



simply Munich

Destination Information



The Munich Christkindlmarkt – A Christmas Market With Tradition

(20.11.2019) When darkness falls and the snow on the roofs of the market stalls begins to sparkle in a glowing sea of fairy lights, it is then that the atmosphere of the Munich Christkindlmarkt in the central square of Marienplatz is at its most enchanting. The 3,000 lights on the soaring Christmas tree, the market's landmark, glitter against the romantic backdrop of the neogothic town hall. Year after year, visitors from far and wide mingle with the Munich locals in the city's „best parlour“ to join in the festive spirit and yuletide traditions celebrated at this charming Christmas market.

In 2019 the Christmas Market starts on November 27th and ends on December 24th.

Christmas Market History

It is said that the origins of Munich's Christkindlmarkt date back to as far as the fourteenth century when so-called Nicholas markets were held in the town. However, it was not until 1642 that the first one was officially recorded in the annals of the city – the Nikolaidult, a yuletide fair located near the „Schöner Turm“ tower in the Kaufingerstraße. The actual event was probably much older – reaching back to as early as the second half of the sixteenth century. Unlike the other fairs and markets held in Munich, the Nikolaidult – which took place on 5th and 6th December – allowed only local Munich traders to take part.

According to the chronicles of Michael Schattenhofer, the Nicholas market of 1805

traded in „goods and wares from Oberammergau, Lebkuchen gingerbread from Nuremberg, cotton clothing for children, nativity figurines and chimney sweep figures shaped from prunes and almonds (Zwetschgenmanderl), and little paper pictures of St. Nicholas, nuns and hermits“. This market is regarded as the forerunner of today’s Christkindlmarkt.

Under the influence of the Enlightenments and the growing significance of the Protestant religion in the early nineteenth century Munich found itself undergoing the same changes that other regions and towns such as Nuremberg and Strasbourg had experienced as long ago as the sixteenth century – the move away from the figure of Saint Nicholas as the bringer of gifts in favour of the Christ Child (Christkind). As a consequence, the yuletide market became associated with the Christkind or Christmas festivities and no longer with Saint Nicholas.

In the course of the past two hundred years the range of goods at the Christmas market have remained basically the same: sweetmeats such as Lebkuchen and Zwetschgenmanderl, and wood-carven figures from Oberammergau, South Tyrol and the Erzgebirge mountains of Eastern Germany. Plus, of course, all the other wares that form an integral part of Advent and yuletide and are on offer at the more than a hundred market stalls at Marienplatz. In recent years there has been a revival of the quaint paper pictures of former times, thus adding an air of nostalgia to the old world charm of the Christmas market.

The Manger Market

Of particular interest is that area of the market known as the Krippenmarkt (meaning literally the “market of the holy manger”) which is situated at the church St. Peter just a few steps from the Marienplatz. It features displays of handicraft figures portraying scenes from the Nativity. This Krippenmarkt is thought to be one of the largest of its kind in Germany and boasts a longstanding tradition. Enjoying a separate identity within the Christmas market, it has always been very popular with visitors. In the mid-

nineteenth century the Krippelmarkt divided off from the rest of the yuletide market and had its own opening times starting on the first Sunday in Advent, trading right through Christmas and going on till Epiphany. It was not till after the Second World War that the Christkindlmarkt and Krippelmarkt joined forces again. Manger builders, both amateur and professional, will find inspiration in the historic city manger created in 1953 by the Munich artist Reinhold Zellner and located in the town hall's inner courtyard (Prunkhof).

The Munich Christmas Market – a Unique Experience

One of the great pleasures of a visit to the Christkindlmarkt is the opportunity to enjoy its particular culinary delights. There's mulled wine and mead to give visitors that inner glow as well as freshly roasted almonds and chestnuts to keep body and soul together. Other traditional features of the Christkindlmarkt include tempting grilled sausages and Advent sweetmeats such as spicy "Pfeffernüsse" biscuits and "Magenbrot" cake. Visitors who are intolerant to lactose or gluten will also find treats and savoury tidbits suitable for them. Vegans and vegetarians will also be happy here.

