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FESTIVE IDEAS



10 WAYS TO HAVE
A BUDGET-FRIENDLY
Thanksgiving

By Courtney Woodruff

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FESTIVE IDEAS

Norman Rockwell's oil painting, "Freedom from Want," is an iconic representation of the American holiday meal. Grandpa is standing at the head of a long table while Grandma makes room for the massive roasted bird, and multiple generations sit around them—elbow to elbow—in eager anticipation. Family, good food and togetherness are the central themes of the moment.

For military families and their civilian counterparts, the Thanksgiving table often looks a bit different, especially in times of overseas assignments. Without extended family members to celebrate and share the expense of the holiday meal, the extra costs often fall on our shoulders in times of high stress, seasonal blues and homesickness.

But don't worry. It is possible to plan a memorable Thanksgiving feast for your family on a tight budget at an overseas duty location.

Here's how:

01 PLAN EARLY

Thanksgiving items are now on display at commissaries throughout Europe. DECA begins planning in early March to ensure the right products and quantities are available to meet the holiday needs of OCONUS commissary customers—including the demand for 715,000 turkeys sold in overseas stores every year. Plan your menu ahead of time, so you are able to participate in the season's best promotions.

02 SHOP AT THE COMMISSARY

When it comes to finding traditional Thanksgiving menu items on a budget, shopping at your local commissary is the way to go. Since many ingredients are not available on the economy, DECA manufacturers do their best to provide the best prices while also offering special coupons and additional savings to service members, civilian workers and their families.



03 STOCK UP A LITTLE AT A TIME

Instead of waiting to purchase all of the items for your budget-friendly Thanksgiving feast in one shopping spree, consider collecting dry, canned and frozen goods over several visits to the commissary. This will help spread the total expense across several pay periods.

04 KEEP IT SIMPLE

Curb the desire (or perceived pressure) to go all out. Avoid complicated dishes, and stick with a maximum of three family favorites for sides and two desserts. Also, for smaller gatherings, compare the price of turkey legs or cutlets to the cost of a whole turkey.

05 HOST A POTLUCK

Entertaining a crowd? Ask guests to contribute one of their favorite family dishes to the spread, and organize who is bringing appetizers, sides, desserts and drinks. This way, the cost and time it takes to prepare the meal is divvied up between partygoers, and it is likely you will each get to try something new. Everyone wins.





Happy Thanksgiving!

06 CONSIDER A NON-TRADITIONAL MENU

If you are not fully committed to the idea of preparing a traditional turkey dinner with all of the fixings, why not change things up a bit? Go with an inexpensive crowd-pleaser, like lasagna—or come up with a new theme, altogether! Remember, at the end of the day, the holiday is about who is around our tables, not what is on our plates. Also, changing things up a bit may help stave off those unwelcome blues that tend to come along with spending holidays away from extended family members.

07 STICK TO YOUR LIST

Resist the urge to deviate from your original game plan. Even though flashy promotions and last-minute deals may seem attractive, buying on impulse can quickly derail your budget.

08 OPT FOR FROZEN OR CANNED INGREDIENTS

In most cases, you can save a little bit of money (and time) by choosing frozen or canned ingredients over fresh products, especially when it comes to the bird. Keep in mind the cost of the turkey will be 40 percent of your total meal budget. Forgo the fresh fowl, and purchase a frozen one with a coupon. Just be sure to plan ahead for the time it will take your turkey to thaw—one day in the fridge for every five pounds.

09 DECORATE WITH HANDMADE AND NATURAL ITEMS

Fall in Europe is one of the most beautiful times of the year. Instead of blowing your budget on store-bought décor, get creative and take a look around. Go on a scavenger hunt to collect colorful, dry leaves, fresh berries, acorns and sticks for centerpieces. Have your little ones join in the fun, and encourage them to craft personalized napkin rings, placemats and name cards from items you already have around the house.

10 PLAN MEALS FOR LEFTOVERS

Stretch your pennies by planning inexpensive meals for the rest of the week that can incorporate the inevitable turkey dinner leftovers. Get creative or try new twists on old favorites, like substituting shredded turkey meat for ground beef in tacos and pasta dishes.

Even though a budget-friendly Thanksgiving feast overseas may not resemble the typical American holiday in one way or another, we can do our best with the resources we have available to us. Friends and neighbors who become family, good food and togetherness are still the central themes of the moment—and, at the end of the day, being thankful for what we have is still what matters most. ■





Due to the pandemic,
our favorite holiday
pastime is uncertain
this year.



