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WHAT'S UP

WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO

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  Sardinia's City by the Bay

Check out our Editor's
Picks for fun things to
do this month

Cross off your bucket
list of Christmas
Markets in Germany

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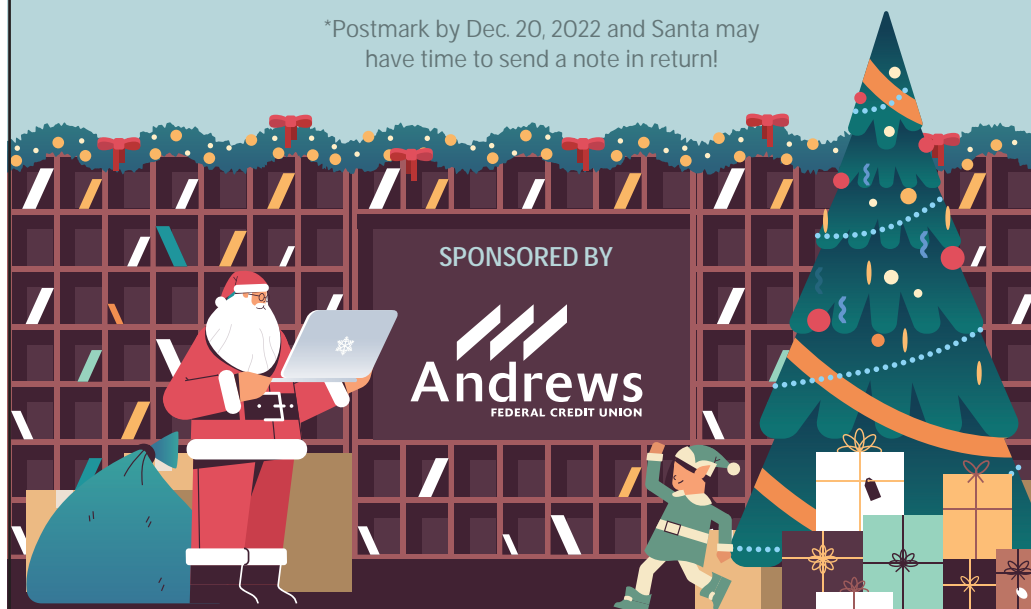


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By Tamala Malerk

While Christmas markets are the talk of the town this month, keep in mind there is still plenty to do in Germany if you have already stocked up on ornaments and gifts and found your Tannenbaum. From Irish dancing to crafting, lovable talking sea creatures and classic vehicles, there is an event on this list for everyone.

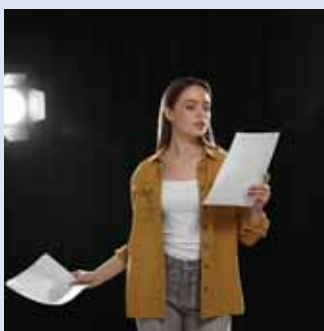
Dance Masters! Best of Irish Dance Dec. 1, Erding



©BRAMBILLASIMONE/123RF.COM

Enjoy 200 years of Irish dance and music as 12 Irish tap dancers showcase the love story of Kate and Patrick in this two-hour show. Live vocals, guitar, violin and traditional pipes accompany the dancers.

Jazz'n'Poetry Dec. 2, Hannover



Enjoy some of the best slam poets in Germany as they are accompanied by jazz music. Lingitz & Puchert, Jule Weber and Yannick Steinkellner will perform.

Essen Motor Show Dec. 3 to 12, Essen



©JVDWOLF/123RF.COM

For automobile lovers everywhere: Enjoy classic cars, motorsports and discussions on tuning and lifestyle at "Europe's leading event for sporty vehicles."

Handmade Creative Market Dec. 3 to 4, Zwickau



Kids and adults alike will enjoy this craft fair where you can stuff a teddy bear, decorate door signs, make fabric flowers, craft with beads and handcraft a pillow.