This year the people of Munich will come together at Marienplatz at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27th, to celebrate the opening of the Christkindlmarkt by mayor Dieter Reiter. It is then that the lights are officially turned on to present the almost 30 metre tall Christmas tree in all its shining glory. Tradition has it that each year a different town donates the tree to the city of Munich. In 1809 Therese von Saxon-Hildburghausen, wife of the Bavarian King Ludwig I., introduced a decorated Christmas tree to the Munich Residenz palace for the very first time.

The Munich Christmas market – Events

Heading the programme of festive music which accompanies the opening ceremony of the market is the popular German Christmas carol "O du fröhliche....". Then, every day, around 5.30 p.m. and at noon on December 24th, there are live recitals from the town hall balcony by soloists, choirs and music groups to spread the festive spirit to

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the crowds.

Songs Beneath the Christmas Tree - An inclusive community experience for everyone! Come and sing some Bavarian and German Advent songs and Christmas carols together. Bavarian television presenter Traudi Siferlinger and musician Monika Drasch will invite visitors at the Christkindlmarkt to sing along. Extra features include: full disabled access, texts in large lettering and Braille, sign language interpreters and induction loops for the hard-of-hearing. Guide dogs are allowed.

Meeting point: the Manger Market, St. Peter church near by Marienplatz; free entry, no registration required

On Thursdays 28.11., 05.12., 12.12. and 19.12.2019; 4.30 pm.

Duration: around 30 minutes each

The “Krampus Run”

The “Krampus Run” across the Christmas Market is great fun for locals and tourists alike.

Sun, Dec. 8, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

The 500-year old tradition of the “Krampus Run” dates back to the Christian mythological character of Bishop Saint Nicholas and his companion, “Krampus”. The members of “Sparifankerl Pass”, Munich's first “Krampus group”, dress up in archaic costumes, take a thrilling run across the Christmas Market and show up in the most unlikely places.

Munich Christmas Market Tours

Official Munich tour guides provide cultural and historical facts as well as culinary information during their tours “about Kletzbrot and Fatschnkindl” and the tasting tour “Baked Apple, Fatschnkindl and Stories”. Tours can be booked for groups only at München Tourismus:

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tourismus.guides@muenchen.de, facsimile + 49 (0) 89 233-30 319

Information: Phone + 49 (0) 89 233-30 234 or -30 204

Mail: tourismus.guides@muenchen.de

www.muenchen.de/guides

Service for visitors:

There's a handicrafts programme called "Himmelswerkstatt" ("Heavenly Workshop") for children (Nov. 28 – Dec. 14). Other features include: a "Christkindl" post office with a special stamp (Nov. 27 – Dec. 15), a "Christkindl tram" and a bus where you can store all those bags with your Christmas shopping.

Opening hours:

Mon-Sat, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Sun, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Dec, 24th 10 a.m. - 2.p.m.

The Christkindlmarkt at Marienplatz is organised by the City of Munich
Department of Labour and Economy

Info: www.christmasmarket-munich.com

Background

München Tourismus is the city's central tourist organisation and is part of the City of Munich's Department of Labour and Economic Development. München Tourismus works with its business partners in the private sector and the tourist organisation München TIM e.V. to develop marketing and PR campaigns and tourism products in a bid to establish Munich as a destination on the international travel market. The strategy for achieving this aim is defined by the Tourismskommission München, a joint undertaking between the city council and the local tourist industry. The objective of the partners involved in this collaboration is to promote quality tourism in Munich. This safeguards the quality of a stay and the quality of life in the city, and ensures acceptance of tourism among the population. München Tourismus acts as a centre of expertise, knowledge and innovation within Munich's tourism industry; as a link to regional and supra-regional tourist organisations (TOM, BayTM, DZT, MC and many more); and as a professional, neutral advisor to the tourist industry.

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Pictures:

www.simply-munich.com/photoservice