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Christmas Markets Guide



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<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Introduction to Christmas Markets	4
Christmas Traditions in Germany	5
Local Christmas Markets in Germany	6 - 12
German Christmas Markets Over an Hour Away	13 - 21
Useful Vocabulary	22
Christmas in The Netherlands	23
Local Christmas Markets in the Netherlands	24 - 25
Christmas in Belgium	26
Local Christmas Markets in Belgium	27 - 29
Christmas in France	30
Lille Christmas Market	30
Santa's Journey	31
Postal Dates	31
Useful Websites	31
HIVE Locations	32
HIVE Mission Statement & Disclaimer	33

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Christmas markets conjure up tempting aromas, magical atmospheres and the festive glow of yester-year in enchanting settings.

Christmas Markets provide opportunity for friends and family to meet up and enjoy hot mulled wine (glühwein) and stroll around the beautifully decorated stalls. These stalls offer handicrafts and gifts, delicious regional specialities and festive baking.

The aromas of hot chestnuts, grilled sausages, lebkuchen and other tasty snacks further enhance the ambience.

Many Christmas Markets start in the last week of November and run through to Christmas Eve or a day or two before. They are usually open daily from 10am to about 8 and 9 pm.

The history of Christmas markets goes back to the Late Middle Ages in the German-speaking part of Europe, and in many parts of the former Holy Roman Empire that includes many eastern regions of France and Switzerland.

Dresden's Strietzelmarkt was first held in 1434, the Christmas markets of Bautzen were first held in 1384 and Frankfurt was first mentioned in 1393. Munich and Augsburg were even older.

The Vienna "December market" was a kind of forerunner of the Christmas market and dates back to 1294, during this period of time they were simply known as street markets that sold items associated with the celebration of Christmas and overtime have evolved into the 'Traditional Christmas Market'.

One of the longest reigning traditional Christmas Markets in Germany is the Christkindlesmarkt (Christian Children's Market), which begins on the first Friday before advent and is an impressive event for all to see. It is a popular place to buy presents for the children and is a perfect opportunity for all the local craftsman and artists to be able to sell their wares.

Traditional music fills the crisp winter air with colourful decorations and toys on sale plus mulled wine and kinderpunch for children to taste and really get into the Christmas spirit

More information on this event can be found at

<http://www.christkindlesmarkt.de/en/>

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN GERMANY

Advent

Christmas begins on the last weekend in November, which is the first Sunday in Advent. Many homes display a circular wreath of decorated pine branches with four candles on it. The first candle is lit on the first Sunday in Advent, two on the second Sunday and so on until all four candles are lit on the Sunday before Christmas. Sometimes a large centre candle is lit on Christmas day.

St Nicholas' Day

For children the highlight of Advent is St Nicholas' Day on 6th December. Originally on the night of 5th December children left out food for St Nicholas' horse. Now they leave their polished boot or shoe outside their door for St Nicholas' visit. In the morning they hope to find it filled with sweets and treats. Good children will receive lots of sweet treats, whilst others may find mainly twigs!

St Nicholas has a long white beard and wears a red robe and a tall mitred hat. He will often make an appearance at fairs and markets and is accompanied by his servant, Knecht Ruprecht.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is the main day of the family's celebration. Shops and offices close at mid-day and most people spend the afternoon preparing for the evening celebrations. The children are kept away from the room with the decorated Christmas tree until all the preparations are complete, just after dark. Then the tree lights or candles are lit.

The Christmas meal is eaten on Christmas Eve. The family will probably go to church at midnight, or possibly late afternoon, and will spend the evening together.

Families with young children generally don't allow them in the living room that afternoon so parents can get everything ready for Father Christmas' arrival. The children will often get a knock at the door late afternoon/early evening or open the living room door to find Father Christmas has called with gifts.

Also the exchanging of gifts is carried out on Christmas Eve in Germany

Christmas Day & Boxing Day

December 25th is known as the First Day of Christmas and is a quieter day spent with family with more eating.

Boxing Day, also known as St Stephen's Day, is the Second Day of Christmas and is often spent with friends

LOCAL CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN GERMANY

Winterzauber Dalheim

Date: 16th – 18 November 2018
Location: Am Kloster 11, 33165 Lichtenau-Dalheim
Time: Friday – Saturday 1100hrs – 2000hrs
Sunday 1000hrs – 1900hrs

Sparkling bright lights, spicy cinnamon fragrance, sweet treats and eagerly awaited gifts; delight young and old alike. North Rhine-Westphalia's most beautiful monastery opens its doors again for three days, the dreamlike complex turns into a magical, pre-Christmas market.

For more information please visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-deutschland.de/kloster-dalheim-winterzauber.html>

Paderborn Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 23rd November – 23rd December 2018
Closed 25th November 2018
Location: Cathedral and Market Square, Paderborn
Times: Sunday – Thursday 1100 – 2100hrs
Friday – Saturday 1100 – 2200hrs

Each year, from the end of November the Paderborn Christmas Market has a great festive atmosphere, lovely decorations and romantic lights around the impressive Cathedral with its splendidly illuminated spiral. About 60 stalls sell Christmas decorations and gifts in the Christmas Village on the Cathedral Square. There are many food stalls selling items such as bratwurst, crepes, champignons, etc. as well many drinks huts selling hot glühwein, which is often served in traditional a Paderborn Christmas cup.

Special highlights include the nativity with live animals, the over 100-year old "Paderborn Pony Roundabout" and the "Heißer Wilhelm" beverage stand. From the 1st December the front of the Rathaus becomes a huge Advent Calendar with a window being lit up each day.

For more information please visit: <https://www.paderborn.de/weihnachtsmarkt>

Christkindlmarkt Rheda -Wierdenbrück

Date: 26th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Am Markt, 33378, Rheda-Wierdenbrück
Time: Monday – Thursday 1430 – 2100hrs
Friday 1430 – 2200hrs
Saturday 1200 – 2200hrs
Sunday 1200 – 2100hrs

The Christmas market in Wierdenbrück consists of numerous stalls offering baked goods and hot food to the visitors. Hot wine and brandy punch are served against the cold, whilst the aroma of cinnamon and baked goods fills the air. Other stalls complete the typical Christmas market program by selling traditional crafts and products. The Christmas market has a long tradition as it was one of the flagship Christmas markets.

For more information visit: <http://www.christkindlmarkt-wiedenbrueck.de/>

Bielefeld Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 23rd December 2018
27th December – 30th December 2018
Closed 24th – 26th December 2018
Location: Downtown Bielefeld, 33602 Bielefeld
Times: Sunday - Thursday 1100 – 2100hrs
Friday and Saturday 1100 – 2200hrs.

More than 120 festively decorated half-timbered stalls add magic to Bielefeld's city centre in the weeks running up to Christmas.

From trendy, sophisticated Jahnplatz with its little red houses and the twinkling light pyramid to the bustle of the old market place – Bielefeld's Christmas Market has something to suit every taste and every age group.

