



Press release

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The Munich Christkindlmarkt – A Christmas Market with a Rich Tradition

When darkness falls and the snow on the roofs of the market stalls sparkles in the bright glow of countless lights, then the Munich Christkindlmarkt at Marienplatz square is at its most enchanting. About 3,000 lights on the soaring Christmas tree, the market's landmark, glitter against the romantic backdrop of the neo-gothic town hall. Every year Munich locals and their visitors from near and far mingle in the “best parlor” of the Bavarian capital to enjoy the festive spirit at this charming traditional market.

This classical Christmas market is said to be the oldest of its kind in Munich. The original Christkindlmarkt is also the most popular one in town.

The origins of Munich's Christkindlmarkt are reported to date back to the Nicholas markets of the 14th century. Town records first mention a “Nikolaidult” located near “the Beautiful Tower” in Kaufingerstraße in 1642, an event which is likely to have taken place already in the second half of the 16th century. Unlike other fairs and markets held in Munich, the Nikolaidult – which took place on December 5 and 6 – allowed only local Munich merchants to take part.





At the beginning of the 19th century (1803) the Nikolaidult relocated to today's Promenadeplatz square. According to the chronicles of Michael Schattenhofer, the last Nicholas market of 1805 traded in "goods and wares from Oberammergau, gingerbread from Nuremberg, cotton clothing for children, nativity figurines and chimney sweep figures made of prunes and almonds, as well as little paper pictures of Santa, nuns and hermits". This market held at Max-Joseph-Platz is regarded as the predecessor of today's Christkindlmarkt.

Under the influence of the Enlightenment and the growing significance of Protestantism in the early 19th century, Munich was undergoing the same changes that other regions and towns such as Nuremberg and Strasbourg had experienced already in the 16th century – the move away from the figure of Saint Nicholas as the bringer of gifts in favor of the Christ Child. As a consequence, the Nicholas market became associated with the Christ Child and the Christmas celebrations.

"The ancient Nikolaimarkt was dismantled and a Christmas market in the Protestant manner ... was instead moved to Residenzplatz or Max-Joseph-Platz square" noted Lorenz Westenrieder in his diary on December 6, 1806.

The "Münchner Christkindlmarkt", as the Christmas market is lovingly called, occupied a great number of locations in the course of its history after 1806:



1806	At the Dultplatz, today's Maximiliansplatz,
1886 - 1938	in the area in front of the Sendlinger Tor into Sonnenstraße,
1938	for reasons of structure and traffic on Blumenstraße at the site of the former Schrammehalle,
1939	at Mariahilfplatz in the Au quarter,
1940	at the site of the synagogue on Maxburgstraße which was demolished in 1938,
after 1945	at the high-rise air raid shelter on Blumenstraße,
since 1972	at Marienplatz in the heart of the city.

The range of goods on offer has not undergone any significant changes in the past two hundred years: Gingerbread and prune figures, wood-carvings from Oberammergau, South Tyrol and the Erzgebirge mountains and all the other goods that form an integral part of Advent and the Christmas season are sold at about 160 market stalls around Marienplatz. The revival of the quaint paper pictures of former times adds a nostalgic charm to the Christmas market.

Particularly noteworthy is the area of the market occupied by mangers and manger accessories. The so-called "Krippenmarkt" is situated at the church St. Peter, just a few yards from the Marienplatz, and is probably the largest of its kind in Germany.

Large splendid crèches from the Orient and Alpine miniature variations are on offer as well as manger figures made from a plastic material that looks deceptively like wood but is guaranteed to be unbreakable.

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From the lantern for the manger and fodder for ox and donkey to the gifts of the three Magi – the market supplies all you need to create a realistic nativity scene.

The manger market at the Munich Christkindlmarkt looks back on a long tradition. This special section separated itself already in the 19th century as independent manger market with opening times from the first Sunday of Advent to Epiphany. Only after the Second World War were Christmas and manger market reunited.

Manger builders and those aspiring to be will find inspiration in the historic city manger created in 1953 by the Munich artist Reinhold Zellner and located in the town hall's interior courtyard (Prunkhof).