The SpongeBob Musical - Bikini Bottom Live on Stage Dec. 8, Aachen



©ROBWILSON39/123RF.COM

Do you know who lives in a pineapple under the sea? Join SpongeBob, Patrick and all your Bikini Bottom buddies for this musical event that is not only a treat for kids, but also parents who remember when SpongeBob first hit the airways.

Winter Festival Dec. 8 to 18, Berlin



©BULGARIN/123RF.COM

Enjoy concerts from local and international choirs in venues across Berlin.

The Bären Gin Tasting Evening Dec. 10 & 17, Cologne



Learn all about gin, its history and proper tasting techniques as you sample five different gins and snack on finger foods at this event.

Made in Hamburg Dec. 11, Hamburg



Shop local at this trade fair that brings you face-to-face with Hamburg's manufacturers, inventors and crafters. Shop everything from technology to fashion to home accessories and leisure items.

PLAN AHEAD

The Music of Harry Potter - Live in Concert Jan. 10, Düsseldorf

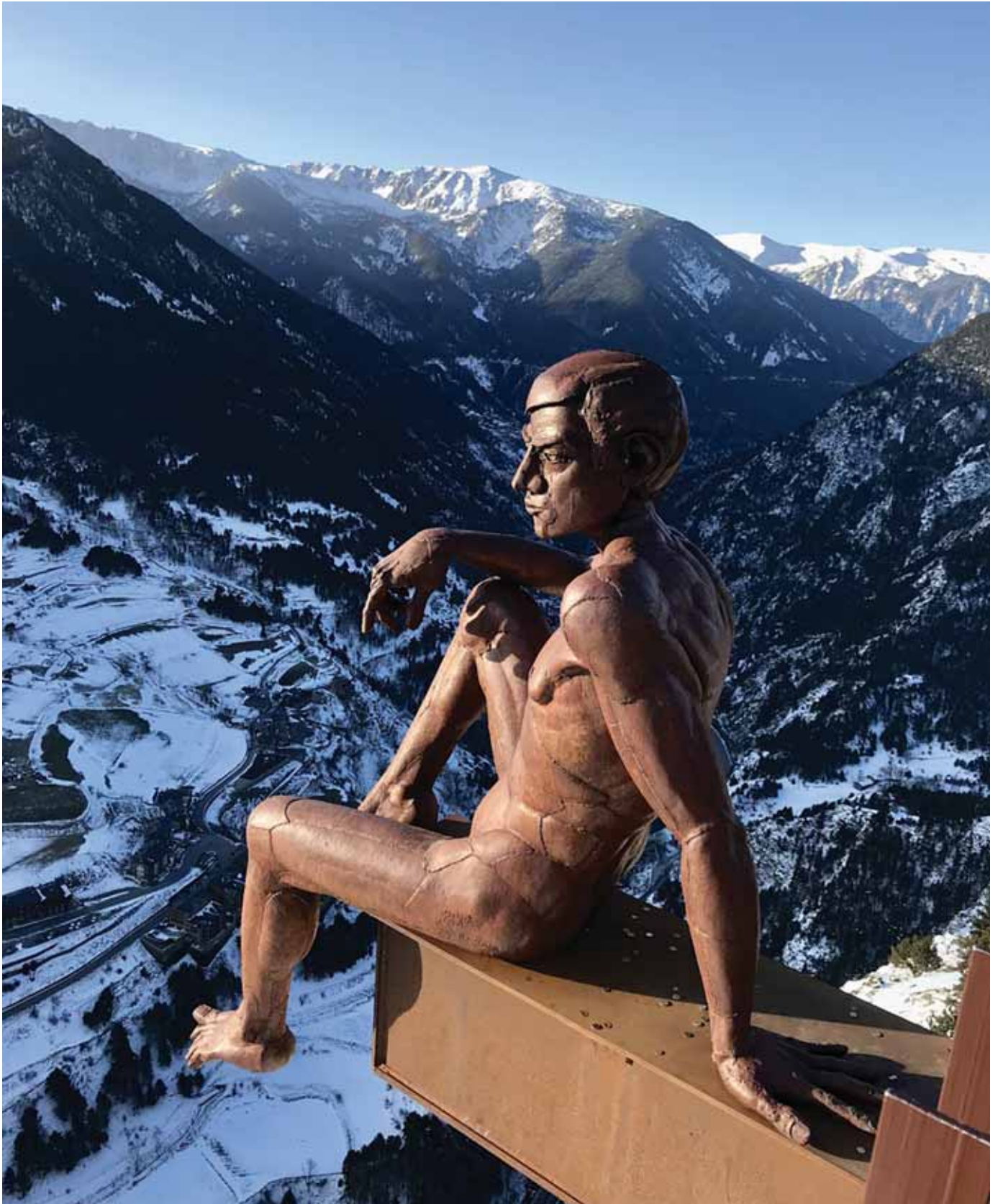
Grab your ticket for platform 9 ¾ and go along for this musical adventure that takes you through your favorite wizarding world film music. For more dates and German cities go to www.highlight-concerts.com. ■