One of the many highlights is the rustic "Haus Vom Nikolaus" with warm open fire, snowmaker and "Feuerzangenbowle", a traditional German alcoholic drink from which a rum soaked sugarloaf is set on fire and drips into mulled wine.

The colourful and varied choice of shops within the pedestrian precincts offers an ideal combination of presents, crafts and culinary delicacies, while a programme of choir singing, concerts, storytelling and much more evokes the spirit of Christmas.

For more information visit: <https://www.bielefeld.de/en/attractions/christmas/>

Herford Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 30th December 2018
Location: Markt Herford, 32052 Herford

When the Christmas lights begin on the Monday before the first Advent, then Herford city centre turns into a colourful sea of lights. Over 20,000 lights provide a Christmas glow and make a visit very special experience.

For more information please visit: <https://www.herford.de/Tourismus-Kultur/Veranstaltungen/Weihnachtslicht/>

Bad Oeynhausen Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 30th December 2018
Location: Innenstadt, 32549, Bad Oeynhausen

Stroll along the festively decorated stalls and enjoy a cup of mulled wine whilst feasting on specialities such bratwurst and Christmas biscuits. At the stalls you will find arts, crafts, ceramics, beautifully wrapped gifts ideas and much more.

The beautiful old villas in the background provide a lovely ambience with a festive atmosphere. The main attraction is an open air skating-rink; here you can experience live performances from the main performance stage whilst enjoying your time on the rink.

For more information visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-badoeynhausen.de/>

Minden Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 27th November – 30th December 2018
Closed 25th December 2018
Location: Obermarktstrasse, Minden
Time: Monday – Wednesday 1100hrs – 2000hrs
Thursday – Saturday – 1100hrs – 2100hrs
Sundays 1300hrs – 2000hrs
24th December 1100hrs – 1400hrs
26th December 1300hrs – 2000hrs

Minden's Christmas market stretches all the way from the market square along Obermarktstrasse to lower Bäckerstrasse. It's always a great event, with fire eaters and ice sculptors, trumpeters, St. Nicholas, the German equivalent of Punch and Judy and Christmas music by various ensembles providing just some of the excitement.

While the Christmas pyramid rotates, why not glide before it on your skates over the floodlit skating rink.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.germany.travel/en/specials/christmas/christmas-market-in-minden.html>

Bad Salzufler Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 28th November – 30th December 2018
Closed Christmas Day
Location: Salzhof, 32105, Bad Salzuflen
Times: 1200 - 2100hrs

A Fireworks display takes place at 1900hrs 30.12.2018
During Christmas time within the historic town centre a nativity village with live animals and blazing fires comes alive. Surrounding the nativity village ornate wooden cottages selling many gifts and crafts can be found. The city is decorated with endless lights and the scent of mulled wine and culinary delicacies fills the air.

In the centre of the town there is a huge Christmas pyramid that rises more than 33 feet into the air. Beneath the large wings of the pyramid traditional figures rotate on three floors; right at the bottom of the pyramid hot drinks are served to keep you warm.

For more information visit: <http://www.badsalzufler-weihnachtstraum.de/index-2.html>

Bad Driburg Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 29th November – 2nd December 2018
Location: am Raiffeisen-Brunnen (fountain)
Downtown Bad Driburger, 33014 Bad Driburg

The traditional Christmas market in Bad Driburg has numerous craft huts and stalls selling Christmas decorations and handmade gifts. There are several huts mulled wine and food stalls. There will be an Advent events programme with a variation of festive activities.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bad-driburg.de/de/stadt/veranstaltungen.php>

Gütersloh Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 29th November – 30th December 2018
Closed 25th - 26th December 2018
Location: Downtown, Berliner Platz, 63, 33330 Gütersloh
Times: Monday – Friday 1100 – 2100hrs
Saturday 1100 – 2200hrs
Sunday 1100 – 2200hrs
Christmas Eve 1000 – 1300hrs

If it smells in Downtown of cinnamon, baked apples, waffles and biscuits with bright lights on the Berliner Platz, then the Gütersloh Christmas Market has begun.

A festively decorated stage in Downtown hosts daily programmes with local and regional artists. Traditional Christmas carols, swing, gospel modern music are just of the sounds you can experience. A big lavishly decorated Christmas tree in the centre of the town beautifies the wait for Christmas.

For more information visit: <http://www.guetersloherweihnachtsmarkt.de/>

Lippstadt Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 30th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Altstadt (Old town) Lippstadt
Times: Monday & Wednesday 1400 – 2000hrs.
Thursday & Friday 1400 – 2100hrs
Saturday 1200 – 2100hrs
Sunday 1200 – 2000hrs.
Food stalls daily from 1200hrs.

The illuminated half-timbered houses offer arts and crafts, pottery, jewellery, gift items and an array of tasty Christmas treats. There will be an ice rink for ice skating. During Advent, the Rathaus is transformed into a large, illuminated Advent calendar with trumpets being sounded when each window is illuminated every day. There will be varied music and children's programme.

For further information please visit:

https://www.lippstadt.de/veranstaltungen.php?get=event&event_id=76178&active_timestamp=1543532400&date_from=30.11.2018&date_to=01.12.2018

Sint Nicolaas Markt in Blomberg

Date: 30th November – 2nd December 2018
Location: Marktplatz 1, 32825 Blomberg

The Sint Nikolausmarkt in Blomberg is considered the greatest Dutch Christmas market in Germany. On Friday the market is opened by having a drink of traditional mulled wine and toasting Saint Nicolaas, at 1500hrs Saint Nicolaas will be visiting and will be handing out Dutch sweets. He will be accompanied by a marching band.

For more information please visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-deutschland.de/weihnachtsmarkt-blomberg-lippe.html>

Salzkotten Adventmarkt

Date: 1nd – 2rd December 2018

Location: Sälzerhalle, Salzkotten

The Salzkotten Christmas market takes place every year in the Salzer Hall. There is a Christmas entertainment programme and stalls for visitors to browse.

For more information please visit: http://www.2017.schuetzen-salzkotten.de/termine_main

Delbrück Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 1st – 2nd December 2018

Location: Kirchplatz (The Historic Church Square) Delbrück

Times: Saturday 1500 – 2200hrs

Sunday 1200 – 1900hrs

This traditional Christmas market located in the heart of Delbrück is a great way to kick off the holiday season. It has a varied programme with live music from many local groups ensuring a Christmassy atmosphere.

For more information please visit: <http://www.komm-nach-delbrueck.de/veranstaltungen>

Detmold Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 5th – 24th December 2018

Location: Detmold Marktplatz (market place)

The Detmold Christmas market is held in the market place. There will be an array of Christmas stalls to browse. There is also a stage with a varied music and entertainment programme.

Saint Nicholas will arrive on December 6th 2018

For more information please visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-deutschland.de/weihnachtsmarkt-detmold.html>

Kläschenmarkt Lemgo

Date: 6th – 9th December 2018

Location: Old Hanseatic City, Lemgo

A kilometre-long market with mulled wine, gifts, sweets and other nice things. Fairground, ghost trains, shooting stalls, raffles, ball throwing and horse racing are just some of the things to do at this lovely Folk Festival.

