the train.

Go to kentlive.news and search for Dickensian Christmas Festival to learn more about getting to this festive event.



Check out these other, small Dickens events across the U.K.

- Dickensian Christmas Festival. Nov. 23-24, Ulverston
- Dickens of a Christmas, Dec. 1, Olney
- Dickensian Evening, Dec. 6, Ware
- Dickensian Christmas Market and Craft Fayre, Dec. 8, Wetherby ■

HOLIDAY WHIMSY AT HYDE PARK

Winter Wonderland

By Stacy Roman and Katie Wells

There are plenty of fantastic Christmas options in the U.K., from Victorian markets across the country (see page 16) to the Frankfurt Christmas Market in Birmingham. However, one of my all-time favorites is the **Hyde Park Winter Wonderland**.

As the holiday season returns, the usually calm and serene landscape of London's Hyde Park transforms into a spectacular Winter Wonderland. Take a spin around the ice-skating rink, peruse your way through a stunning display of elaborate, "Alice in Wonderland" themed ice sculptures in the **Magical Ice Kingdom**, or have a nightcap at **Bar Ice**, where the bar is made of ice. And if you're not tired of all the frozen fun, expert artists teach workshops where you can create your own ice sculpture. After being immersed in the beauty and chill of all the ice, you may want to warm up. There is a Swiss-inspired sit-down fondue experience at **Le Chalet Fondue** where you can enjoy plenty of variations of hot, melty cheese fondue and pre-booking is available.

Thrill rides can be found in all corners of the park, including the crowd-favorite, the **Munich Looping** roller-coaster. At first glance the five humongous loops reminded me of the Olympic rings, and I imagined that riding this coaster would feel pretty close to that. Word to the wise from personal experience, save your lunch and hot chocolate consumption for after the rides.

There are plenty of food options where you can eat or sip on something warm while standing by a blazing, open-fire listening to live-bands and DJs or watching all the fun of live performances. **The Market Square**

is Scandinavian-inspired and brings forth the cozy feeling of hygge. They have plenty of Christmas market food staples like bratwurst and glühwein along with Scandinavian-style meatballs and waffles. You will also find a large line-up of street food to try throughout the wonderland. For even more winter magic, you can head to **Bar Narnia**, which is dreamily inspired by C.S Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia."

Alpine trading chalets are lined with twinkling Christmas lights and offer plenty of seasonal wares. Of course, what would a Winter Wonderland be without the big man himself? Head over to **Santa Land** to catch a sighting of jolly ol' St. Nick. Kids of all ages can get their pictures taken in Santa's grotto and might even receive a present for good behavior. There are plenty of rides and places for little ones to get their pent-up energy out, or you can visit the all-new **Zippos Christmas Circus**, packed with acrobatic and comic routines in a heated circus megadome.

Winter Wonderland opens on Nov. 21, 2024, and runs through Jan. 5, 2025 (closed on Dec. 25 for Christmas). To make your trip less stressful, you can pre-book your date and entry time online and purchase any tickets or tokens for rides and activities you may want to try. You can also make

reservations at some of the sit-down restaurants. Keep in mind that peak days may cost more. Daily hours are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., with the last entry at 9:30 p.m. Hyde Park can be accessed via Green Park, Hyde Park Corner, Marble Arch, Victoria and Paddington London Underground stations. For more information, visit hydeparkwinterwonderland.com. ■

"The Market Square is Scandinavian-inspired and brings forth the cozy feeling of hygge."





Make the Holidays More Rewarding

Earn 1.5 Rewards Points for Every Dollar Spent*

With the Service CU Visa Signature Everyday Elite Card, not only will you earn 1.5 points per dollar spent all year, you'll also earn 15,000 bonus points when you spend \$1,500 in the first 60 days.* Pay yourself back this holiday season with the credit card that earns you more.



Scan QR Code or Visit
servicecu.org/everydayelite

servicecu.org | 00800.4728.2000 | Proudly Serving the U.S. Military Since 1957

Insured by NCUA *Must be a member of Service CU or eligible for membership with at least \$5 in a Primary Savings account and a new Visa Signature Everyday Elite Credit Card holder. To receive the 15,000 rewards points, you must make \$1,500 or more in purchases within the first 60 days of account opening. The rewards points will be added to your uChoose Rewards points balance within 30 days after you reach the required purchase dollar amount. You must register for uChoose Rewards to redeem and use the points. Promotion subject to change or be canceled at any time without notice.



EUROPE'S BEST CHRISTMAS MARKETS

By Kat Nickola





1 BARCELONA, SPAIN

NOV. 28 – DEC. 24, 2024

Catalan items and Nativity scenes.
Mild temperatures.
Churros con Chocolate.

2 BOLZANO, ITALY

NOV. 29, 2024 – JAN. 6, 2025

Tyrolean culture.
Mountain town markets nearby.
Local Italian wine.

3 BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

NOV. 17 – DEC. 31, 2024

Hungarian folk art.
Two sizeable markets.
Hearty goulash and grilled meat.

4 COLMAR, FRANCE

NOV. 26 – DEC. 29, 2024

Medieval fairytale atmosphere.
Local wine.
Nearby scenic village markets.

5 COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

NOV. 15, 2024 – JAN. 5, 2025

Tivoli Gardens is decked out.
Harborside markets.
Spiced glögg and Julebryg (Yule beer).

6 EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

NOV. 17, 2024 – JAN. 6, 2025

Markets below the castle.
Parties. The big wheel.
Stay for Hogmanay.

7 GDAŃSK, POLAND

NOV. 11 – DEC. 23, 2024

Pretty, colorful old town.
Find the talking moose.
Maritime heritage. Tasty pierogi.

8 KÖLN, GERMANY

NOV. 18 – DEC. 24, 2024

Six unique locations.
Glühwein mugs galore.
Mini-train between markets.

9 KRAKÓW, POLAND

NOV. 30, 2024 – JAN. 1, 2025

Ornate old town square market.
Carriage rides.
Delicious local soups.