PHOTO of the month

Nestled in the small nation of Andorra, there is an observation deck called Mirador Roc del Quer, where you can get a fantastic view of the Pyrenees. If you are not afraid of heights, there's a 1,978-foot Tibetan bridge to walk across! At any time of year, this place provides you with a view of the world that sits between Spain and France, and more than enough beauty to sit still and gaze for a while.

Photo by Laura Welsh.

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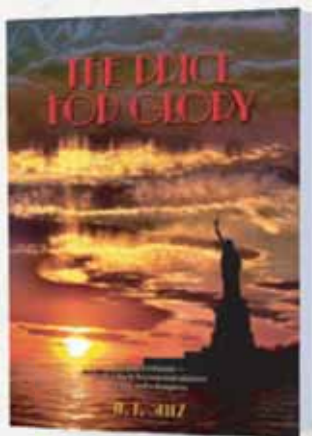


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a day at

Augsburg

By Tamala Malerk

An hour from Munich and about two hours from Stuttgart is Germany's third oldest city and Bavaria's third-largest city, Augsburg. Established by the Romans in 15 BCE as a provincial capital called Augusta Vin-delicum, Augsburg has accumulated an interesting personality worth exploring indoors and out.

Families with kids (or kids at heart) will want to start their day at the Augsburg Zoo, home to over 200 species of birds, 80 different species of mammals and an assortment of reptiles and amphibians. You can pay extra and go "behind the scenes" to see the meerkats, seals or penguins up close. Or, included in the price of admission, you can watch the feeding of the seals and pelicans.

Once you have had your fill of the animals, music lovers and history buffs alike (or those who just want to keep their fun indoors), will appreciate the Leopold Mozart House. Father of the famous Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Leopold Mozart's house museum contains letters and artifacts that reveal a fascinating story of Leopold, who was an accomplished musician, composer and music manager in his own right.

For a mid-day sweet snack, have yourself a piece of Zwetschgendatschi, a cake dessert layered with Zwetschge plums. Zwetschgendatschi is Augsburg's most famous dish and the dessert is believed to have originated there.

After your meal, head over to the Augsburger Puppenkiste, the puppet theater, and catch a 2 p.m. or 4 p.m. show. December shows



Zwetschgendatschi is Augsburg's most famous dish, and the delicious dessert is believed to have originated there.

include "Dr. Faust," "The Wizard of Oz" and "Ghosts of Christmas." Before or after your show, you can tour the on-site museum, which houses famous puppets such as "the cat with the hat" and "Luke the engine driver." The museum also offers guided English tours so you can fully immerse yourself in the experience. There is also a cafe if the Zwetschgendatschi did not completely fill you up.

It is not a day in a German city if you do not find yourself at one of Germany's many castles and palaces. Augsburg's Schaezler Palace is a must-see for architecture and art enthusiasts. Completed in 1770, this gorgeous palace is not only an architectural masterpiece, but also contains multiple collections of paintings and the rococo garden of the palace, which was designed in 2005. The first floor of the palace holds the Steiner Collection, an extensive assortment of 18th-century reverse glass paintings. A ticket to the palace also includes admission to the State Gallery of Old Masters in St. Catherine's Church, which has paintings from the Augsburg and Swabian schools of the early Renaissance and the late Middle Ages.