For more information please visit: <https://www.klaeschen-lemgo.de/klaeschen/>

Oerlinghausen Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 7th – 9th December 2018

Location: Rathausplatz, Inner Stadt, 33813 Oerlinghausen

The Christmas market in Oerlinghausen always takes place on the Second Advent weekend and has a full festive entertainment programme, as well as stalls selling a wide range of goods and drinks including Glühwein. The stores on the high street will be open on the Sunday.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.oerlinghausen.de/de/veranstaltungen/termine/7110217736.php>

Castle Park, Schloss Neuhaus Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 7th – 9th December 2018

Location: Schloss und Auen Park (Castle Park), Schloss Neuhaus

Times: Friday 1500 – 2100hrs
Saturday 1300 – 2100hrs
Sunday 1100 – 1900hrs

The Schloss Castle Christmas market has festively decorated stalls with a range of items including handmade gifts, porcelain, textiles, poinsettias, jewellery, Christmas decorations, books and games. There will be tasty treats such as nuts and honey, fine herbs and spices, Würstebrei, hot waffles and Glühwein. On Sunday at 1700hrs Santa Claus will make an appearance.

For more information please visit: <http://www.schlosspark-paderborn.de/5-Veranstaltungen/146-Weihnachtszauber-im-Schlo%DFpark.html>

Bad Lippspringe Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 7th – 9th December 2018

Location: Kongresshaus (Castle Ruins), Bad Lippspringe

Times: Friday 1500 – 2100hrs
Saturday 1300 – 2100hrs
Sunday 1100 – 1900hrs

With 30 wooden festively decorated huts full of arts and crafts, gifts, jewellery, cosmetics, ceramics, wood carvings and tasty food and drink. There will be a lively festive music programme and nativity scene. The Bad Lippspringe Christmas Market is the perfect way to get in the mood for Christmas.

For more information please visit: <https://www.bad-lippspringe.de/bali/veranstaltungen/highlights.php>

LWL Open Air Museum Detmold Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 7th December 2018 – 9th December 2018
Location: LWL Detmold Open Air Museum, 32760 Detmold
Times: Friday 1400 – 2100hrs
Saturday 1400 – 2100hrs
Sunday 1100 – 1900hrs

The Museum village of Paderborn is decorated all ready for the best party of the year, the artisans have unpacked their goods in the stalls around the village pond and the smell of biscuits and freshly baked bread blows from the bakery. An entrance Fee is required.

For more information please visit: <https://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/LWL-Freilichtmuseum-Detmold/programm/museumsadvent/>

Das Gästliche Dorf, Delbrück Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 7th – 9th December 2018
Location: Das Gästliche Dorf, Lippstädter Straße 88, 33129 Delbrück
Times: Friday 1300 – 1900hrs
Saturday & Sunday 1100 - 1900hrs

During this period, the village is transformed into an Elves Workshop. Handcrafted items and gifts, marzipan figures, Baumkuchen, individual witch houses and much more can be found on the exhibitor's stalls. There will be a creative craft workshop for children.

In the small forest, well-known fairy tale characters will be visiting as well as Santa Claus. The Backhaus is converted into a huge gingerbread house. There will be a varied music and entertainment programme on the live stage.

On Saturday and Sunday there will be a breakfast buffet from 09.30hrs the entrance fee is € 3, 00 per person, children free.

For more information please visit: <http://www.das-gastliche-dorf.de/aktionen/veranstaltungen.html>

Augustdorf Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 8th – 9th December 2018
Location: Village Centre, 32832 Augustdorf
Time: Saturday & Sunday 1400 – 2100hrs

The Christmas market in Augustdorf village is always held on the second weekend of Advent and will have more than 35 stalls selling Christmas themed products as well as refreshments. The nativity tent is popular with children.

For more information please visit:
<https://www.augustdorf.de/index.php?object=tx|3027.4&ModID=11&FID=3027.126.1>

GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS – OVER AN HOUR AWAY

Essen Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 16th November – 23rd December 2018
Closed 18th and 25th November 2018
Time: Sunday - Thursday 1100 – 2100hrs
Friday - Saturday 1100 – 2200hrs
26th November 18.00 – 2200hrs

Under a glittering canopy of 45,000 lights, the 200-plus stalls of the International Christmas market in Essen are packed with fantastic gift ideas and culinary specialities from all over the world. The festively decorated stalls extend from the Willy-Brandt-Platz, along the Rathenaustraße, to the Kennedyplatz, the Flachsmarkt up to the Markt.

Set out on a journey into the past in the medieval market; at the Great Cathedral; and experience the true meaning of Advent at the nativity play (Krippenspiel). The illuminations from the Essen Festival of Lights and the avenues of conical lights are magnificent to behold.

The 500-year-old tradition comes to life once again in the Nativity land of Essen. On your way through the city, you can discover wonderful Nativity scenes at 20 locations of peace and contemplation. You will sometimes even have angels showing you the way.

For more information visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-essen.com/>

Dortmund Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 22nd November – 30th December 2018
Closed 25th November & 25th December 2018
Location: Hansaplatz, 44137, Dortmund
Time: Monday -Thursday 1000 – 2100hrs
Friday - Saturday 1000 – 2200hrs
Sunday 1200 – 2100hrs
24th December 1000 – 1400hrs
26th December 1200 – 2100hrs

The world's tallest Christmas tree stands in Hansaplatz every year. In total, 1,700 fir trees soar 45 metres into the sky and a 4-meter tall angel crowns the top. Around 48,000 lights beam festive illumination for all who come to delight in the holiday spirit of the Dortmund Christmas Market. With around 300 stands, this market is amongst the largest and most popular in Germany.

Besides typical Christmas items, there are numerous other arts and crafts from various cultures around the world. To round off the experience, a diverse array of culinary delights and traditional mulled wine (Glühwein) stands offer some delicious treats.

For more information visit: <https://www.dortmunderweihnachtsmarkt.de/>

Düsseldorf Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 22nd November – 30th December 2018
Closed 25th November & 25th December 2018
Time: Sunday – Thursday 1100 – 2000hrs
Friday – Saturday 1100 – 2100hrs
24th December 1000hrs – 1400hrs

A stroll through the city centre during the pre-Christmas time is a wonderful experience. Unlike in other cities, the atmospheric Christmas market in Düsseldorf is not staged centrally as a large funfair, but rather individually at different locations in the lively city centre.

On the market square in front of the historic Town Hall (Rathaus) a number of artisans present their goods in nostalgic stalls. One of them is a nativity carver from Bethlehem who produces life-size figurines from olive wood. At the Flinger Strasse, the Christmas wares on offer are hand-painted replicas of Düsseldorf town houses.

For more information visit: <https://www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/en/our-top-events/duesseldorf-christmas-market/>

Hamburg Weihnachtsmarkt Events

Date: Between 22nd November & 30th December 2018
Time: Various timings

Thousands of lights are reflected in the Alster, Elbe and canal, while the scent of roasted almonds and fir sprigs fills the air. The eyes of visitors light up with the romantic Christmas decorations and each year Hamburg turns into a real Christmas fairy-tale. Discover the festive lights, arts and crafts and delicious delicacies at the variety of Christmas markets in Hamburg.