10 LONDON, ENGLAND

NOV. 21 – JAN. 5, 2025

Vibes and lights at marketplaces.
Winter Wonderland.
13 pop-up markets.

11 NAPLES, ITALY

DEC. 2, 2024 – JAN. 7, 2025

Nativity scene paradise.
Market at the railway museum.
Seasonal sweets.

12 PARIS, FRANCE

NOV. 16, 2024 – JAN. 1, 2025

Rides and food near the Louvre.
Notre Dame market.
Quality artisans and gourmet food.

13 PRAGUE, CZECHIA

NOV. 30, 2024 – JAN. 6, 2025

Picturesque old town and castle.
Walkable markets across town.
Tasty trdelník.

14 SEVILLE, SPAIN

NOV. 29 – DEC. 23, 2024

Lots of lights. Nativity scenes.
Market by the cathedral.
Street musicians.

15 SIBIU, ROMANIA

NOV. 17, 2024 – JAN. 2, 2025

Medieval heritage.
Grand Square light show.
Cheesy lángos.

16 TALLIN, ESTONIA

NOV. 22 – DEC. 27, 2024

Authentic medieval walled town.
There will be snow.
Abundant gingerbread.

17 TRIKALA, GREECE

NOV. 2024 – JAN. 2025 (TBD)

Mill of the Elves-theme village.
Rides and attractions.
Near cliff-top monasteries.

18 VIENNA, AUSTRIA

NOV. 15 – DEC. 23, 2024

Numerous markets around town.
Posh palace atmosphere.
Classical concerts.

Iconic European Christmas Market Treats

By Tamala Malerk

As you are strolling along at one of the many Christmas markets across Europe the sweet smells of desserts fill the air. As you gaze into the clear cases, mouth watering, it can be hard to decide what to eat. A crunchy cookie? A soft fruity bread? A chocolate-covered yule log?

Each country has its own iconic Christmas market treat. Our list can help guide you to the most traditional flavors Europe has to offer.

Germany

CHRISTSTOLLEN OR WEIHNACHTSSTOLLEN

Dusted with snowy powdered sugar, this sweet treat is reminiscent of raisin bread but also contains citrusy hints of lemon zest and candied orange peel.



Italy

PANETTONE

This dome-shaped sweetbread or fruitcake originated in Milan in the 15th century. It is filled with raisins. Toast it for a bit of a crispy crust and pair it with hot cocoa or gluhwein.



U.K.

CHRISTMAS MINCE PIE

These filled pastries can be sweet or savory, depending on your personal tastes. No matter what you choose, it is customary to eat one pie per day for the 12 days of Christmas.

Portugal

BOLO REI

Also known as "King Cake," this ring-shaped cake features nuts, crystalized fruit and raisins. It is traditionally eaten on Christmas Day and King's Day (Jan. 6).



Greece

KOURABIEDES

These butter and almond cookies are the perfect crunchy treat. Each family tends to put their own spin on the recipe such as adding whiskey to the batter or switching the nuts for ouzo.



Hungary

BEIGLI

Marvel at the swirl of this poppy seed and walnut roll cake. The dough can also be flavored with lemon or orange zest for a citrusy twist.



France/Switzerland

BÛCHE DE NOËL

Also known as a Yule log, this decadent sponge cake is rolled with whipped cocoa hazelnut cream and covered in a thick chocolate ganache.

The Netherlands

BANKETSTAFF

These flaky treats come in log shapes, S-shapes and M-shapes. They are a simple confection that consist of only three ingredients: almond paste, egg and puff pastry.



Sweden

LUSSEKATTER

These tiny S-shaped and cross-shaped yeast pastries get their yellow tint from saffron. They are traditionally baked on Dec. 13th, Lucia Day.

Czechia

PERNÍČKY

These sweet snacks are very similar to gingerbread cookies, but they are chewier and get their flavor from fennel, anise, cinnamon and cloves. ■





Ramstein
Dental Care

&



Wiesbaden
Dental Care

*Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year
from all of us to all of you*



Our Services

- Family Dentistry
- Registered Dental Hygienists
- Cosmetic Dentistry
- Crowns / Bridges
- Implants
- Root Canals
- Oral Surgery
- Orthodontics
- Zoom Whitening
- Periodontist

American Doctors & Staff



Ramstein Dental Care

06371 406230
Poststrasse 1, 66877 Ramstein
RamsteinDental@gmail.com
www.RamsteinDental.com



Wiesbaden Dental Care

06119 887 2650
Bahnstrasse 14, 65205 Wiesbaden
WiesbadenDentalCare@gmail.com
www.WiesbadenDental.com



UNITED CONCORDIA®





TOP 10 THINGS TO DO AT A *Christmas Market*

By Tamala Malerk

1 Find your mug.

Each market comes with its own special mug. Take a selfie with the mug and get your pfand (tax) back, or for around 2-5 euros keep the mug as a collectible.

“See page 10 to learn more about mug traditions.”

Eat market food.

Lebkuchen, mince pies, bratwurst, kartoffelpuffer, raclette, chestnuts, cookies and more await you all over Europe.

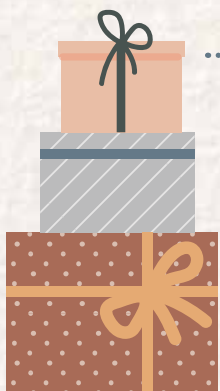
3 Find a hot beverage.

Whether you like glühwein, hot cider, Christmas punch or hot cocoa, each market will have special hot drinks to keep you warm in the cold winter.



Take a “pre-shopping” stroll.

With some markets having hundreds of stalls, you don’t want to buy something, only to find a better item later.



5 Shop for one-of-a-kind presents.

Artisans are on-site at the stalls offering handmade, unique items perfect for Christmas gifts.

6 Find the local highlight.

Perhaps it’s a living advent calendar, a walk-through Nativity scene or a visit with St. Nick, going to different markets gives you the chance to see what makes each one special.