If you are up for a nice winter stroll, end your day at the Fuggerei, "the world's oldest social housing project," which is still in use. Founded by the Fugger family in the early 16th century, this little area contains museums, a World War II bunker and is still a residential area where 150 people call home for the yearly rent of 0.88 euro and daily prayers for the Fugger family. Keep in mind that since this is a residential area, you should respect the privacy of the residents by visiting the display residence to learn more about the interior of the buildings. ■



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By Amanda Palumbo

There is a tiny city on a tiny island in a very big ocean. Sardinia's capital, Cagliari, is only 33 square miles, a blip on the radar when compared to the major Italian cities like Rome, nearly 500 square miles. But Cagliari doesn't care it's often overshadowed by the behemoths Rome, Venice and Milan.

There is a very different culture here, one you will find nowhere else.

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Cagliari's history goes back a few millennia and much of it has been preserved over time. The city's **Castello district, a hilltop fortified citadel, is still surrounded by ancient walls and towers.**



A City With Personality

Those lucky to call this beachside city home often joke they're not 100% Italian, thanks to Sardinia's long and interesting history. The island has been under Roman, Pisan, Spanish, Austrian and eventually Italian rule in 1861. Over the course of several centuries, Sardinia became a melting pot of European culture. It's also one of the most welcoming cities for immigrants. New culture is infusing with old. Cagliari is the oldest continuously inhabited city in Italy, with residents dating back to 5,000 BC living in the area's vast caves.

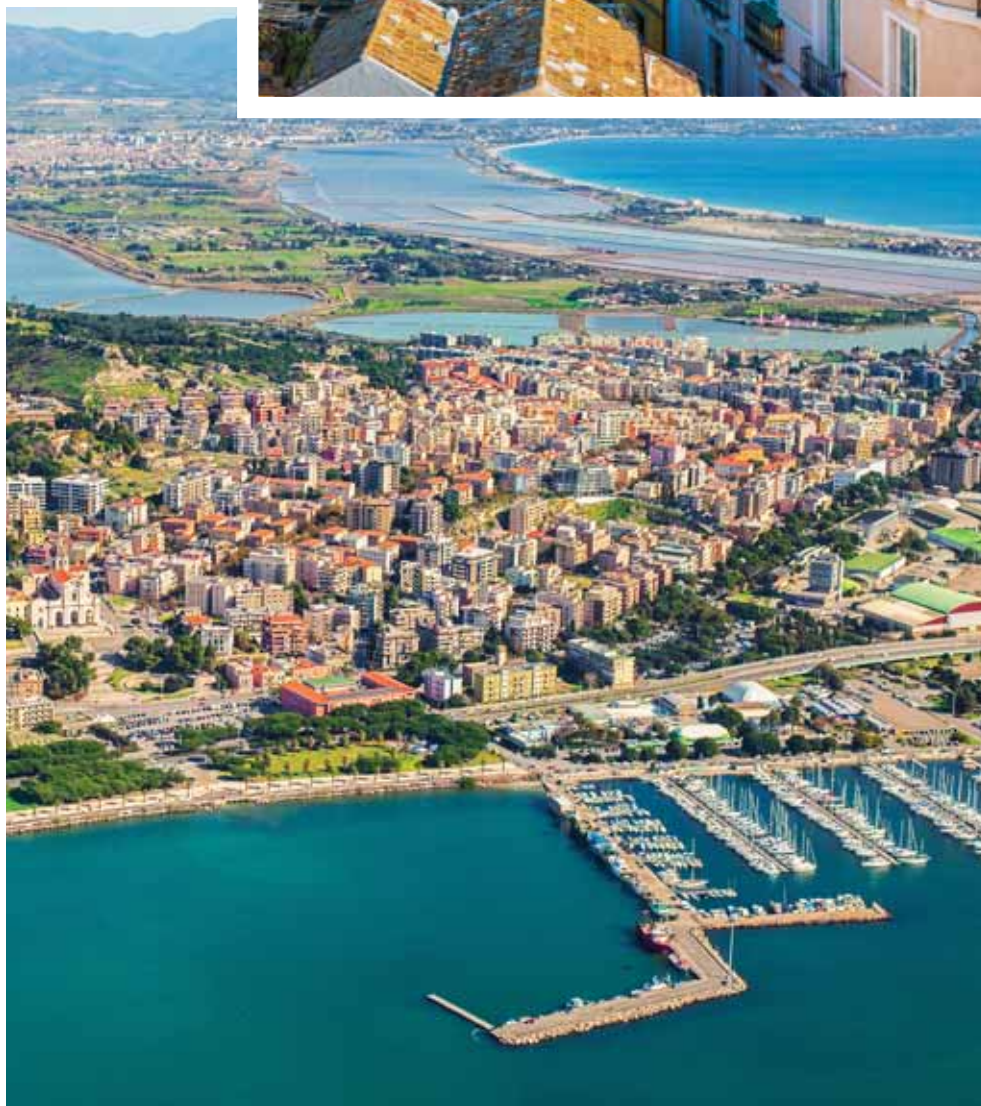
It gives Sardinia and its capital a very different personality. Cagliari still has the richness of Italy but with a more laid-back reserved mentality. Don't mistake this for disinterest or aloofness. The people here want to share their city with the world, they're just not pretentious about it. Cagliari is sort of like your really "chill" friend. People tend to move a little slower here, take in the scenery a little more and spend more moments making memories over a good meal and glass of wine. It's a city made to lose track of time.