There are many different markets to choose from so for more information visit: <https://www.hamburg.com/explore/events/christmas/>

Rudesheimer Weinachtsmarkt Der Nationen

Date: 22nd November – 23rd December 2018
Closed 25th November 2018
Location: Rudesheim Am Rhein,
Time: Daily 1100hrs – 2000hrs
Friday & Saturday 1100hrs – 2100hrs

Guests from all over the world celebrate together with locals in the historic landscape of the Rhine Valley and give the market its distinctive flair. Houses and courtyards are festively decorated to a very high standard.

Merchants and craftsmen invite you, in goods and enjoyments, in colours and flavours, a foretaste of Christmas on the Rhine.

For more information please visit: <https://w-d-n.de/markt/>

Aachen Weihnachtsmarkts

Date: 23rd November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Friedrich-Wilhelm-Platz, 52062, Aachen
Time: Monday – Sunday 1100 – 2100hrs
25th November 1800 – 2100hrs
23rd December 1100 – 2000hrs

Every year the squares and streets around Aachen's Cathedral and Town Hall are transformed into a glittering spectacle with lights and festive aromas. The enchanting "Christmas village" is a popular destination for tourists.

There is a traditional carousel for the children, as well as delicious local delicacies from Potato fritters, to "Spekulatius" (Spiced Cookies) and marzipan bread which are distributed all over the world.

For more information visit:

http://www.aachen.de/DE/tourismus_stadtinfo/90_veranstaltungen_events/Aachen_Weihnachtsmarkt/index.html

Köln Weihnachtsmarkt Events

Date: 23rd November – 23rd December 2018 (Harbour Christmas Market)
26th November – 23rd December 2018 (Köln City)
Time: Various Timings

The aroma of baked apples, cinnamon biscuits and mulled wine will waft through the alleys, and many differently themed Christmas markets will invite people to stroll, shop and explore.

The larger Christmas markets are held in downtown Cologne. The booths near Cologne Cathedral are arranged around a huge Christmas tree, next to which is a stage for a diverse programme of live music performances. At the "Heimat der Heinzeln" (Home of the Heinzelmännchen) on Heumarkt, visitors will be thrilled to find a spectacular skating rink. The "Markt der Engel" (Angel Market) on Neumarkt will treat you to a magnificently shining sea of stars, while the "Nikolausdorf" (St. Nick's Village) on Rudolfplatz will create a family-friendly atmosphere.

But Cologne's smaller Christmas markets also have plenty to offer. Between Rudolfplatz and Schaafenstraße is the gay-lesbian Christmas Avenue market, where everyone can enjoy a party atmosphere and a diverse programme of stage events. You can look forward to a maritime ambience at the Harbour Christmas Market next to the Chocolate Museum. And if you prefer a more idyllic setting, you shouldn't miss the Christmas market in the Stadtgarten, where more unusual handicrafts will be sold.

For more information visit: <http://www.cologne.de/events/christmas-markets/harbour-christmas-market.html>
or <http://www.koelnerweihnachtsmarkt.com/en/>

Osnabrück Weihnachtsmarkt

Date 26th November – 22nd December 2018
Location Markt 28, 49074 Osnabrück
Time: Monday – Thursday 1200hrs – 2100hrs
Friday – Saturday 1200hrs – 2200hrs
Sunday 1200hrs – 2100hrs

In front of an incomparable historical backdrop presents itself one of the most beautiful Christmas markets in Germany.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.osnabrueck.de/weihnachtsmarkt/weihnachtseinkaeufe.html>

Soest Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 22nd December 2018
Location: Rathausstraße, 59494, Soest
Time: 1100 – 2000hrs
Friday & Saturdays 1100 – 2100hrs
Food stalls open daily until 2200

Enjoy the beautiful Christmas atmosphere in the historic town of Soest. Framing on one of the most beautiful places in Westphalia, impressive green sandstone churches and historic buildings surround 90 lovingly decorated wooden houses between the Cathedral, City Hall, St Peters Church and Market Square.

On the romantic walk of Vreithof; meander in to quaint, inviting, illuminated stalls offering baked goods and hot food to the visitors. Hot wine and brandy punch are served against the cold. Other stalls complete the typical Christmas market town program by selling Christmas crafts and products. The Christmas market has a long tradition and gets its visitors into the mood for the festive season.

For more information visit: <http://www.soester-weihnachtsmarkt.de/>

Münster Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: PrinzipalMarkt, Münster
Time: Sunday - Thursday 1100 – 2000hrs
Friday - Saturday 1100 – 2100hrs

Münster's Christmas Market becomes more festive and more fairy-tale like every year. Set against the charming backdrop of the illuminated old quarter, its five Christmas Markets are all within a stone's throw away from each other.

There are 300 stalls in all, offering a huge range of toys, decorations and crafts, as well as sweets, treats, snacks and hot drinks.

For more information visit: <https://www.stadt-muenster.de/en/weihnachtsmarkt/home.html>

Berlin Weihnachtsmarkt Events

Date: 26th November – 30th December 2018

Time: Various Timings

Whether you prefer a magical traditional market or a more lively and urban one Berlin can offer them all. Meander around the many stalls and discover their magical charm, and unique items. Stroll through the large boulevards and squares as well as on the small side streets and even in a handful of museums.

The Charlottenburg Castle Christmas Market in Berlin is host to one of the most famous Christmas markets in Berlin. The castle and its park are aglow in a romantic light where approximately 150 vendors sell their wares.

Experience a Nordic-Scandinavian Christmas Market, the Lucia Market, at the Kulturbrauerei (Cultural Brewery). Situated in the Prenzlauer Berg district of Berlin, you'll find 20 historic buildings and 6 charming courtyards.

Looking for a nostalgic Christmas Market? You'll find this between the Staatsoper and Opernpalais. Traditional confectioners, craftspeople and candle makers offer their wares in more than 200 enchanting wooden huts. Children will love the crib with real animals and a wooden horse carousel.

For more information visit: <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/christmas-markets-berlin>

Hameln (Hamlyn) Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 26th November – 23rd December 2018

Location: Altstadt Hameln, 31785 Hameln

Time: **Monday – Thursday 1000hrs – 2000hrs**

Friday & Saturday – 1000hrs – 2200hrs

Sundays 1100hrs – 2000hrs

December 1st 2018 (Mystic Night) 1000hrs – 2300hrs

70 individually designed huts and the huge pyramid building are set in a wonderful advent scene ready for Christmas. Artisans, Glühweinbuden, the Christmas bakery, the Lütje ice rink, Karrussells and all sorts of goodies await visitors.