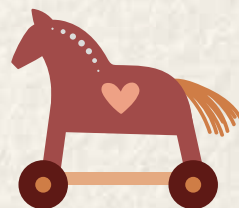
Try a Winter Activity.

It’s fun to ice skate at a German market, ski into an Austrian market or take a horse-drawn sleigh ride in Sweden.

7

8 Go Round-and-Round on a Ride.

Most markets have a Ferris wheel or merry-go-round, but if you visit a medieval market, you might just be cranking your own kids around the wooden carousel.



Search for Santa.

Whether you are looking for Santa Claus, Père Noël, Noel Baba, Joulupukki, Babbo Natale, Der Weihnachtsmann or Sinterklaas, he is sure to make an appearance.

9

10 Watch a Local Performance.

Listen to carolers, see a Christmas or Nativity play, watch dancers and enjoy the local talent. ■



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

By Kat Nickola



While visiting Christmas markets around Europe, it is fun to find local traditional holiday decorations. Ornaments are a highlight and come in many iterations, from beautiful blown glass to hand-felted wool, but you can stretch your decorating talents beyond the tree. Try some of these iconic trimmings to bring your travels home this holiday season.

ENGLAND

In England, bringing greenery indoors is an essential mark of a well-decorated wintertime home. You can shop for beautiful handmade **wreaths** made with traditional holly, ivy, evergreen branches and pinecones. Another old-fashioned decoration you may find at the market is the **kissing bough**, a series of decorated hoops crossed to create a ball-shaped hanging. Most are made with greenery and ribbons, but fruit-covered boughs were popular in the Georgian period and have seen a comeback. If the large spheres aren't to your taste, it's always popular to hang a small bunch of fresh-cut mistletoe.

FRANCE

France is known for its **country linens** and **white lace** perfect for a beautifully set holiday dinner table. At the local Christmas markets, look for tablecloths, napkins and runners in white and solid colors with holiday-themed cutout edging. Popular lace edges feature Christmas trees, snowflakes and the Alsatian stork. While in Alsace, look for locally made **kelsch** textiles. Created by weaving together linen and cotton which is dyed with woad or cochineal, the blue and red plaid patterns can be used all year. Can't make it to the market? You can shop two floors of holiday items any time of year at *Un Noël en Alsace* in Strasbourg.

GERMANY

The **Weihnachtspyramide** (Christmas pyramid) will be a common site at markets across Germany. These multi-tiered wooden towers derive from the same heritage that brought us the evergreen Christmas tree lit with candles, though the wooden iteration comes from the Ore Mountains of Saxony. They make a beautiful centerpiece for seasonal candlelit evenings. For more seasonal lighting, find an intricate wooden candle arch called a **Schwibbogen** perfect for your window. Today, most arches are battery-lit for safety near curtains, however the themes often still include a nod to their origins in German mining villages.

ITALY

In Italy, a family's **Presepe**, or Nativity scene, is given pride of place in the home during the Christmas season. Ornate and complex, these scenes go well beyond the holy family, often representing an entire village and the humbleness of daily life into which Jesus was born. Markets are a wonderful place to find a new piece to your growing Presepe. You may even find **La Befana**, an older witchy-looking lady with a broom who brings treats to good children on the eve of January 6th. Decorated brooms are also popular representations of La Befana for those interested in embracing this Italian legend.

POLAND

Bring some Polish pottery home from the holiday market with winter-themed ceramics like *Sw. Mikolaj* (Saint Nicholas) with his bag, tall, serene angles and colorful Christmas trees. Many of these pieces are **candleholders** with spaces for the firelight to twinkle through. If you are looking to invest in a festive table, you can shop for a special holiday set of **dishware**. Many of the traditional Polish pottery designs have distinct winter versions with evergreen trees, holly branches, snowflakes or moose entwined with the pattern. ■

A MAGICAL WEEKEND AT THE Kraków Christmas Market

By Kimberly Kephart



Kraków, with its rich history and picturesque charm, is a city that exudes warmth even in the depths of winter. It has the perfect Christmas market to explore. All of my Polish friends raved about this market being one of the most charming in Poland. So, my husband and I decided to make the trek down to Kraków.

As we stepped into Rynek Główny, the main square, it felt as though we had walked straight into a Christmas postcard. The market was alive with the sights, sounds, and, most memorably, the smells of the season. The wooden stalls were adorned with festive decorations, their roofs dusted with snow, and the entire square was bathed in the golden glow of twinkling lights. I was so captivated by the setting. I looked around and saw horse-drawn carriages going around the square and a Christmas tree standing tall against the dark sky. I felt like I was transported back in time. But what truly enchanted us were the tantalizing aromas that filled the air—scents that spoke of tradition, comfort, and a deep love of good food. We received this advice: “Come hungry, you won’t regret it!” and we followed it to the letter.

Our Kraków Christmas Market journey began with a steaming cup of *herbata*, which was much needed as it was cold. At first glance, you might think it’s just a simple cup of tea, but in Kraków, herbata is much more than that. This spiced tea, often infused with honey, cinnamon

and slices of fresh fruit, is a winter staple, warming both body and soul. As we wrapped our hands around the hot mugs, the steam rising in the crisp air, we sipped slowly and savored the blend of flavors. The sweetness of the honey balanced the subtle bitterness of the tea, while the spices added a comforting warmth that spread through us with every sip.

Not far from the herbata stall, we encountered a vendor offering *grzaniec*, Poland’s answer to mulled wine. Unlike the herbata, grzaniec is a spiced wine served hot, rich with flavors of clove, cinnamon and orange. We learned that each vendor has their own secret recipe, with some adding a splash of brandy or a handful of dried fruits for extra flavor-depth. The result was a drink that was both robust and soothing—a true taste of Polish hospitality. As we sipped our grzaniec, we wandered through the market, the warmth of the wine counteracting the cold that seeped through our gloves. It was a ritual we would repeat often during our three-night stay, each time discovering a new nuance in the flavors. Sadly, I didn’t get a collectible mug to take home as each time we were served grzaniec in paper cups. The food stalls at the Kraków Christmas Market are a feast for the senses. Every stall offered something unique, a culinary de-

light that told the story of Polish Christmas traditions. One of our first encounters was with pierogis; we were able to get six for 25 PLN (\$6.50). They had flavors ranging from sweet to hearty and filling.