Walk Through History

Much of Cagliari's history has been preserved over time. The city's Castello district, a hilltop fortified citadel, is still surrounded by ancient walls and towers. The "old town" still sits high above the rest of the city and is only accessible by two 14th century gates. Both the Tower of St. Pancrazio and the Elephant Tower offer amazing panoramic views of the city with ocean and mountain backdrops.

The city is also home to a Roman Amphitheatre built in the second century that once sat 8,000 - 10,000 people. When you walk through the ground level, with the rock and limestone towering above, you will be standing in the exact place gladiators once battled and men fought wild beasts for entertainment. If you hike to the top, you'll see Cagliari's famous skyline.

The churches show you how architecture changed over time based on who was ruling the area. There are seven churches in the heart of





Cagliari. Four are Gothic, two Baroque and one in Pisan-Romanesque. The Pisans built the Cathedral of Santa Maria in the 13th century and it has been transformed into many styles of the centuries. The church is home to the Sanctuary of the Martyrs, a crypt beneath the altar with nearly 200 preserved relics. Also inside, the “Madonna col Bambino,” or “The Virgin and Child” wooden statue dating back to the 14th century.

The Affordable Italy

Italy can be an expensive destination but there is relief in Cagliari. According to travel organization, Budget Your Trip, the average cost per day for tourists visiting Cagliari is 96 euros per day. Compared to Rome's average 130 euros, Sardinia is a steal. Remember, 96 euros is the average, so if you're a thrifty traveler like me, you can get that number a lot lower. Switching hotels for hostels and public transport for

cabs and cars will save you a bundle. Not to mention, Cagliari is small and beautiful, so walking is the best method and it's free.

Food

You can't write about any Italian city without mentioning the food! There will be the usual Italian dishes like pizza and pasta but it's best to live like a true Sardinian. Swap pasta for “fregula,” a toasted couscous very similar to a risotto. Another favorite is “culurgiones,” dumplings native to Sardinia. They can be filled with vegetables, spices, meats or cheeses. Since Cagliari is a coastal city, you'll naturally have the freshest and best seafood. Wander the sights and smells of the city's fish markets.



Best Beaches

If you're a beach bum at heart, Sardinia's coast will give you everything you need from adventure to serene and relaxing views. A word of caution: do not take any sand or rocks from the beaches. It is illegal and strictly enforced with a fine up to 3,000 euros.