Embracing GERMANY

The Magical Christmas Markets

By Stacy Roman

Every holiday season, we normally would all be looking forward to the highly anticipated markets. However, due to the pandemic, our favorite holiday pastime is uncertain this year. Nevertheless, for anyone new to Germany, I encourage you to take a look at what makes these markets so magical.

WHAT ARE CHRISTMAS MARKETS?

Christmas Markets are commonly known as “Christkindlmarkt” or “Weihnachtsmarkt,” and are just as they sound — market stalls selling seasonal wares and gifts. There’s also plenty of delicious food and beverages to partake in as well. Set up in small, alpine huts neatly lined in rows, the markets gravitate toward the city center or a popular tourist attraction. While there are some disputes about when the first “Christkindlmarkt” began, the general consensus points to the Dresden Striezelmarkt in 1434, which is still put on every year.

Usually popping up right before or after Thanksgiving, Christmas Markets are a one-of-a-kind experience. Some may charge a small admission fee, while others are free of charge. If you visit markets in different cities, you may be slightly disappointed to find many of the stalls selling the same trinkets and decorations. However, most markets have some sort of unique flair. For instance, Wiesbaden’s Twinkling Star Market features huge flowers lining the street which light up at night and Stuttgart’s town hall is converted into a giant advent calendar.

EAT AND DRINK ALL THE THINGS

Food at Weihnachtsmärkte can be described as upscale, awesome fair food. Sizzling brats, freshly baked pretzels and roast candied almonds meet your nose as you walk through. Be sure to save your appetite for the soft, gingery goodness of Lebkuchen — especially if you visit Nuremberg, where it originated. But the most popular delicacy isn’t a food, it’s a drink. Glühwein is a staple at Christmas markets. Made with red or white wine, this delicious imbibe is mixed with mulling spices and usually served piping hot. Not big on drinking? Indulge in hot chocolate or the non-alcoholic (yet cloyingly sweet) version of glühwein, “kinderpunsch.” You can either hang on to your mug as a keepsake or return it for the small “pfand.”

WHERE TO GO

The traditional big markets are usually found in Dresden, Nuremberg, Aachen, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt and Berlin. Another fan favorite is the fairytale village of Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber. One market I personally loved was Potsdamerplatz in Berlin. Not only were there rows upon rows of stalls, but there was also a huge sledding hill right smack in the middle of the city. Another personal favorite the Heintzels Wintermärchen in Cologne. This market is dedicated to all thing gnomes. With animatronic scenes atop the huts and gnomes peering out from different corners, it whimsically encompasses the season.

Christmas markets come in all different shapes and sizes. Hopefully this time next year, we can embrace this fun and magical time of year in Germany. Frohe Weihnachten! ■



TRAVEL INSPIRATION

PERFECT



PRAQUE

LESSER TOWN BRIDGE TOWERS

These two stylistical-ly different towers, connected by a gate, form the entrance to the Lesser Town from Prague's famous Charles Bridge.

The delightfully scenic city of Prague is the capital of Czech Republic and the largest city in the country. It is split by the Vltava River and is brimming with Baroque churches, Renaissance architecture, medieval streets and tasty treats that will make you yearn to return over and over again. History buffs, foodies, castle fanatics and grand church aficionados can all find something that draws them to this incredible location.

By Jessica Zen

TRAVEL INSPIRATION



ABOVE: Admire the astronomical clock at the Old Town Square first installed in 1410.

RIGHT: Take a stroll and view the 30 statues mounted to the balustrade of Charles Bridge.



Sites to see

No European city is complete without a castle perched high on the hill overlooking its territory. Prague is no exception. Prague Castle was once the seat of Czech rulers, but today is the residence of the president. The surrounding grounds are free to visit, but you have to pay to enter the St. Vitus Cathedral, Basilica of St. George and Golden Lane. It's worth the small fee as this massive structure is the largest coherent castle complex in the world.

Not far from Prague Castle is Charles Bridge. A quick 15-minute walk will take you to the edge of the Vltava River. The colorful buildings in the background plus the 14th-century bridge make for the perfect picture which captures the essence of Prague. Stroll across the bridge, stopping for photos along the way.