The world-famous Pied Piper is in the middle of the market telling his fabulous story: drawing visitors through Hamelin's streets. Let yourself be enchanted by Hamelin and the many fabulous offers at Christmas time.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.hameln.de/de/veranstaltungen/weihnachtsmarkt/infos/>

Braunschweig Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 28th November – 29th December 2018
Location: St Blasii Cathedral Square, Braunschweig, 38100
Time: Wednesday 28th November 1800 – 2100hrs
Monday – Saturday 1000 – 2100hrs
Sunday/Bank Holidays 1100 – 2100 hrs
29th December 1000 – 2000hrs
Closed 24th - 25th December 2018

Every year, the squares around St Blasii Cathedral are transformed into a beautiful Christmas market with elegant illuminations and a delightful atmosphere. Roughly 150 artisans and vendors open their lovingly decorated stalls against an impressive historical backdrop.

They offer a broad range of gifts, wooden toys, jewellery and Christmas gifts, plus much more. With its 500 year tradition this Christmas market is amongst the most attractive and atmospheric.

For more information visit:

<https://www.braunschweig.de/weihnachtsmarkt/index.html>

Goslar Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 28th November – 30th December 2018
Location: Marktkirche, Goslar
Time: Monday – Saturday 1000 – 2000hrs
Sunday – 1100 – 2000hrs
24th December 1100 – 1400hrs
25th – 26th December 1200 – 1900hrs
30th December 1000 – 1800hrs

As every year during the cold season, Goslar lights up in the glow of festive decorations, the taunting aromas of cinnamon, baked apples, roast almonds tickle your senses – the crisp air is bearing promises of Christmas. Romantically framed by the background of the market square, 80 lovingly decorated wooden huts invite you to stroll around and give yourself a delicious treat.

In the fairytale Christmas forest in the historic city centre, in an ensemble of 50 tall, illuminated pine trees on pleasantly fragrant forestry ground, your visit to this wintery land townscape will get you in just the right mood for Christmas.

For more information visit: <http://www.weihnachtswald.de/>

Hannover (Hanover) Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 28th November – 22nd December 2018
Location: Altstadt Hanover, 30159 Hanover
Time: 1100 – 2100hrs

Visitors can stroll and browse among no less than 150 stalls, enjoying delicious Christmas treats or simply observing the busy scene. In the historic village, a medieval town is brought to life again in all its olde-worlde quaintness.

The Finnish Christmas Market on Ballhofplatz square exudes a charm all of its own as delicious “flammlachs” – slow-grilled salmon – is prepared on an open fire.

There will also be Christmas Markets around the central station located at Ernst-August-Platz which brings the spirit of the festive season into the heart of the city and on the Lister Meile - where seasonally decorated chalets transform the pedestrian boulevard into an illuminated ribbon of Christmas pleasures.

For more information visit:

<https://www.hannover.de/Veranstaltungskalender/M%C3%A4rkte/Weihnachtsmarkt-Hannover>

Bad Pyrmont Weihnachtsmarkt

Date 29th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Brunnrnplatz, 31812 Bad Pyrmont
Time: 1100hrs – 2000hrs

Atmospherically illuminated and festively decorated – this is how Bad Pyrmont Christmas Market, ion the heart of the city, presents itself on Brunnenplatz. The scent of roasted almonds, sweet gingerbread, savoury sausages and delicious mulled wine, as well as an extensive programme of events, concerts and much more to get you in the Christmas mood.

For more information please visit: <http://www.weihnachtsmarkt-deutschland.de/weihnachtsmarkt-bad-pyrmont.html>

Weihnachtszauber Schloss Bückeberg

Date: 29th November – 9th December 2018
Location: Hasengarten, 31675, Buckeberg
Time: 30th Nov, 1st, 7th,8th, Dec 1000 – 2100hrs
1000 – 1900hrs

The magic takes place within the gardens whilst being surrounded by the historical backdrop of the magnificent Buckeberg Castle; visitors are invited for eleven days of Christmas magic.

The festively decorated Castle opens its doors also to four nights of late night shopping, come and browse through the castle and grounds and enjoy shopping for unique seasonal items.

There is a cost of €15 per adult entry; however children under 15 are free.

For more information visit: <http://www.weihnachtszauber-schloss-bueckeberg.de/>

Rothenburg Ob Der Tauber

Date: 30th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Reiterlesmarkt, 91541 Rothenburg
Time: Monday - Thursday 1100 – 1900hrs
Friday - Sunday 1100 – 2000hrs

Massive stone town walls studded with 42 towers; half-timbered houses with red-tiled roofs; cobblestone streets and flower-filled window boxes: That is Rothenburg ob der Tauber, located on the famous Romantic Road. One of Europe's most beautiful medieval town looks like a movie set – but it is all real!

The silhouette of the gate and defence towers conveys the aura of a fairy tale. As you enter through one of the old gates, you will immediately feel secure within the time-honoured walls of this romantic place. Rothenburg's enchantment has prevailed over the past 1,000 years and is continuing to cast its spell onto the international visitors.

A local specialty that shouldn't be missed is the "Schneeball" or snow ball, made from strips of sweet dough fried and covered with powdered sugar or chocolate. Rothenburg ob der Tauber is also home to the German Christmas Museum. To complement this winter fairy-tale, a varied programme of entertainment runs until the New Year.

For more information visit: <https://tourismus.rothenburg.de/index.php?id=677>

Wernigerode Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 30th November – 23rd December 2018
Location: Nicolaipplatz, Wernigerode
Time: Sunday – Thursday 1000 – 2000hrs
Friday – Saturday 1011 – 2100hrs
23rd December 1000hrs – 1800hrs

Wernigerode is a medieval town nicknamed the 'colourful town in the Harz foothills' (Bunte Stadt am Harz).

The charming Christmas market in this historic town is overlooked by the magnificent Town Hall and beautifully restored half-timbered houses. Bathed in a festive glow, stalls offer traditional food, drink and handcrafted goods.

A popular trip from Wernigerode, is hopping on-board the Christmas train up to Mount Brocken on the Harz narrow-gauge railway. The old style carriages pulled by a steam engine takes you through the snow-covered countryside upwards to the Brocken. Please note that the trip can be crowded and the weather at the Brocken will be cold.

For more information visit: <https://www.wernigerode.de/de/>

Würzburg Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 30th November - 23rd December 2018
Location: Upper and Lower Market Square, Eichhornstraße
Time: Monday – Saturday 1000 – 2030hrs
Sunday 1100 – 2030hrs

In the heart of Würzburg's Old Town one of Germany's most picturesque and enchanting Christmas Markets attracts thousands of visitors every year. The Christmas market's tradition dates back to the early 19th century.

The historic market square with its Gothic Chapel of St Mary and its abundance of Baroque architecture provide a scenic backdrop for some 100 wooden stalls. Choose from handmade holiday decorations ranging from artful glass, straw, pewter and pottery to wooden toys.

