

Christmas markets in the local area

Esslingen

Nov. 27 to Dec. 21: Esslingen's medieval Christmas market features over 180 booths and huts in the city center. Costumed vendors offer arts and crafts, food and drink, plus there's plenty of entertainment, such as jugglers, fire-breathers and jousting. The market will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://tourist.esslingen.de>.

Ludwigsburg

Nov. 27 to Dec. 23: The baroque-inspired Christmas village is located in Ludwigsburg's historic downtown area. The market is illuminated by arches and gates made up of thousands of tiny lights. More than 170 stands offer Christmas decorations, handmade candles, jewelry and much more. The market is also famous for its freshly baked gingerbread and "Holzofendinnede," or Swabian pizza. The market is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Stuttgart

Nov. 28 to Dec. 23: The Stuttgart Christmas market is located in the downtown area and spans from Marktplatz to Schillerplatz, Karlsplatz and Schlossplatz. With more than 250 festive booths and attractions, it is considered one of Europe's largest Christmas markets.

Children of all ages can enjoy an ice rink, a small Ferris wheel and a miniature train. A Finnish Christmas village can be found at Karlsplatz. The market will be open Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Böblingen

Nov. 28 to Dec. 2: The Böblingen Lake sets the stage for this traditional Christmas market with entertainment, shopping and food. The market will be open daily from noon to 9 p.m.

Möhringen

Dec. 1: The Möhringen Christmas market, located on Maierstrasse next to the Martin's Church, will be open for one day only, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The market offers handmade decorations, jewelry and pottery, as well as hearty food and freshly-made "Glühwein."

Vaihingen

Dec. 1-2: The Christmas market is located in downtown Vaihingen and spans from the town hall to the "Schwabens Galerie" shopping mall. More than 120 booths offer Christmas decorations, arts and crafts, and food. Children can enjoy a carousel and bouncy castle. The market is open Dec. 1 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Bad Cannstatt

Dec. 1-31: The "Wintermarkt," or winter market, on Marktstrasse in downtown Bad Cannstatt will be open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Dec. 24 and 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Dec. 8, a Nikolausmarkt on Marktstrasse will be open for one day only, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fellbach

Dec. 6-22: The market is located in the downtown area and spans around the city's town hall. Music, festively-decorated booths, a fairy-tale tent and an ice skating rink are also featured. The market will open weekdays at noon, and 11 a.m. on weekends.

Herrenberg

Dec. 7-9: More than 50 decorated booths will offer a colorful array of gifts, crafts, food and more. The market will be open Friday from 2-8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Sindelfingen

Dec. 7-9: The Sindelfingen Christmas Market will be held at the Marktplatz in the downtown area. The market will offer handmade arts and crafts, entertainment, a live nativity scene, a historic merry-go-round, food and Glühwein. The market will be open Dec. 7 from 6-10 p.m., Dec. 8 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Dec. 9 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Leinfelden

Dec. 8-9: The "Engelesmarkt," or angel's market, is located at "Neuer Markt" in downtown Leinfelden. The market features a holiday concert and choir performance Dec. 8 at 4 p.m. Small booths offer arts and crafts, food and homemade baked goods. The market is open Dec. 8 from 3-9 p.m. and Dec. 9 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tübingen

Dec. 14-16: The market spans all throughout Tübingen's historic downtown area and features hundreds of decorated huts and booths set up in front of the city's beautiful half-timbered houses.

If you are looking for an extraordinary holiday gift, Tübingen is the ideal place. Most of the goods offered are handmade: jams and honey, shawls, gloves, ceramics, toys, paintings, candles and Christmas tree decorations.

The market will open Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Durlach

Nov. 29 to Dec. 23: The medieval Christmas market in Durlach, near Karlsruhe, features medieval traditions such as brewing "Met," or honey wine, jousting tournaments and fire-breathers, as well as glass blowing, gift huts and more.

The market is located at Schlossplatz in front of the castle and will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Hechingen

Nov. 30 through Dec. 2, and Dec. 7-9: The Schloss Hohenzollern Royal Christmas market claims to be one of the most romantic German Christmas markets held in a castle setting.

Visitors can enjoy the castle's atmosphere and history while shopping for family and friends in the castle's courtyard and ramparts.

There is an entry fee of €10 for visitors 16 and over, which includes parking and a shuttle bus service.

The market will be open Friday from noon to 10 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information, visit www.burg-hohenzollern.com.

Stettenfels-Heilbronn

Nov. 30 through Dec. 2: Castle Stettenfels in Untergruppenbach,

... in castles

near Heilbronn, will hold a medieval Christmas market. Visitors can stroll through the castle's courtyards and outer buildings to shop and enjoy the season's offerings.

Glühwein, gingerbread, and Stollen, as well as decorations and candles can be purchased. Entrance to the castle is €3.50 for adults; children 12 years old and under are free.

On Nov. 30, the market will be open from 4-8 p.m., Dec. 1 from 1-8 p.m. and Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.burg-stettenfels.de.

Heidelberg

Dec. 6-11 and Dec. 13-18: Colorful lights, the aroma of "Lebkuchen," or gingerbread, and the majestic atmosphere of the castle make this market a magical Christmas experience. The market features arts and crafts, tasty treats, classical music and costumed tour guides. The market will be open Thursday from 5-9 p.m. and Friday to Tuesday from noon to 9 p.m.

The main Christmas market in the center of Heidelberg will run from Nov. 21 through Dec. 22 and will be open Sunday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The market will be closed Nov. 25.

For more information, visit www.schloss-heidelberg.de or www.heidelberg.de.

Maulbronn Monastery

Dec. 8-9: The Maulbronn Monastery is one of the most well-preserved medieval monasteries north of the Alps.

During the Christmas market, visitors can take in the historic atmosphere while enjoying sugar cookies, Glühwein, bratwurst and "Schupfnudeln," or Swabian potato noodles.

The market offers arts and crafts, felted accessories, jewelry, home decor, Christmas decorations and fine honey products.

Musical performances also create a festive atmosphere throughout the market. The market will be open Dec. 8 from 2-9 p.m. and Dec. 9 from 1 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.kloster-maulbronn.de.

Bruchsal

Dec. 13-17: Bruchsal's baroque castle serves as the backdrop for a romantic fairy-tale Christmas market.

Visitors can enjoy Glühwein, shop for gifts, taste fresh Weihnachtsstollen (a sweet Christmas bread) or simply enjoy the live music. The market will open daily at noon.

The city's main Christmas market at the Otto-Oppenheimer-Platz and Kübelmarkt will be held Nov. 28 to Dec. 23 and is open daily from noon to 8 p.m.

For more information, visit www.bruchsal.de.

It's hard to resist the charm of a German Christmas market. With so many in the area, why not visit a different market each weekend?

... on the road

Baden-Baden

Nov. 26 through Dec. 30: A trip to this traditional Christmas market is like strolling through a scene from a winter fairy tale. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Augsburg

Nov. 26 through Dec. 24: This Christmas market has nearly 150 stands, all located around a large Christmas pyramid in the city's historic downtown area. The market will be open Sunday

through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nürnberg

Nov. 30 through Dec. 24: One of Germany's most well-known and famous Christmas markets is located around the Frauenkirche in downtown Nürnberg. Open Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Dec. 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Nov. 30 through Dec. 23: While visitors to the "Christmas Village," can enjoy Christmas all year long, a visit to this medieval village during the holiday season is especially festive. The market is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.