As with most European cities, the Old Town Square is not to be missed. Dine in an al fresco restaurant, admire the surrounding architec-

ture and listen to the clip-clop of horse-drawn carriages as they convey visitors through the cobblestone streets. In the square you'll find the astronomical clock on the Old Town Hall. This is one of Prague's proudest accomplishments. The clock was built in the 15th century and is considered one of the best preserved medieval mechanical clocks in the world!

From Old Town, the Jewish Quarter is just a five-minute walk. This area dates back to the 13th century when both Czech Jews and those from other countries had to vacate their homes. Despite having many of their buildings destroyed, there is still a fantastically preserved complex of Jewish monuments today. Surprisingly, this little neighborhood survived Nazi occupation because Hitler wanted it to be a "Museum of an Extinct Race." Artifacts were collected from other occupied countries and now make up the Jewish Museum in Prague. You can also visit six synagogues here.



"No European city is complete without a castle perched high on the hill overlooking its territory. Prague is no exception."

What to eat



The Czech Republic is full of fantastic foods, and Prague is the perfect place to sample as many as possible.

- 1 Be sure to add beef tartare to your list of foods to try, a raw minced beef dish often served with an egg on top. You can eat it with bread and garlic and it pairs perfectly with a Pilsner beer.
- 2 If you prefer your meat cooked, try "svíčková" with dumplings. This is marinated sirloin beef and bread dumplings covered in a delectable root vegetable cream sauce. It is served with cranberry sauce and unsweetened whipped cream and makes for the perfect dinner.
- 3 If you're looking for something a little lighter, opt for the fried cheese. This incredible dish is exactly what it sounds like: fried and breaded Edam cheese. The ooey gooey goodness hits the spot every single time. Do not pass up an opportunity to try this!
- 4 Of course you must sample some of the local sweets. One particularly delightful dessert is "kolache". It is a small, round yeast dough ball filled with sweets like strawberries or cherries. It pairs perfectly with the coffee you are sipping at the cafe!
- 5 While you're strolling the cobblestone streets you'll likely notice many places selling "trdelník," or chimney cakes. These are rolled yeast doughs wrapped around a stick and roasted over an open flame. The dough is then brushed with butter and rolled in cinnamon and sugar. Get them filled with Nutella and ice cream for an extra sweet treat!



TOP ROW: Beef tartare, fried cheese, chimney cakes

BOTTOM ROW: Marinated beef & dumplings, "kolache" pastry



Where to stay



The buses, metro lines and trams make it easy to stay just about anywhere in the city, but a few places stand out as the best.

Malá Strana is known as a fairytale neighborhood. It is in the hills near Prague Castle and close to Charles Bridge. Though it can be quite busy during the day, it is peaceful at night.

If you want to be right in the center of the action, Old Town is the place for you and the obvious choice for first time visitors. New Town, though not actually new, surrounds Old Town and has lots of cafes, bars, restaurants and shopping opportunities.

If you have a creative side and crave crafty spaces, Holešovice is for you. This is a former industrial area that is now home to warehouses and factories for artists and creatives. It is located across the water from the historic city center.

No matter where you stay or what you do...

in Prague, you'll want to come back time and time again. From the incredible scenery to the inexpensive food options, there is no shortage of ways to spend your days. Explore the castle, learn about the local history and indulge in a chimney cake or two. Prague is the perfect place for your next vacation. ■





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10 Reasons to Love Prague

By Mary Del Rosario

1. The timeless architecture throughout the city will leave you speechless.
2. There are many craft beers to sample at the several breweries here. BeerGeek Bar was my favorite.
3. The Astronomical Clock located in the beautiful Old Town Square is a sight to behold.
4. Walking along historic Charles Bridge will be your favorite pastime.
5. Trdelník, rolled dough on a stick coated with sugar, will have your mouth drooling.
6. For fans of The Beatles, a visit to the John Lennon Wall is a must-do.
7. The KGB Museum and the Jewish Quarter provides a perfect glimpse into Prague's storied past.
8. Prague Castle is what fairytales are made out of. You can witness the changing of the guard at noon.
9. Getting lost in the narrow cobblestone alleyways are part of the city's charm.
10. The nightlife is like no other.