Next up, I noticed one of my favorite Polish treats, *pierniki*—gingerbread cookies which we previously discovered have a history that dates back to medieval times, when they were originally made by nuns in monasteries as a treat for the winter solstice. These cookies were traditionally spiced with ginger, cloves and cinnamon, and sweetened with honey—ingredients that were considered exotic and luxurious in those days. Each bite was a burst of warm, spicy sweetness.

My husband happened to notice a large selection of grilled meat stalls. Poland is famous for their grilled meats and it’s something we knew we had to try. We started with kielbasa, Poland’s iconic sausage. Grilled to perfection, the *kielbasa* was smoky and savory with a satisfying snap as we bit into the casing. It was served with a generous helping of sautéed onions and potatoes, and a side of mustard that added just the right amount of tang. My husband declared it the best kielbasa he’d ever tasted, and I had to agree. The combination of the charred, juicy sausage and the sweet-

ness of the caramelized onions was simply divine. But the kielbasa was just the beginning.

As we continued our exploration, we came across vendors grilling succulent cuts of pork and chicken over open flames. The meat, seasoned with a blend of Polish herbs and spices, was incredibly tender, with a smoky flavor that hinted at the traditional wood-fired grills used throughout the country. We couldn't resist trying pork skewers threaded with chunks of meat and vegetables, grilled until they were perfectly caramelized. The pork was rich and flavorful, the fat rendered down to a delicious crispness. Paired with hearty potatoes, roasted until golden and tossed with fresh herbs, it was the kind of meal that makes you feel truly nourished—both in body and spirit. The market was filled with these comforting, hearty foods, a testament to Kraków's enduring love for good, honest cooking that warms you from the inside out.

Of course, the market wasn't just about eating—it was about the whole experience, including the lively music that filled the square each evening. From traditional Polish folk songs to more modern holiday tunes, the music brought an energy to the market that was infectious. The band played a bit of Disco Polo, and the crowd went nuts. If you've never listened to Disco Polo live, you're in for a treat! My husband and I found ourselves swaying to the rhythm as we wandered from stall to stall, the music providing a joyful soundtrack to our holiday adventure.

We were on a mission to find the perfect souvenirs for our nieces and nephews, and we weren't disappointed. We discovered beautifully carved wooden toys, a specialty of the region. The toys, with their charmingly simple designs, were painted in bright, cheerful colors, each one a little work of art. We picked out a set of wooden animals and a train, knowing they would bring joy to our family.

One item I needed to find was a Christmas ornament, and the market was full of stalls that had beautifully handcrafted ones ranging from wooden to ceramic and glass. As I was perusing a stall, I found a little ceramic bell in the shape of the Kraków dragon. I knew this would be perfect! The vendor told us that the dragon is a popular folktale of Kraków, representing the city's spirit and strength.

I left Kraków feeling full of Christmas spirit, knowledge of new traditions and gratitude for the true warmth of Polish hospitality! ■

Kraków Christmas Market

Nov. 29, 2024 – Jan. 1, 2025

*Performances by live bands
only happen on weekends.*



**"We received this advice:
'Come hungry, you won't
regret it!' and we followed
it to the letter."**



Other Polish Christmas Markets

Bydgoszcz: The Bydgoszcz Christmas Market will be held from Nov. 18th – Dec. 22, 2024. The market will be set up along Mostowa Street, the Staromiejski Bridge and the Old Market Square.

Wrocław: All the fun starts Nov. 7, 2024 – Jan. 7, 2025 and will be taking place in four main areas: The Market Square (Rynek), The Salt Square (Plac Solny), Świdnicka Street and Oławska Street.

Gdańsk: Every year, the Christmas Market is held in Targ Weglowy or the Coal Market from late November to December. Gdańsk Christmas Market is known for its large advent gate, thematic zones and dazzling illuminations.

Warszawa: Held in the historic Old Town Market Square starting around mid-November.

Poznań: The Poznań Christmas Market, also known as Betlem Poznańskie, is held in the Old Market Square and Plac Wolności. It features beautifully decorated stalls offering handcrafted goods, traditional Polish food, and festive drinks. Festivities start mid-November.

Toruń: Known for its medieval architecture and charming atmosphere, the Toruń Christmas Market offers a delightful mix of traditional crafts, food, and festive activities that all begins mid-November.

Information about additional markets courtesy of the Polish Tourism Organization www.poland.travel

THE DIFFERING NAMES OF CHRISTMAS MARKETS

By Katie Wells

Have you ever wondered why Christmas markets go by more than one name? Christmas markets date back to the Middle Ages throughout Austria, Switzerland and, of course, Germany as well as in parts of what is now modern France. It is speculated that the earliest mention of “December markets” is from Vienna in 1296. However, the market recognized as the oldest and most influential has taken place in Dresden since 1434.



Christmas markets are associated with providing comfort during cold months or historical hardships and coincide with Advent to celebrate the holiday season. Having such a long history spanning over many regions, it's no wonder there are various naming conventions.

There are two chief names for Christmas markets:

WEIHNACHTSMARKT

This is the common over-arching term given to Christmas markets throughout Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In Middle High German the word “*weih*” means holy, so Weihnachtsmarkt translates to *holy night market*; fitting for the typical twinkly lights and German Christmas stars brightening dark winter night skies.

CHRISTKINDMARKT

This name is popular in southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria and has a Protestant origin. The German term translates to *Christ child market*. Instead of Saint Nick bringing gifts to children, the “Christ Child” gives gifts on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, tradesmen, farmers and artisans would meet around churches in open-air markets to sell homemade crafts and warming foods to evoke a sense of togetherness and joy during harsh, cold winter days. This, along with the celebration period of Advent in anticipation of the arrival of the “Christ Child,” brought forth the Christkindmarkt, or depending on location and dialect, Christkindlesmarkt, Christkindlemarkt or Christkindlmarkt.