Look out for original knitwear, creative jewellery, mouth-watering delicatessen or tasty gingerbread for your loved ones. Sample delicious Franconian Christmas cookies and roasted almonds, and don't forget to sip the traditional Glühwein, a popular hot red wine infused with spices such as

For more information visit: <http://www.wuerzburg.de/en/visitors/christmas-market/index.html>

Nikolausmarkt in Brakel

Date: 6th – 9th December 2018
Location: Rathaus, Am Markt 12, 33034 Brakel
Time: From 1800hrs

The market place in Brakel is transformed into a Winter Wonderland for Nikolausmarkt. There is a lively music programme as well as masses of food to choose from including potato waffles, sausages, Christmas cake and sugared almonds, plus mulled wine, eggnog, Rheder beer to quench the thirst of visitors. The Rathaus is adorned with a large Santa Claus hat and the children look forward to a visit from Santa Claus himself on the opening night.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.brakel.de/Leben/M%C3%A4rkte/Nikolausmarkt>

Warburg Altstadt Weihnachtsmarkt

Date: 15th – 16th December 2018
Location: Altstadt (Old town), 34414 Warburg
Times: Saturday 14.00 – 22.00hrs. Sunday 11.00 – 18.00hrs

The Old Town Christmas market in Warburg takes place every year on the third weekend of Advent. Visitors can explore the old town with a horse-drawn carriage, stroll along the 30 half-timbered stalls selling crafted items.

For more information visit: <https://www.emsig-design.de/alle-jahre-wieder-warburg/index.php>

There are a couple of websites which cover all the Christmas markets throughout Germany that you may also wish to look at.

www.germany-christmas-market.org.uk
<https://www.christmasmarkets.com/>

SOME USEFUL VOCABULARY FOR VISITING MARKETS

German	English
Pfand	Deposit If your Gluwein is served in a mug a returnable deposit may have been included in the price charged. You can return the mug and reclaim your deposit or keep it as a souvenir.
Stollen	Traditional German Christmas cake.
Glühwein	Hot spiced red wine (mulled). With a "Schuss" which means rum or liqueur is added.
Feuerzangenbowle	Burnt rum and red wine punch.
Bockwurst	Sausage (like a hot dog).
Bratwurst	Grilled sausage.
Currywurst	Bratwurst cut up and served on a plate with curry sauce.
Speisebraten	Spit-roasted meat (usually pork).
Lebkuchen	Traditional German baked Christmas treat, similar to gingerbread
Dominosteine	Little cubes with a Lebkuchen base, marzipan and apricot layers and a chocolate coating.
Gebrannte Mandeln	Burnt sugar almonds.
Reibekuchen mit Apfelmus	Potato fritters with apple sauce.

CHRISTMAS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Dutch children in the Netherlands, anxiously look forward to St. Nicholas Day on 6th December. They eagerly await the arrival of Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas).

Sinterklaas is a kindly bishop. He wears red robes and a tall, pointed mitre on his head. He travels with his servant called Zwarte Piet (Black Peter). Sinterklaas travels by ship from Spain to Amsterdam's harbour every winter. With him he brings his white horse and a huge sack full of gifts for the children. The mayor and all the people of Amsterdam flock to the harbour to greet Sinterklaas as he arrives. Bells ring out, the people cheer, and a brass band leads a parade through the streets. The parade stops at the royal palace, where the Queen welcomes Sinterklaas.

Families celebrate St. Nicholas Eve at home with lots of good food, hot chocolate, and a letterbanket. This is a "letter cake" made in the shape of the first letter of the family's last name. In some families, each person gets a little letterbanket with their first initial.

Then out come the carefully chosen and wrapped "surprises." Every gift is accompanied by a personal verse written by the giver about the recipient. And even though the gifts are from family and friends, they all are signed "Sinterklaas." No one is supposed to know who really gave the gift.

At the end of the evening, the children set their shoes by the fireplace. The shoes are filled with hay and carrots for the horse. Sinterklaas rides through the streets on St. Nicholas Eve. The children sing songs and tell their parents how well, or how badly, they have behaved throughout the past year. The well-behaved children awake in the morning, their shoes are filled with nuts, candy, and other surprises.

Families go to church together on Christmas Eve and then again on Christmas morning. They gather together for a family dinner of roast hare, venison, goose, or turkey. Eggnog and a mulled drink are specially made for this celebration.

December 26th is called Second Christmas Day. Often the family goes out to a restaurant to eat on that day.

LOCAL CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Brunssum

Date: **Date in December TBC**
Contact Brunssum HIVE for further details, Pg 30

Location: **Main Town Square**

A small Christmas Market offering a wide range of products and handcraft items. Fresh homemade waffles and delicious mulled wine will also be available.

Valkenburg

Date: 16th November – 30th December 2018 (city Market)
16th November – 31st December 2018 (Santa's Village)
Various dates and times for Christmas Parade (see web link)

Location: Kerststad Valkenburg

Experience a unique Christmas in the caves of Valkenburg. Markets are held in both the Velvet and Municipal caves, make sure you wrap up, it can get cold down there! It is a magical experience not to be missed. You'll also find a small market in the town next to the VVV

The annual 'Christmas Fairytales' parade features beautifully lit floats and dancers in breath-taking costumes.

For more information visit:

<http://www.kerststadvalkenburg.nl/en/inspiration/christmas-market-velvet-cave-valkenburg/>

or <https://www.santasvillage.nl/>

or <https://www.kerststadvalkenburg.nl/en/inspiration/christmas-parade-valkenburg/>

Monchau Christmas Market

Date: 23rd November – 23rd December 2018

Location: Am Handwerkerzentrum, Monschauer

What sets the Monschau Christmas Market apart from other markets is the Christmas stalls are so pretty they entice to shop or to linger. Also local shops, restaurants, galleries, antique shops etc fit perfectly into the pre-Christmas spirit.

There is even a House of Christmas in Monschau: throughout the months of March to December, this typical building offers Christmas decorations for sale on all 3 floors.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.monschau.de/en/experience/christmas-market/>

Schloss Merode Christmas Market

Date: 28th November – 23rd December 2018

Closed Monday & Tuesday

Location: 52379 Langerwehe-Merode

At 5pm, 6pm and 7pm, the Christmas market angel appears at the highest window of the castle to recount the story of the Nativity. At this time, all the guests are invited to sing carols in the castle courtyard

Varied musical programme (choirs, musicians, fanfare and brass-band)

Children's carousel, Punch-and-Judy shows, Nativity scene with live animals,

A live trumpet solo "Silent Night" on the Castle bridge (at the end of every market day).

For more information please visit: <http://schlossmerode.de/>

Kerstwereld Rolduc, Kerkrade

Date: 1st – 9th December 2018 (weekends only)

Location: Rolduc Abbey

Kerstwereld (Christmas World) Rolduc takes place in the 900 year old beautiful and unique Abbey. With more than fifty cosy stalls and church music performed by several choirs from the local area this really is a Christmas treat and on our door step too.

For more information please visit: <https://www.kerstwereldrolduc.nl/nl/home/>

Magical Maastricht Festival

Date: 1st December – 31st December 2018

Location: Vrijthof Square, Maastricht

Young and old can have fun on the 800 m2 skating rink. You can admire the Maastricht skyline from the big wheel, while a grand carousel decorated with beautiful typical Maastricht scenes provides fun for all ages. Stroll through the Christmas market looking for original gifts and enjoy the special performances in the atmospheric Vrijthof pavilion.