POETTO

Poetto is Cagliari's main beach and runs nearly five miles. It is also considered one of the most photogenic beaches, making it an Instagram-worthy dream. Poetto is flat; its water clear and shallow, making it perfect for families with young children. There are also lifeguards on duty and entertainment for children. Locals come here to exercise, so you'll see plenty of people getting their morning walk or bike ride in. They won't mind if you join them.

CALA FIGHERA

Poetto can get a bit crowded and windy in the summer. If you're an introvert like me, head to Cala Fighera. While the beach has more pebbles than sand, this small inlet is much more secluded and quiet. Its turquoise waters splash alongside sandstone cliffs providing a peaceful view. This is also where daredevils will leap from the cliffs and into the water, though you should be careful. Cala Fighera is considered “nudist-friendly” so keep that in mind.

CALA REGINA

If you're wanting a more authentic “stranded-on-a-beautiful-desert-island” feel, head to Cala Regina. This is about a 40-minute drive southeast of the city but worth it. Cala Regina is another pebble beach but because it's located within a small cove, it's protected from the strong winds that blow over many beaches. An old Spanish watchtower perched on a hilltop gives you a view of the ocean you will never forget. Since the water is so clear here, it's a fantastic place to snorkel and experience life under the sea.

If you've already knocked out your big European bucket list destinations, I encourage you to go off the beaten path and experience parts unknown to the average traveler. The memories you'll make on those trips will no doubt stay with you forever. A good starting point is Sardinia's Cagliari. ■

YOUR CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY BUCKET LIST

By Erica Fowler



3

Collect tiny handmade trinkets for a fun kids' advent calendar this year or next!



4

Find the wackiest **winter socks** you can, more points if they're twins with your ugly holiday sweater, so you can snuggle up thinking of all the fun you had finding them.



1



Buy fresh **Nuremburg lebkuchen** and a cookie tin or container you can always remember them by...especially since the cookies won't last long!

5

Be sure to experience at least one holiday performance or tradition, whether it's a **choir in the town square**, a glass blower at work (it is warmer there) or the torchlit mountain parade in the town of Freiburg.



6

Attend a St. Nicholas Parade and **Krampus Run** to be sure to wave at the many iterations of St. Nick and to jolt naughty children into their best behavior.



Take a good old-fashioned **sleigh ride** through the snow in Bavaria.

7



8

Visit massive ornament shops like the **Käthe Wohlfahrt Christmas Village** in Rothenburg ob der Tauber to feel like you feel stepped into pure Christmas joy!



9

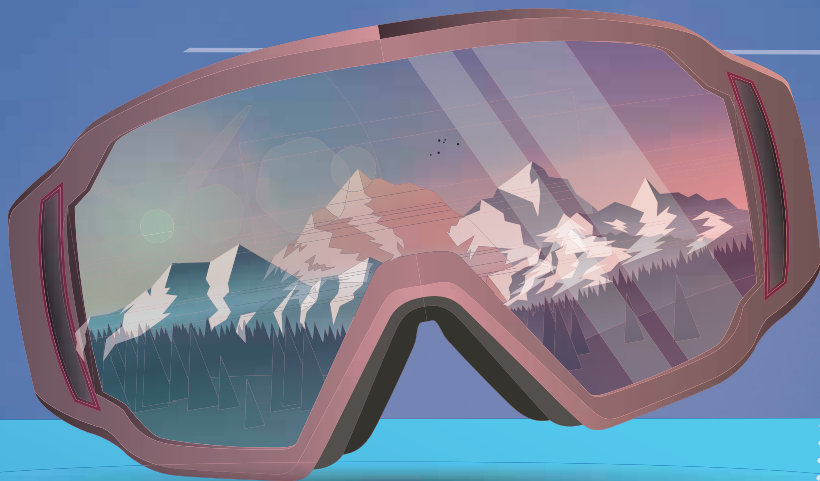


Participate in activities like **press printing your own Christmas card** at the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz or learn to bake top-notch cookies in a cooking class.

10

Visit a themed Christmas market, such as the "Kinderweihnacht" for family-oriented fun, or one made just for dogs, like the "Berliner Hundeweihnachtsmarkt Sirius." ■





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