Some places have a special name for their Christmas market due to history, tradition or legend:

CHRISTKINDELSMÄRIK

While most Christmas markets in France are referred to as *Marché de Noël*, in the Alsace region of France, which sits along the border of Germany, it makes sense that the name has only been slightly adapted to *Christkindelsmärik*. Strasbourg hosts one of the most popular *Christkindelsmärik*, which has occurred around its cathedral since 1570 when the city was still part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Other markets in this region of France have also kept the German root of the name with the French modification.

STRIEZEELMARKT

The oldest market in Germany deserves its own name. “Striezelmarkt,” came to be because the word derives from the Middle High German word “*Struzel*,” a type of bread-pastry that today is called the Dresdener Christstollen. It is a traditional holiday treat made with nuts, spices, dried fruit and coated with icing or marzipan. It is suggested that the bread was meant to look like the Christ child swaddled in a blanket. Others believe the bread’s tunnel or *stollen* shape references the area’s history of silver and tin mining.

NEUBRANDEBURGER WEBERGLOCKENMARKT

This is another unique, localized name for a Christmas market. It refers to a legend from Neubrandenburg where the weaver, Matthias Gerling had been walking for several days from a neighboring town to make it home to his family for Christmas. A surprise snowstorm made him lose his bearings and he wandered for hours in the forest unsure of where to go. Alone and cold, he suddenly heard the clanging of bells. The bells from Saint Mary’s church guided the weaver home. To honor the “miracle,” the ringing of the watchman’s bell of St. Mary’s in the evening during Christmastime has become tradition. Weberglockenmarkt literally translates to “weaver bell market.” ■



Give the Gift of Beauty & Relaxation

with a gift card from
Cocada Kosmetik!

Shop online at our website or Instagram.
We ship to your home.



10% OFF
Any Service
Through
December 31, 2024

Holiday Gift Cards – The Perfect Stocking Stuffers!

Our Services:

- NEW - SALMON SPERM FACIAL WITH PROFESSIONAL KOREAN PRODUCTS
- WAXING PACKAGES
- SPECIALTY FACIALS
- RADIO FREQUENCY FAT REDUCTION
- LASER HAIR REMOVAL
- BRAZILIAN LYMPHDRAINAGE
- POST SURGERY LYMPHDRAINAGE



Follow us on Instagram
@cocadacosmetik

Postplatz 8 • 71032 Böblingen
www.cocada-kosmetik.de • 07031/7217993



We wish you
happy holidays and
a good start into
the new year!

Your Team from Speech and
Occupational Therapy
Kruft/Schmitt



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY • SPEECH THERAPY

Jina Schmitt • *Andreas* Kruft • *Jeannette* Kruft

- NEW OPENING November 2024 (Adults/Pediatrics) • Therapy in German, English and Spanish
- Appointments within 24h • Therapy for both kids and adults • All American Insurances Accepted
- Preferred Tricare provider • Therapy dog • Good Parking
- Free Screenings • Native English Speaker



logoergo.westpfalz



info@logoergo-westpfalz.de

All insurances accepted - Tricare provider

Kaiserstr.169 • 66849 Landstuhl • 06371/7349757

www.logoergo-westpfalz.de



H&R BLOCK

Germany H&R Block Tax Offices.
Get face-to-face tax help.

Ramstein

06371-8020410

Wiesbaden

0611-890-23100

Vilseck & Grafenwöhr

0713-573-6112

jorellano@hrblock.com

Express filing ITIN & Reports of
Foreign Bank Accounts (FBAR's)



Email: eclemons@hrblock.com

Markets to Visit in the New Year

By Kat Nickola and Tamala Malerk

While many holiday markets dwindle after Christmas, outside traditional Germanic regions they can last longer.

Here are some European markets worth visiting after the winter holidays and into the New Year.

Innsbruck, Austria

Nov. 15, 2024 to Jan. 6, 2025

Stroll across six different markets featuring 200 stalls to find all of your favorite market items, including those unique mugs at the Innsbruck Mountain Christmas. Get in the winter spirit as you feast and shop with the gorgeous mountain background. The conglomerate of markets is home to Austria's oldest and largest Christmas market at the foot of the Golden Roof.

Enjoy live storytelling and puppet theater, marvel at the 14-meter-tall Christmas tree and pet the animals at the petting zoo. The six different markets have a variety of opening and closing times and dates. Only the Maria-Theresien-Street and Hungerburg markets are open through Jan. 6. To ensure you get to visit every market you want to on these mountains, visit www.tyrol.com/things-to-do.

Edinburgh, Scotland

Nov. 15, 2024 to Jan. 5, 2025

For something off the charts, book tickets for the wild and crazy New Year's Eve celebration that is Hogmanay in Edinburgh, Scotland. Or visit the calmer, free and family-friendly Sprogmanay events on New Year's Day. After that, the Christmas season continues for another week at the sprawling Christmas markets.

The markets are located below Edinburgh's famous castle along the Princes Street Gardens and its adjacent roads in the heart of the historic old town. In addition to shopping at the numerous stalls, eating delicious street food and imbibing a warm beverage, there are other fun activities like an ice-skating rink, a Christmas tree maze and rides. Visit www.edinburgh-christmas.com or www.edinburghshogmanay.com for more information.

Warsaw, Poland

Nov. 29, 2024 to Jan. 6, 2025

Holiday lights and a local craft fair spill out of the Barbican area next to the old defensive walls, with a Christmas tree that boasts thousands of lights and is known as one of the "most beautiful in Europe." Beginning at the adjacent bright red Royal Castle, the scenic Royal Route walking trail takes you past festively lit royal gardens, scenic cathedrals and impressive palaces.

