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the German National Press Office

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Preparing for Christmas, Fall Festivals and New Openings

Welcome to our press newsletter: Preparing for Christmas, Fall Festivals and New Openings. We do respect your privacy. Should you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please scroll down to unsubscribe. Thank you

Editor's Choice: Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar Re-Opens after Fire

Marking the 200th anniversary of the death of Duchess Anna Amalia, the restored library in Weimar will re-open on October 24. In the mid 1700s Duchess Anna Amalia turned her residence the 'Green Palace' in Weimar, close to Leipzig, into a library comprising a unique combination of books, an art collection and architecture. After the library was partially destroyed by a devastating fire in September 2004, the building has been restored to appear as it did around 1850, during its brilliant period. The outstanding gifts received to re-fill the gaps in the collection include 17th and 18th century classical editions of Cicero's philosophy and Lucretius' works as well as individual rare prints from the 16th century. www.anna-amalia-bibliothek.de

Feature: German Origins of an American Christmas Season

From gingerbread houses and the soldier-shaped nutcracker to trimmed Christmas trees and Santa Claus. Many of the American Christmas traditions have their origins in Germany.

First came Santa Claus the most famous personality in terms of Christmas. He was brought over to America by European immigrants and got his name from the Dutch, but his 'true father' is the German Thomas Nast. Thomas Nast was born in 1840 in the small town of Landau and came to the US in the mid 1800s. He invented the Republican Elephant, the Democratic Donkey and even the caricature of Uncle Sam. Nast drew the first Santa Claus for the 1862 Christmas season *Harper's Weekly*. When Nast created his image of Santa Claus he was drawing on his native German tradition of Saint Nicholas, a fourth century bishop known for his kindness and generosity. In Germany he today not only arrives as 'Santa

Events

The Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt

Oct 10 - Oct 14
Exhibitors from over 100 countries present their newest literature from October 10 to October 14 at the biggest book and media fair in the world. The wide-ranging presentation of events makes the Frankfurt Book Fair a cultural event of superlatives. www.buchmesse.de

Onion Market, Weimar

Oct 12 - Oct 14
The 300 year old Weimar Onion Market is an annual happening that always takes place in early October. The fields around Weimar still produce great onions, and the three day event has more than 550 market stalls and about 350,000 visitors the biggest festival of the state Thuringia. In every year as one of the festival highlights a local girl is announced onion queen. www.weimar.de
(German only)

Claus' on Dec 24 but also as 'Nikolaus' on Dec 6 when he leaves his gifts in children's shoes.

Along with Santa came not only the Christmas tree including ornaments but also the famous gingerbread houses and the nutcracker. Both have their origin in German stories. In fact, before the Nutcracker became a Tchaikovsky ballet, he was the hero of an 1816 story by Berlin's E.T.A. Hoffman. The gingerbread house has a similar origin. It first appeared in the Grimm brothers' tale of Hänsel and Gretel, then in Humperdinck's short opera about the two lost children. The opera became a Christmas tradition in German opera houses soon after its world premiere on December 23, 1893. Few people outside Germany remember the opera any more, but the old crone's gingerbread house survived. It's rebuilt each December with gumdrops and a lot of frosting. The gingerbread itself has quite a history on its own, dating back to 1643 when gingerbread bakers in Nuremberg were first allowed to form their own trade guild, independent of the cake and bread bakers.

As for the Christmas music, songs such as 'Away in a Manger', 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing', 'Still, Still, Still' and 'O Christmas Tree' may sound very familiar. Written by Martin Luther, Felix Mendelssohn and others they traveled from Germany around the world. And of course, 'Silent Night,' was famously improvised in 1818, just across the Austrian border, when a church organ broke down, and the organist, Franz Gruber, quickly wrote out a song for guitar accompaniment, with words by the local curate, Joseph Mohr.

For those who can't wait for Christmas Day, the Advent calendar provides some solace. With a month's worth of treats hidden behind little paper doors it was first printed in Germany in 1908. During the pre-Christmas season, visitors to Germany can experience all these popular traditions and get a sense of 'home for the holidays'. A Christmas Market set on a medieval town square between timbered houses, cobble-stoned streets and small castles in the background, is a great treat for young and old.

For these and many more examples of German customs in America, visit www.GermanOriginality.com, a new website designed for all German Americans and those interested in German influences in American history. For more information on Germany and its Christmas markets go to www.ComeToGermany.com.

Theme: Christmas Markets and their Traditions

German Christmas markets reveal the country's festive side. Over 2,500 Christmas markets in wonderful settings invite visitors from all over the world to share in the joy of the pre-Christmas season and enter into Germany's special holiday mood. Popular and traditional Christmas markets can be found throughout Germany, but some of them are home to special regional Christmas treats and toys. Learn more about the homes to nutcrackers, wooden crafts, Christmas cake and gingerbread on a whirlwind tour of Germany's Christmas Wonderland.