Take a breather and grab a seat on one of the heated Christmas café terraces and enjoy winter treats like hot chocolate with whipped cream, 'oliebollen' (deep-fried doughnut balls), or mulled wine.

For more information please visit: <https://www.visitmaastricht.com/magical-maastricht/magical-maastricht-on-vrijthof-square>

Sittard Winter Dream

Date: 14th December – 6th January 2018

Wëntjerdrum is the local word for 'winter dream'. It's a festive dream world with a beautifully illuminated marketplace all dressed up in a festive, wintry look, with beautifully-decorated façades and wintry trees along with various attractions for children on the wonderful, historic marketplace. Throughout the city centre, you'll find fun winter-related activities, with music and live performances.

For more information please visit: <https://wentjerdrum.nl/>

***For further information on Christmas Markets in Netherlands visit:
<https://www.christmasmarkets.com/location/holland/>***

CHRISTMAS IN BELGIUM

In Belgium there are two main languages, Flemish and Walloon (a version of French) and the two languages are spoken in different regions.

In Flemish Happy Christmas is 'Vrolijk Kerstfeest' and in Walloon 'djoyeus Noyé'.

On Christmas Eve ('Kerstavond' in Flemish and 'le réveillion de Noël' in Walloon), a special meal is eaten by most families. Apéritif and hors d'oeuvres are served, followed by a starter typically of sea-food, followed by a main course of stuffed turkey. The dessert is 'Kerststronk' (Flemish) or 'la bûche de Noël' (Walloon) which is a chocolate Christmas Log made of sponge roll layered with cream, and the outside is covered with chocolate butter cream and made to resemble a bark-covered log.

Children in Belgium have two Christmas visitors, as they do in Netherlands. 6th December, 'Sinterklaas/St. Niklaas' (Flemish) or 'Saint Nicholas' (Walloon) brings presents to children. Different regions of Belgium have different customs and traditions about St. Nicholas.

Small presents are left under a tree or in Christmas stockings left near the fire-place and are opened on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning.

The traditional Christmas breakfast is the same as the normal Sunday breakfast eaten throughout the year. This is freshly baked crusty rolls with butter & cold meats and/or jam, followed by pastries (similar to Danish pastries) called "koffiekoek(en)" (meaning coffee cake(s) as they are normally eaten with a cup of coffee!).

In Walloon districts (the south of Belgium), a special sweet bread called 'cognou' or 'cognolle' made in a shape that is supposed to be like baby Jesus is eaten for Christmas breakfast.

Some families have Advent Crowns made from fir or leylandii greenery.

LOCAL CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN BELGIUM

Ypres

Date: 23rd November – 2nd January 2019
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays
Location: Grote Markt, Ypres
Time: Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday 15:00 to 19:30
Friday 15:00 to 22:00 Saturday 10:00 to 22:00
Distance from SHAPE: 1hr 13mins approx. 111km

Ypres Christmas Market, a relative newcomer, is fast becoming one of the popular markets in Belgium. The Swiss style chalets and ice rink ensure a typical Christmas atmosphere returns to Grote Markt.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.christmasmarkets.com/individual-christmas-market/ypres-christmas-market/>

Bruges

Date: 23rd November – 1st of January 2019
Location: Markt 1-5, 8000 Brugge, Belgium
Time: 10:30 – 22:00 Friday and Saturday 10:30 to 23:00
Distance from SHAPE: 1hr 23mins approx. 131km

Medieval Bruges, with its beautiful setting, is host to one of the most famous Christmas Markets in Belgium, offering the best of winter products, Christmas gifts and warm glühwein and snacks.

Medieval Bruges, with its beautiful setting, is host to one of the most famous Christmas Markets in Belgium, offering the best of winter products, Christmas gifts and warm glühwein and snacks

The festive season in Bruges includes the Bruges Christmas Market and Ice Rink (Winter in Bruges), stalls can found on the Market Square and on Simon Stevinplein (Ice Rink).

The cosy Christmas atmosphere at the Christmas market in Bruges helps make Bruges Christmas Market one of the most vibrant markets of the country.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.christmasmarkets.com/individual-christmas-market/bruges-christmas-market/>

Mons

Date: 30th November – 6th of January 2019
Location: Grand Place, Belgium
Time: Monday – Friday: 11:00 – 20:00
Saturday - Sunday: 11:00 – 22:00
Distance from SHAPE: 13mins approx. 6km

The Mons Christmas Market is held under the theme “Heart of Snow” (“Coeur de Neige”). There’s a 900m² ice skating rink that’s also accessible for people with reduced mobility, as well as a curling piste. At the Mons Christmas market you’ll also find a big Christmas tree, street artists and around 50 vendor stands where you can buy craft gifts and seasonal products.

For more information please visit: <https://www.christmas-markets.at/mons-christmas-markets/>

Brussels

Date: 30th November – 6th January 2019
Location: Sint-Katelijneplein 40, 1000 Brussel, Belgium
Time: Daily 11:00 to 22:00
Distance from SHAPE: 59mins approx. 80km

Brussels Christmas Market, the Winter Wonders takes place in the heart of Brussels. Hailed as Europe's most original Christmas market by British tour operators. Prepare to be impressed.

Brussels Winter Wonders takes place on and around Grand-Place, Bourse, Place Sainte-Catherine and Marché aux Poissons.

Visitors will be enchanted by many aspect of the winter festival including the magical son & lumière illuminations on the Grand-Place. Christmas markets in the city centre attractions including merry-go-rounds on Place Sainte-Catherine, the large wheel and ice rink at Marché aux Poissons, stalls for stocking up on gifts and treats within a 2km trail.

For more information please visit: <https://www.brussels.be/winter-wonders>

Liege

Date: 30th November – 30th December 2018
Location: St. Lambert square and the Liège Market Square, Belgium
Time: Daily from 11:00 to 20:00
Distance from SHAPE: 1hr17mins approx. 127km

The Village de Noël de Liège (Christmas Village) has become one of Belgium's' most famous Christmas Markets in Belgium, with wooden chalets offering gastronomic specialities, handicrafts and souvenirs. Liege Christmas Village has been running for 30 years, and is not only the largest market of its kind in Belgium, but the one with the longest pedigree.

The Christmas Village of Liège has conferred its role of being the top Christmas market in Belgium, thanks to its scale, its duration and its atmosphere. With over 200 chalets attracting an estimated two million visitors to Liège every year, the market leads the way in presenting a fantastic fun-filled market.

For more information please visit: <http://www.belgium-tourism.be/informations/events-liege-liege-the-christmas-city-christmas-village/en/E/19420.html> or <http://www.villagedenoel.be/en>

Antwerp

Date: 8th December to the 6th of January 2019
Location: Grote Markt, Antwerp
Time: Monday to Thursday 12:00-21:00
Friday 12:00-23:00
Saturday 11:00- 23:00
Timings may vary on Bank Holidays
Distance from SHAPE: 1hr 15mins approx. 114km

Antwerp Christmas Market at Grote Markt has approximately 90 festive stalls offering all kinds of traditional speciality goods, a range of food and drinks on sale, and nativity scenes, all set amidst the backdrop of Antwerp's historic building.