You can also shop for woolen sweaters and Polish pottery, or try ice skating, at another colorful market in the Old Town Square. The Soviet-era Palace of Culture and Science also hosts an ice skating rink and small market with a Ferris wheel out front of its 1950s Art Deco tower. Take a ride up to the 30th floor terrace for a panoramic view over wintry Warsaw. Find information at www.warsawtour.pl.

Dolomite Region, Italy

Nov. 15, 2024 to Jan. 6, 2025

Christmas in Italy is traditionally celebrated until Epiphany on January 6, and in the mountains of Tirol that means Christmas markets are often open into the New Year. You will find some of the most magical mountain

villages in the snowy Dolomite region. Start in the valley city of Bolzano (Bozen), whose market is situated in the central Piazza Walther. The 80 colorful stalls make up the oldest and largest Christmas market in Italy.

Take a drive high into the mountain villages where picturesque local Christmas markets sparkle below magnificent peaks. In Bressanone (Brixen), the market is shadowed by a beautiful cathedral and the nativity scene display is an 800-year-old tradition. The tiny ski towns of Val Gardena and Ortisei host cute markets perfect for an evening après ski. In Brunico (Bruneck), you can wander a few Christmas markets through the old town lanes below the castle. Visit dolomiti.it/en/christmas-markets for travel information in the Dolomite region.

Copenhagen, Denmark

Nov. 15, 2024 to Jan. 5, 2025

If you read about hygge in our latest Stripes Europe magazine, then you know that Denmark prides itself in all things cozy, comfy and relaxation. The Tivoli Gardens' Christmas Market is the perfect place to experience this. The area is illuminated by the lights on the many Christmas trees and performers provide a symphonic soundtrack for your experience.

Try not to fall on the skating rink, say "hej" to Santa Claus, shop the many vendors and fill up on the many Danish Christmas treats at your disposal. To learn more and buy your tickets go to www.tivoli.dk. ■

*Treat yourself
to a Quality Ride
this year at...*



*Voted #1 Pre-Owned Dealership
2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024!*



- No Payments for 90 Days*
- Tax Free Car Sales
- Bumper to Bumper Warranty
- Drive Away Same Day
- Guaranteed to Pass Inspection
- Finance Consultation
- Auto Insurance
- Trade-Ins Welcome

*Per credit approval

Closed
Dec. 24th-26th.
Open Dec. 27th-31st.
We resume normal
business hours on the 2nd:
Mon - Fri 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sat 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

www.ramsteinusedcars.com
info@ramsteinusedcars.com

Locations in : Kaiserslautern • Spangdahlem • Stuttgart • Vilseck • Baumholder • Grafenwöhr



*Christmas Season
at Kullman's*

Wonderful Christmas Parties • Festive Spirit • Stylish Decorations
Delicious Diner Food • Christmas Gift Vouchers • Feels Like Home!



Sam Kullman's Diner • Mainzer Str. 119 • Kaiserslautern
Phone: 0631 / 41 50 916 • www.kullmans.de

Enjoy the Mountain Vibe at Bruneck's Christmas Market

By Kat Nickola



The best pair of woolen slippers I have ever owned come from a craft stand at the Christmas market in Bruneck (Brunico), Italy. I was admiring their bright green wool and struck up a conversation with the keeper of the little wooden hut. Much to my surprise, she made that actual pair, and many more of the slippers at the stand. They are hand-crafted, have a wonderful cork sole and a cute little edelweiss button. I loved them so much; I got a pair for all the folks on my shopping list.

The beauty of this South-Tyroleean Christmas market is that it retains the original market vibe. Almost everything for sale is locally crafted, cooked or created.

We visited the Bruneck Christmas Market on Dec. 6, the feast day of Saint Nicholas. That morning my kids woke up to some treats in their newly cleaned shoes, a German tradition we have adopted in our family.

Being in South Tyrol means straddling an area of Germanic heritage within the country of Italy. Here, almost everything has two names: one in German and one in Italian. It can be a bit confusing until you understand that both languages are used throughout the region.

When my family wandered downtown to the city park in Bruneck, St. Nick was there giving out more candy. We learned that his antithesis, Krampus, would be parading through town the next day. He is accompanied by many painted demons and a fire show. Krampus is said to lock up the naughtiest among us, so make sure to be on your best behavior. A nighttime visitation by hundreds of people dressed as Krampus is an alpine tradition, and one of the most popular times to visit.

For the rest of the season, the Bruneck Christmas market is a calm outpost in a very sporty area. The small city is scenically nestled along



the Rienz River at the base of the **Kronplatz**, a mountain region with all manner of skiing and winter sports options. The 13th-century Brunico Castle lords over the town and houses the **Messner Mountain Museum Ripa** where the connection between people and mountains is the focus.