One of the first Christmas markets ever is Dresden's 'Striezelmarkt', recorded as far back as 1434. Its name derives from 'Striezel', the sweet fruitcake baked in the shape of a loaf and dusted with icing sugar is today known as Stollen or Christmas cake. The highlight of the annual market is the 'Striezel' Festival, held on the second Sunday in December. In the 16th century, the local 'Striezel' bakers would present two 'Striezel' weighing 36 pounds each to the ruler of Saxony, carrying them ceremoniously through the town to the castle. Today, one giant Christmas cake is presented in a parade in honor of the cake by the town's bakers and confectioners. www.weihnachtsmarkt-dresden.de

Exhibition Paula Modersohn-Becker-Paris, Bremen

Oct 13 - Feb 24

This exhibition is an homage in Paula Mendersohn Becker marking the 100th anniversary of the artist's death. The first early 20th century female German painter, who was a leader in Germany's Expressionism movements, traveled on four occasions to Paris, where she encountered the French avant-garde and received formative influences for her own artistic development. This is the first exhibition to directly consider aspects of her art alongside works by such artists as Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Picasso and Matisse. www.paula-in-paris.de

Freimarkt Fair, Bremen

Oct 19 - Nov 4

Head first into the night, linking arms and swaying along until the early hours - for 17 days in autumn Bremen goes wild as locals and visitors celebrate the Freimarkt fair. Germany's oldest and third-largest fair attracts more than four million people to the Bürgerweide near the old quarter in the second half of October. But Bremen's 'fifth season' also spreads out into the entire city, featuring music, dance and excitement in public houses and the historic Ratskeller, Germany's oldest wine cellar. www.freimarkt.de

Duane Hanson - Sculptures of the American Dream, Völklingen

Oct 20 - Mar 30

As its finale for the European Capital of Culture year, the UNESCO world heritage site Völklingen Iron Works is showing 26 works by the acclaimed American pop artist Duane Hanson, one of the 20th century's most important sculptors working in the realist tradition. Hanson achieved his first international success with his lifelike sculptures at documenta 5 in Kassel in 1972. The exhibition at Völklingen Ironworks is the

South of Dresden is the Erzgebirge mountain region which has a tradition of producing hand-carved wooden crafts going back more than 300 years. Today, the beautiful nutcrackers, carved incense burners and figures as well as Christmas angels, ornaments and the Christmas Pyramid, produced by the workmen of the Erzgebirge have become famous all over the world and the region's workshops provide most of Germany's Christmas markets with wooden crafts. The small town of Seiffen is the birthplace of the nutcracker and its old town is a perfect romantic setting for a Christmasy atmosphere, selling the handicrafts from the region. But nutcrackers can be found on the Christmas markets all over the Erzgebirge mountains region and in many of the small towns visitors can participate in workshops to create their own Christmas magic.

➤www.sachsen-tour.de

The Aachen Christmas market can be recognized by its unique delicious scent of cinnamon, carnations, cardamom and other exotic spices. Located on the border to the Netherlands and Belgium in the state of North Rhine Westphalia, Aachen is home to the Printe, a special kind of gingerbread. Its name stems from the English word 'to print', because in earlier centuries bakers used carved wooden molds for Printen manufacturing, which gave the Printe its characteristic shapes. Still today the Aachen Printen bakers carefully guard their recipes as family secrets, and each has their own composition of spices. This is why this delicacy is available in a huge variety: hard and soft, with herbs, chocolate or nuts, as a Printen man, Printen woman or Printen horse or in the typical rectangular shape. ➤www.aachen.de

Nuremberg's medieval Christmas market in southern Germany is held in the city's old quarter. Traditionally opened by the Christmas Angel, this market is famous across the globe, as is the local gingerbread, the so called Lebkuchen. Nuremberg gingerbread is sticky, sweet and legendary. The old imperial city enjoyed a favorable location at the point where the ancient trading and spice routes intersected, and gingerbread can be traced back to the Franconian monks who used to bake pepper cake and honey cake, forerunners to gingerbread, in the Middle Ages. Visitors to Nuremberg can enjoy the medieval atmosphere and delicious aromas of gingerbread on the Christmas Market on Hauptmarkt in the city center every year before Christmas. ➤www.christkindlesmarkt.de

In Munich, Christmas fans will find one of Germany's largest manger markets. From the lantern for the manger to fodder for the ox and donkey, from beaming cherubs to the gifts of the Magi, the market covers all visitors' needs to create an authentic manger. Each lovingly chosen and carefully packed item is a reminder of childhood, when the manger under the Christmas tree symbolized a world of mystery and wonder. Christmas mangers have long been a tradition in Munich. As early as 1597, the Jesuits set up a manger in St Michael's church. In 1757, the first original Christmas market took place: it lasted from the first day of Advent to the Epiphany. One of the craftsmen's sources of inspiration is surely the historical manger in the Town Hall's Court of Ceremonies, created by the Munich artist Reinhold Zellner. ➤www.muenchen.de

To find out more information about Christmas markets in Germany - dates, locations, special tips, recipes etc. go to ➤www.ComeToGermany.com or ➤[click here](#) to download this year's Christmas brochure 'Welcome to Christmas Wonderland'.