One of the great pleasures of a visit to the Christkindlmarkt is the opportunity to enjoy its culinary delights. Mulled wine, punch and Feuerzangenbowle (a flaming punch) ensure an inner glow while freshly roasted almonds and chestnuts keep body and soul together. The tempting smell of grilled sausages makes the mouth water. Advent sweets such as spicy nut biscuits and "Magenbrot" cake are part and parcel of the Christmas market.

Every year the festive opening of the Christmas market by the Munich Lord Mayor attracts local residents to Marienplatz. This year Dieter Reiter will officially open the traditional Christkindlmarkt on Wednesday, November 27 at 5pm. It is then that the almost 30-meter tall Christmas tree shines for the first time in all of its glory. According to tradition the tree taken from afar



is donated by a different community every year. In 1809 Queen Karoline, the second wife of King Max I, had the first decorated Christmas tree erected in the courtyard of the Munich Residenz palace. As a Protestant princess from Baden, she introduced the custom from her home region probably as early as 1799.

The Munich Christmas Market – A Unique Experience

“O du fröhliche...” (“Oh, you joyful...”) the opening line of this carol also announces the beginning of the accompanying musical program. Every day, at 5.30pm, live recitals are held from the town hall balcony by soloists, choirs and music groups to get visitors in a Christmas mood.

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 interpreter and induction loops for the hard-of-hearing. Guide dogs are allowed.

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

On Thursdays 28.11., 5.12., 12.12. and 19.12.2019; 4.30 pm.

Duration: around 30 minutes each

The “**Krampus Run**” across the Munich Christmas market is an attraction for Munich locals and tourists. This centuries-old Alpine tradition dates back to the Christian mythological character of the benevolent Bishop



Saint Nicholas and his companion, “Krampus”. Today many young people revive this 500-year old custom. The imposing characters of “Sparifankerl Pass”, Munich's first “Krampus group”, dress up in archaic masks and heavy fur costumes and take a thrilling run through the Munich Christmas market.

Date 2019: on Sundays, December 8, 3pm – 5pm

In the handicrafts program “**Himmelswerkstatt**” (“**Heavenly Workshop**”) children aged between 6 and 12 can make their own candles, design decorations or create Christmas cards in the town hall.

Meeting point: Town hall gate next to Fish Fountain. The Heavenly Workshop is held in the town hall pub, the Ratstrinkstube (November 28 – December 14, 2019, open daily at 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm, each session lasts around 90 min.)

“**The famous Kasperl**” comes to Munich Christmas Market. Puppeteer Nikolaus Zettl takes children and adults on an adventure into the world of the puppet Kasperl.

Meeting point: Passage into the inner courtyard at the town hall (Prunkhof), Weinstrasse entrance.

Sunday, December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2019, 2 pm and 3 pm, each show lasts around 20 min.

Guided Tours through the Christmas Market

Official Munich visitor guides provide cultural and historical facts as well as culinary information under the title “**Kletznbrot and Fatschnkindl**”.

During a tour through the Christkindlmarkt, visitors are granted insight into



the history of the traditional market and hear colorful stories about market events. As special highlight of the **Culinary Delicacy Tours**, typical Christmas specialties can be tasted such as Stollenbrot (fruit loaf) and punch.

The two-hour cultural tours can be booked for groups only, the culinary tours are offered for groups and already single persons (online booking is possible), through:

München Tourismus, www.einfach-muenchen.de/guides,

E-Mail: tourismus.guides@muenchen.de, Tel. +49 (0)89 233- 30 234

Service for Visitors:

- **Christmas Post** In the passage to the interior courtyard of the town hall – Prunkhof), open daily from 12 pm to 6 pm, November 27 – December 15, 2019
- **ChristkindlTram** A festive journey through the city centre in an historic tram belonging to Munich Public Transport Corporation, starting and ending at Sendlinger Tor, www.mvg.de November 30 – December 23, 2019
- **Storage Bus (“Packeribus”)** Munich Transport Corporation (MVG) parks up a special bus for storing your belongings while you shop. Parked next to the Jagd- und Fischereimuseum (German Museum of Hunting and Fishing) on the corner of Augustiner- and Kaufingerstrasse.
On Saturdays, 11 am – 8 pm
www.mvv-muenchen.de



Business Hours:

Mon to Sat	10am – 9pm
Sun	10am – 8pm
Christmas Eve, Dec. 24	10am – 2pm

Organizer:

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Pictures:

www.simply-munich.com/photoservice