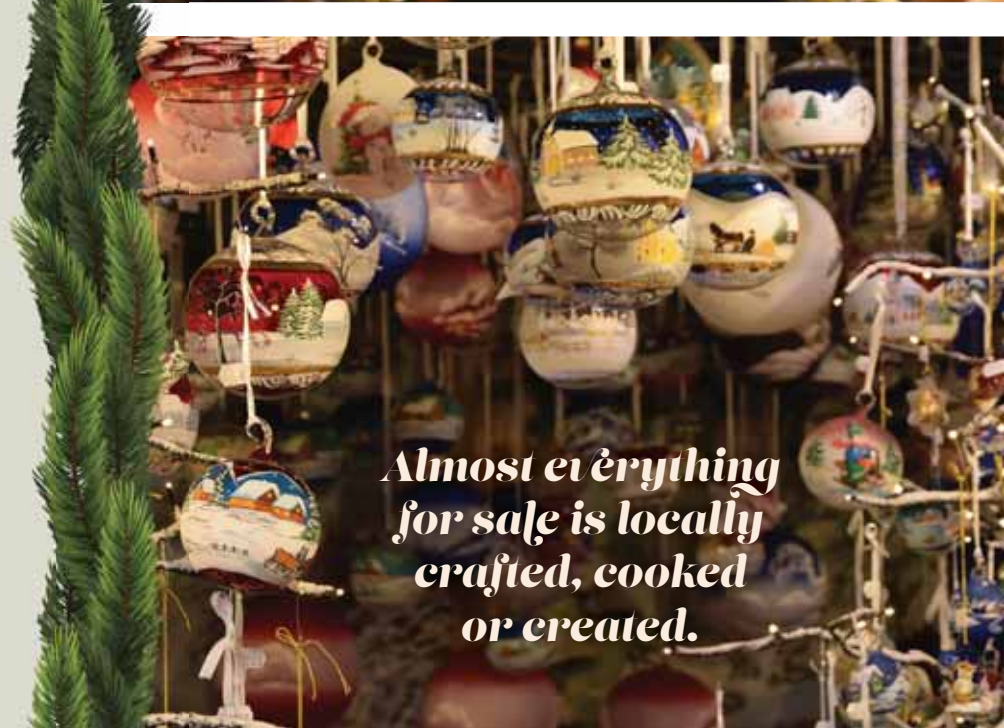
In town, the Christmas market sprawls along the main road: the **Via Bastioni**, an area between the original city walls and gates. The town has an interesting medieval feel with alpine touches like Christmas trees decorating every light post.

Since the thing that sets Bruneck's market apart is the focus on locally made products, we made a point to seek out gifts in the Tyrolean tradition and made by regional artisans. From my favorite slippers, socks and mittens made from local mountain sheep's wool to woodworked items, there were plenty of fun things to be had. One special item was the Bruneck "Duftstadel," a unique pine oil scent created for the city by a local herbalist. It adds a wonderful mountainy fragrance when used in a diffuser.

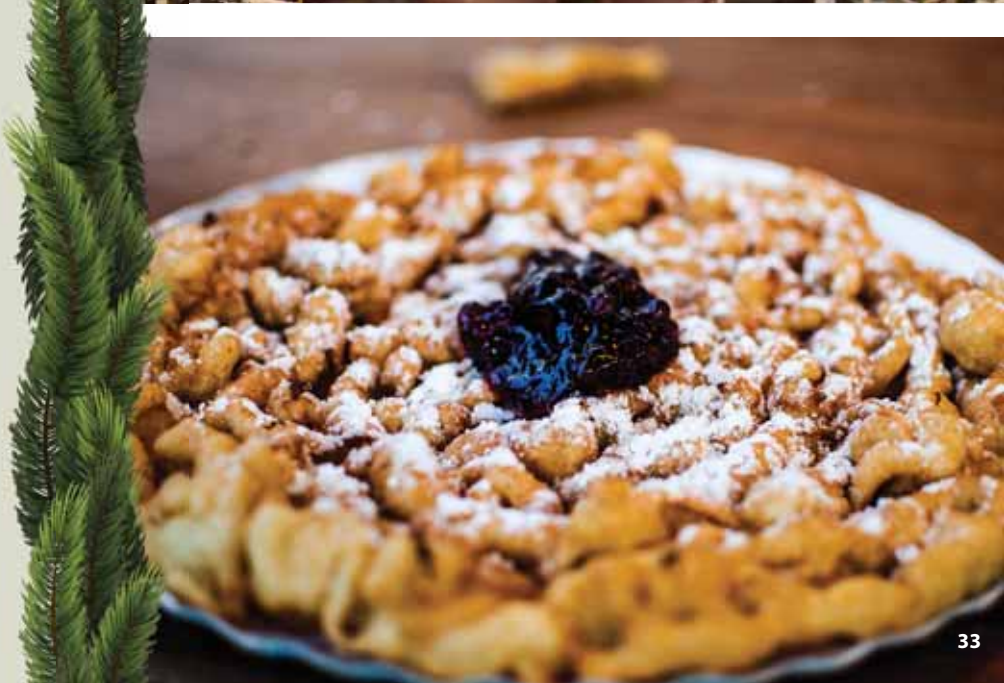
Just outside the westernmost city gate on the Via Centrale was another market area. A large wooden hall housed a special shopping area and exhibit of artisans working on products. We saw people knitting sweaters, crafting baskets and a massive antique weaving loom.

Food specialties in Bruneck have a local mountain flare. A thick, hearty stew in a bread bowl was my favorite, and the local *Strauben*, which was like a hefty funnel cake, delighted my kids. As always, there is mulled wine, or *Vin Brulé* and *Ciccolata Caldo* (hot chocolate).

The Bruneck Christmas market is one of five that claim to be part of the original set of **South Tyrolean Christmas markets**. The other four include Brixen (Bressanone), Sterzing (Vipiteno), Meran (Merano) and Bozen (Bolzano). By staying at a locally-run hotel or guesthouse, you can use the South Tyrol Guest Pass for free transit on buses and trains between the five towns for the duration of your stay. Visit www.suedtirol.info to find accommodations and details about the area. ■



*Almost everything
for sale is locally
crafted, cooked
or created.*





Christmas Alley

IN NAPLES

By Stacy Roman

This time of year is a favorite for many. Seemingly overnight, giant decorated trees sprout up in city centers. The smell of cinnamon-glazed almonds wafts through the air and steaming mugs of mulled wine or hot chocolate warm up hands and souls. Then, in the blink of an eye, it's gone, and another year begins.

In Naples, Italy there's one spot that keeps the holiday alive year-round.

Deep in the heart of the city is a pedestrian-only street called the Via San Gregorio Armeno. Dubbed "Christmas Alley," this narrow, cobblestoned road is filled with old storefronts and ornate window displays with a "presepio," or intricate nativity scene.

In a country where 78 percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic, the presepio is a highly-coveted and revered part of the holiday season.

The presepio is designed to be a display that is added to every year. While there are plenty of pre-made sets, what makes them special is that you can tailor the nativity to your liking. If you feel like adding a figure of King Charles or Cristiano Ronaldo next to baby Jesus, you can, and Christmas Alley is the place to go for your next unique piece. Many shops have been passed down through generations spanning five centuries and still make the figurines by hand.