Antwerp Christmas Market is a very important part of Antwerp's overall 'Winter in Antwerp' festive programme and offers visitors a wonderful Advent experience.

Fledgling designers and charities can be found at the market alongside traders offering more traditional wares and original gifts. The market stretches from Groenplaats through to the Market Square, via Suikerrui to Steenplein, The Groenplaats is adorned with festive Christmas lights with music playing in the background. Enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and a glass of Glühwein, a real speciality of the Christmas market in Antwerp. An ice rink is not too far away from the Groenplaats.

For more information please visit: <https://www.visitantwerpen.be/en/events-exhibitions/winter-in-antwerp-en>

Ghent

Date: 14th December to the 6th of January 2019
Location: Emile Braunplein 39, 9000 Gent
Time: Daily 13:00-21:00 Saturday and Sunday 11:00- 21:00
Distance from SHAPE: 1hr 22mins approx. 116km

At Ghent Christmas Market, you can enjoy the best of the city's sights, whilst sampling the delights of the region's food and drinks, such as chocolates, cookies and local specialities

Ghent's city centre receives a Winter Wonderland makeover, with an ice-skating rink set up under the City Pavilion. The giant Ferris wheel located in front of St Bavo's Cathedral allows a panoramic view of the city, whilst the Christmas market with stalls manned by international trader's returns to Korenmarkt. There is always plenty of food and drink on offer.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.christmasmarkets.com/individual-christmas-market/ghent-christmas-market/>

For further information on Christmas Markets in Belgium visit:
<http://www.christmasmarkets.com/location/belgium/>

CHRISTMAS IN FRANCE

Christmas in France or Noël as it is called in France is celebrated mainly in a religious manner, some families attend midnight mass and decorate their homes with Nativity Scenes depicting the birth of Jesus, the nativity is normally displayed until 2nd February – a date known as La Chandeleur (Fourty days after Christmas Day).

A long family dinner, called a réveillon, is held on Christmas Eve. The dinner is based on the word réveil (meaning "waking") because participation involves staying awake until midnight and beyond.

Réveillon is generally of an exceptional or luxurious nature with appetisers that may include lobster, oysters, escargots or foie gras, etc. One of the many traditional dishes is turkey with chestnuts; dessert may consist of a bûche de Noël and in Provence it can be up to 13 desserts!

Quality wine is usually consumed at such dinners, often with champagne or similar sparkling wines as a conclusion where Christmas carols may also be sung.

Children do not hang Christmas stockings but on Christmas Eve they put their shoes by the fireplace or under the Christmas tree so Père Noël (Father Christmas or Santa Claus) can give them gifts, however, not all parents do – some are patient and wait until New Year's Eve.

Lille Christmas Market

Date: 23rd November – 30th December 2018

Closed 25th December

Location: Place Rihour, Lille, 59000

Time: Monday – Thursday 1100 – 2000hrs

Friday – Saturday 1100 – 2100hrs

Sundays 1000hrs – 2000hrs

Saturdays during December 1000hrs - 2200hrs

24th and 30th December 1100 – 1800hrs

The Christmas Market of Lille is the largest of its kind in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region and has been held in the town since 1989.

The Christmas Village; with its 80 chalet stalls has taken place in the Place Rihour and approximately one million visitors come to discover the produce, gifts and local and International goods. Delicacies such as speculoos, waffles, gingerbread and mulled wine, whilst being surrounded by the warm and festive atmosphere really bring the market to life.

Rue de la Grande Chaussée and Rue de la Monnaie in the Vieux-Lille are adorned with fir-tree garlands made of red and gold ribbons and the streets of Lille shine with bright and festive lights making the city centre a warm and exciting place to be.

The star of the Christmas festivities in Lille is the huge Ferris wheel which stands in the centre of the Grand'Place (Main Square in Lille). It is one of the tallest big wheels of France being 50 metres high and comprising of 36 cabins which can carry 180 passengers. The view from the top is breathtaking and embraces the whole town of Lille and its surroundings, a winter-wonderland village is set up around the big wheel featuring an 18 metre tall Christmas tree.

For more information visit: <http://www.noel-a-lille.com/index.php>

SANTA'S JOURNEY

From 1st December, you can track Santa on his magical journey across the World.

Visit: www.noradsanta.org

Make Christmas magical using Portable North Pole to receive a personalised message, video or phone call from Father Christmas himself.

Visit: <https://www.portablenorthpole.com/en/>

You can also track Santa on Google Santa Tracker as he makes his journey around the world.

Visit: <https://santatracker.google.com/#village>

POSTAL DATES FOR CHRISTMAS

Please visit the following website for the 'Last Dates of Posting' document.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-forces-post-office-last-dates-of-posting

Sending a letter to Santa:

Santa/Father Christmas,
Santa's Grotto,
Reindeerland,
XM4 5HQ

For further information regarding letters to Father Christmas visit:

<http://www.royalmail.com/letters-to-santa>

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.germany.travel

www.germany-christmas-market.org.uk

www.bahn.de

<http://www.holland.com/global/tourism.htm>

<http://www.christmasmarkets.com/location/holland/>

<http://www.visitbelgium.com/>

<http://www.christmasmarkets.com/location/belgium/>

<http://uk.france.fr/>

<http://www.christmasmarkets.com/location/France/>

HIVE LOCATIONS

BIELEFELD

Block 8, Catterick Barracks
Detmolder Straße 440, 33605 Bielefeld

TELEPHONE 0521 92543122
EMAIL bielefeldhive@armymail.mod.uk

GÜTERSLOH

Amenities Centre, Mansergh Barracks
Verler Straße 127, Gütersloh 33332

TELEPHONE 05241 842220
EMAIL guterslohhive@armymail.mod.uk

PADERBORN

Block 15, Barker Barracks
Driburger Straße, Paderborn, 33100

TELEPHONE 05251 57191
EMAIL paderbornhive@armymail.mod.uk

SENNELAGER

Paderborn Community Hub, NAAFI Families Store
Otto Hahn Straße 20, Sennelager 33104

TELEPHONE 05254 9822771
EMAIL sennelagerhive@armymail.mod.uk

SHAPE

UK EJSU, Building 309,
SHAPE 7010, Belgium

TELEPHONE 00 32 65 447075
EMAIL shapehive@armymail.mod.uk

BRUNSSUM

Building 603, Rimbürgerweg 30,
Brunssum 6445 PA, The Netherlands

TELEPHONE 00 31 455 262891
EMAIL brunssumhive@armymail.mod.uk

NAPLES

UKNSE Naples
Naples, BFPO 8

TELEPHONE 00 39 08 15092628
EMAIL napleshive@armymail.mod.uk

Army Welfare Service
delivering information through



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