



Christmas in Germany

(Robert)



The German Christmas season officially begins with the first Sunday of Advent. Stollen, the oldest known German Christmas treat, and Christmas cookies (Plätzchen) are often baked during this time. Gingerbread houses, nativity scenes, hand-carved wooden Nutcracker figures (Nussknacker), Christmas pyramids (Weihnachtspyramiden), and lighted city streets and homes are all signs that Christmas is on its way.

Christmas Trees are very important in Germany. They were first used in Germany during the Middle Ages. If there are young children in the house, the trees are usually secretly decorated by the Mother of the family.



The Advent wreath (Adventskranz) is adorned with four candles, one of which is lit on each of the four Sundays preceding Christmas. The first Advent wreath, which appeared in the mid-19th century, had 4 larger candles and 19 smaller ones. Each day one additional candle was lit to help the children count the days until Christmas.

Santa Claus or Father Christmas (der Weihnachtsmann) brings the presents on December 24th. December 6th is St. Nicholas' Day and "der Nikolaus" brings some small gifts, such as sweets and chocolate, to the children. He comes in the night between the 5th and the 6th and puts the presents into the shoes of the children, who usually place them by their doors on the previous evening.



Germany is well known for its Christmas Markets where all sorts of Christmas foods and decorations are sold. Perhaps the most famous German decorations are glass ornaments.



Christmas Food:

- *Gingerbread - Germans make beautiful Gingerbread houses and cookies*
- *Honey-based Gingerbread cookies are called Lebkuchen*
- *A typical Christmas dinner in Germany would be a roast dinner of goose, duck, pork or turkey*
- *Christmas traditions in Germany*
- *Christbaumgebäck, is a pastry moulded into Xmas shapes and baked for tree decorations in Germany*
- *Stollen is a popular fruited yeast bread that is eaten at Christmas.*



Striezelmarkt, in Dresden, is the name of one of the oldest German markets.

The world famous Nuremberg Christmas Market attracts visitors from around the globe.

The Hanover Christmas Markets add to the city's special yuletide ambiance during this time of the year.