During the holiday season, Via San Gregorio Armeno becomes one of the most popular destinations in Naples. Because of the crowds, the council may implement a one-way pedestrian walkway through the street. If crowds aren't your thing, don't worry. The shops are open all year. ■





Bienvenidos!

Experience the delicious taste of Tex-Mex cuisine and Mexican culture at **Viva la Vida**—
where every visit is a feast for the senses!

Hours of Operation:
Mon–Sat, 5 – 11 p.m.
(kitchen closes at 10 p.m.)
Sunday, noon – 10 p.m.
Closed Tuesdays

We are available
for private parties!
Call +49 (0) 6371 5432

Miesenbacher Straße 45
66877 Ramstein-Miesenbach

restaurant-viva-la-vida.de



chocolART
COLORS OF LATIN AMERICA

**chocolART – The Largest
German Chocolate Festival**

3. - 8.12.2024 | Tübinger Altstadt
www.chocolart.de

STARS AND STRIPES.

Letters to Santa

SEND YOUR
WISH LIST TO SANTA!

For more information, visit ———
letterstosanta.stripes.com

SPONSORED BY

Andrews
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



Andy Smith Jones, PHD
Licensed clinical Psychologist

Julia Conrath, PHD
Licensed clinical Psychologist

Flynn Family Medicine

Adam Flynn, MD

Board certified in Internal Medicine
and Family Medicine

Marisa Flynn, MD

Board certified in Family Medicine

Danielle Wilhelm, MD

Board certified in Emergency Medicine

Marcela Riojas, MD

Board certified in Family Medicine

Greg Phillips, MD

Board certified in Neurology

Our services:

- General Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
- Prevention & Wellness
- Psychology (Individual and group therapy)
- Work/School/Travel Exams
- Minor Ambulatory Procedures
- Chronic Disease Management
- Nutritionalist Services
- Flu/ Pneumonia Immunization
- Gynecology and Well Woman
- Adult Neurology Services

Frontdesk@flynnsmmedical.com
+49 (0)6371 952 7070
www.flynnsmmedical.com

Mug collecting is so much fun!

We asked our social media audience to submit pictures of their favorite Christmas market mugs, and they did not disappoint. Here are some of the best submissions we received.



Vikki Mertzlufft
Schloss Merode



Michele Kaftanic
Houldieson
Colmar



Michele KH
Strasbourg



Jessica Bennett
Innsbruck



Stacy & Jim Pielow
Traben Trarbach



Launie
Kohnekamp
Cologne - Heavenue



Michelle Mg
Aachen



Michele KH
Strasbourg



Jessica Lynn
Monschau



Michele KH
Basel

DEVELOP A GLOBAL MINDSET THROUGH INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES



TAMPA

MADRID

PARIS

HEIDELBERG



Become part of
our multicultural
community at the
Heidelberg Campus

Start your path towards
academic excellence:

- Study in **4 campuses** with vibrant and immersive communities
- Hands-on learning for **real-world success**
- Focus on **Global Career Opportunities**
- Earn **Dual Degrees*** accredited in both the USA and Europe

**DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE
AND ENQUIRE NOW!**



UPCOMING START DATES

Bachelor's programs:

January & September 2025

Master's Programs:

February, June & October 2025

Financial Aid and Support offered to **Military Veterans**
GI Bill accredited

*ACCSC accredited



Stabb Market Memories & Mug Photos

By Stripes Staff

One could argue that Germany is almost as famous for its Christmas Markets as it is for Oktoberfest. We asked our staff for their favorite memories and mugs, not just from Germany, but from Christmas markets all over Europe.

Ann Aglow:

During our trip to Wroclaw, Poland, I loved seeing the difference between the German and Polish markets. The grilled oscypek cheese with a side of cranberry preserves was my favorite.



Kristen Kringle

Last year we visited Zurich's Christmas market where we discovered it to be a foodie's paradise! The markets spread across the city and offered a wide array of cuisines. I made several visits throughout the day because it was necessary to try it all. I was most excited to see arancini, a Sicilian fried, filled rice ball. My heart and tummy were happy!

Decorating Daniela

Heidelberg Christmas mug.



Kind Katie

One of my favorite Christmas market memories is going to the Rudesheim Christmas Market with one of my best friends, Heaven. It was the last one we went to before she moved back to the States, and we kept stumbling onto surprises. We tried delicious chocolate-dipped chili peppers, belly-laughed swinging on a wooden picnic table and marveled at an open-air rabbit village as bunnies hopped to the miniature post office, school, and castle.



Kuchen-Eating Katelin

Cologne has six markets in different squares that each have their own theme. The angel market was my favorite and had the cutest mugs I've found at German Markets. They also have a large ice rink where you can rent skates. It's well-maintained and reminds me a bit of the Rockefeller one in New York. You walk all the markets in a day and it's a great way to see the city as well. The streets are decorated differently as well so it's easy to follow along the path to the next market.

Good Tidings Tamala

We were just aimlessly walking around Munich last year, the weekend after Thanksgiving, and we just stumbled upon not one, but THREE different markets. I, of course, grabbed a mug from each one.



Jinglebell John

Luxembourg Christmas mug.



Laughing Laura

Maria Theresian Platz Market mug. ■



MERRY CHRISTMAS & FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

From your regional healthcare provider



MELIVA
MVZ WESTPFALZ





CWT SatoTravel



Proudly supporting our troops and their families

Book your leisure getaway with CWT SatoTravel.

Why use a CWT SatoTravel advisor?

- We can save you money.
- We save you time and stress.
- We provide expert advice and are detail-oriented.
- We simplify your travel process.

All with a personal service.

Contact us to book now:

📞 49(0) 6302-923717

✉ ticketsservice@cwtsato.com

👤 Monday–Friday 08:00–17:00 hrs (closed on local and U.S. holidays)

🌐 www.europe.satovacations.com