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Slovakia



WHY GO THERE

Experience something a little different than the average vacation while in the heart of Europe. When was the last time you hiked in the Carpathian Mountains and explored an opal cave, all in the same trip? Sip local wine in Modra or explore the largest church in the country. Discover castles, conquer mountains and fall in love with the local culture of Slovakia. No matter which part of the country you visit, you're sure to be absolutely charmed.

Slovakia ON YOUR RADAR

By Jessica Zen

Forget the overcrowded streets of bustling cities and get ready for an adventure that takes you into the lesser traveled country of Slovakia. There's certainly no shortage of activities here, from hiking in the glorious mountains to exploring romantic castles. Pack up the family and get ready for the experience of a lifetime! Whether you keep your vacation strictly outdoors or venture into some amazing villages, you're sure to find something to tickle everyone's fancy.

The mainly mountainous country in central Europe boasts some seriously incredible outdoor opportunities. For example, the National Park of High Tatras is nothing short of breathtaking. This park is one of the oldest protected areas in Slovakia. It is home to the tallest mountain in the country, Gerlachovský štít, towering at 8,710 feet. You can also find over 100 glistening alpine lakes here. Note that hiking is limited to June 15 - Nov. 1, unless accompanied by a guide.

If you would prefer to see the immense beauty below the mountains, there's an opportunity for that as well. The Dubník Opal Mines are something truly amazing to behold. Opalescence, or the perfect play of colors, is on full display in these unique mines. They were operating in full swing from 1845 - 1880 and were run by a Viennese jeweler. Today, many people know the beauty of jewelry made with opals. Visit where these precious stones were once harvested from the earth and marvel at the incredible history!

For some adult-only fun, Modra vineyards are the place to be. Here you can get a taste of some of Slovakia's finest wines. Head to the town of Modra, just outside of Bratislava, in the Small Carpathian Mountains where you will learn about the local wine culture and taste a variety of wine. The town has under 10,000 occupants and is the perfect place to wander around and look at various historical churches. Of course, you'll need to tour a local wine cellar and relax in a peaceful garden while here as well.

If incredible architecture is more your speed, Slovakia is up to the challenge. Bojnice Castle is one of the oldest and most important monuments in the country. This castle towers over the town as a reminder of medieval times. It was built in the Romanesque style, but also has touches of both Gothic and

Renaissance elements, creating a fairytale ambiance. Tour the Count's Flat, Middle Castle, Palffy family tomb, French Park and the travertine cave during your visit.

Another architectural triumph in the country is St. Elizabeth's Cathedral in Košice. This stunning Gothic style cathedral is the largest church in Slovakia, covers 13,000 square feet and can house 5,000 worshippers. The altar features a double-spiral staircase, which can only be found in five churches throughout



Europe. There are also beautiful frescoes and sculptures inside, as well as a tower that should certainly be climbed!

When you're carefully concocting the perfect travel bucket list for Europe, be sure to keep Slovakia on your radar! The outdoor scenery here will draw you in and the architectural feats will only add to the charm of the surroundings. Whether you hike for days in the national parks or relax in a city setting, there is no wrong way to enjoy the fabulous country of Slovakia! ■

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1940'S RADIO SHOW

Have you ever wondered how they did radio entertainment back in the day before the marvels of streaming, audiobooks and podcasts? KMC Onstage Studio Shows presents their annual 1940's Radio Show using actual scripts from real 1940's radio shows at the KMC Onstage Studio on Daenner Kaserne (the KCAC, Bldg. 3109). Shows will be held Nov. 13-15 and 20-22 with Fri and Sat performances starting at 7 p.m., Sun

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NOV
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Saturday 1000-1700 Sunday 1100-1700

The Antique and Craft Fair is the perfect place to find some fall inspiration for your home or to pick up some beautiful holiday gifts. Make sure to visit buildings 411 and 412.

RAMSTEIN & VOGELWEH LIBRARIES

☎ 06371-47-6667 (R) 📍 Building 409 (R)
06371-47-7665 (V) Building 2059 (V)

NOV
10

GAME DAY AT THE LIBRARIES

Celebrate International Games Week on 10 November. Ramstein is hosting tween and teen gaming at 1530 and adult gaming at 1730. Vogelweh invites all ages to join family gaming at 1530. Spots are limited and registration is required.

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NOV
27

BLACK FRIDAY SALE!

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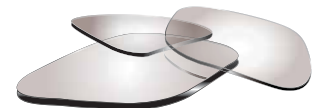
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