Regional Focus: Meet Jesters, Knights and Sorcerers at the Medieval Christmas Market on the Wartburg

Travel back into the Middle-Ages during a Christmas visit to the Wartburg. Visitors to this special medieval Christmas market at the UNESCO World Heritage site, located in Eisenach in the state of Thuringia, can meet

only opportunity in central Europe to catch the Duane Hanson world tour.

➤www.voelklinger-huette.org

Special Deals

Christmas Magic and New Year at the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin

Spend an exclusive Christmas or New Year's at the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin! The Christmas package includes two nights in an elegant deluxe room, a delicious breakfast menu and a festive five-course menu. The offer is valid from December 21 to 27 upon request and according to availability. Prices start at \$672 double occupancy. The New Year's deal includes two nights in a luxurious deluxe double room, a generous breakfast buffet, a three- or five-course dinner on New Year's Eve, a delicious late brunch on New Year's Day as well as free use of the Adlon Spa. Prices start from \$2,545 double-occupancy for arrivals at December 30 or December 31. And don't miss the New Years Bash at the close-by Brandenburg Gate!

➤www.hotel-adlon.de

Lufthansa Holiday Business Class Special

Business Class at greatly reduced fares for the holiday season. Lufthansa offers a special deal for business class flights from various Lufthansa gates within US to Munich for fares starting at \$1250. The offer is valid for travel either between Nov. 18 and 24, 2007 or between December 17 and January 4, 2008. For travel in November tickets must be purchased by November 17., for travel in December and January by December 4.

➤www.lufthansa.com

Picasso Tours Hamburg Special

Stroll the Alster Lake, visit the new BallinStadt Emigration World and see where the Beatles started their career at the Reeperbahn. Discover Hamburg with this winter

jesters, knights and sorcerers every 2nd, 3rd and 4th weekend before Christmas. Craftsmen and tradesmen in traditional costumes communicate in medieval dialect, while concerts featuring traditional instruments provide a musical backdrop. Delicious food is cooked on open fires and locals present their crafts of calligraphy, leathery and jewelry-making at the wooden stalls in the inner ward of the famous castle.

The Wartburg became a well-fortified stronghold in the Middle-Ages and its history is wrapped together with personalities and cultural events of universal importance. The Wartburg was not only the home and center of power of the Holy Elisabeth but also the place where Martin Luther found refuge and translated the New Testament. Luther's study can still be visited and toured along with the rest of the breathtaking castle.

➤www.wartburg-eisenach.de

Hop on board of the historic steam train 'Wartburg Express' on December 8 and enjoy the stunning surroundings of the Wartburg castle on your way to the medieval Christmas spectacle. The chartered Christmas train steams through the winter landscape of the Thuringia forest from Erfurt via Jena and Weimar to the Wartburg. And those who want to make this an all-around nostalgic package can even stay overnight: The castle has retained its friendly hospitality, since the times of the first pilgrims that knocked on its doors and welcomes over night guests in the 'Hotel auf der Wartburg'. For more information on the train ride and hotel go to

➤www.bahnstalgie-thueringen.de or ➤www.wartburghotel.de

Contact Information

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Next Issue: Art of Business Travel: Who Said You Can't Combine Business with Leisure, Big City Museums

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special by Picasso Tours and take advantage of the non-stop connection from New York to Hamburg offered by Emirates Airlines. The package includes an economy class roundtrip flight from New York to Hamburg and three nights accommodation in the Stella Maris Hotel or Hotel City House in Hamburg including breakfast. This offer is valid for travel between November 1 and March 31. Prices start from \$570 double occupancy. ➤www.picassotours.com

Tour German Highlights

Start in Frankfurt on a 12 day tour with Globus Journeys and experience all the highlights of Germany! The offer includes a Rhine river cruise and visits to Cologne, Berlin, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Rothenburg, Munich, the famous Neuschwanstein Castle, the Black Forest and picturesque Heidelberg. This offer is valid for travel between October 16 and 27. Prices start at \$1,589.00* double occupancy including airfare from the US. ➤www.globusjourneys.com

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