



The 26 Best Christmas Markets in Europe



Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens Market, Courtesy Maria Eklind

This year, some of Europe's best holiday markets are back again, although several remain closed. For future planning, read below for our compendium of Christmas markets in many of Europe's cities. These festive institutions can be found in almost every capital, and exploring the wonderlands of treats, souvenirs and stocking-stuffers is a wintertime tradition. Read on for our favorite Christmas markets, from [Paris](#) to [Salzburg](#).

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Berlin

Gendarmenmarkt Christmas Market, held in the Mitte neighborhood, beautifully melds old and new craftsmanship in its month-long celebration of the holidays. Some of the most authentic Christmas shopping in the city can be found here, with dresses, woodcarvings and photographs on offer. We suggest watching the craftsmen at work and catching a performance on the main stage, which occur throughout the day.

Winter World at Potsdamer Platz is ideally located as a stop in between touring Berlin's highlights. In addition to shopping, activities include tobogganing and ice skating.

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Brussels

Winter Wonders is the largest and most pedestrian-friendly of all the Christmas markets. Cordoned off to vehicles, the area feels tucked away from the city bustle and transports visitors to a brightly lit wonderland of sparkling neon Christmas lights, ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds and even a slalom. Winter Wonders spans multiple locations, so it is recommended to go with a guide who can direct you to the best vendors.

Budapest



Budapest's Vorosmarty Square Christmas Fair and Festival, courtesy Top Budapest

Vorosmarty Square Christmas Fair and Festival is a top-notch local street food market. It's known for its *trdelniks*, a type of grilled cake, and *langos*, a deep-fried, savory dough that can be served with butter, garlic, cheese or bacon. There are plenty of activities on offer, though the inaugural welcoming of Santa on December 6 is a festive highlight. Visitors can go ice skating, shop for hand-blown glass ornaments and hand-carved jewelry boxes, and watch performances by local folk musicians.

Basilica of Budapest Christmas Market, with its plentiful stalls and skating rink, is best visited in the evenings, when a light show is projected onto the Basilica.

Copenhagen

Tivoli Gardens Market is Copenhagen's most enchanting and family-friendly market. Complete with festive music, decorations and 60 food stalls serving everything from donuts to mulled wine, the garden also hosts amusement park rides and a series of fantastical light and fireworks shows during the season.

London

Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland is London's answer to all things Christmas, with live performances, a giant skating rink, roller coaster rides and festive street food. The massive festival attracts travelers from across the world, and offers something for everyone, from a comedy club to a cinema to a circus and ice shows.

Munich



Festive lights at the holiday market in Munich, courtesy Indagare

While Sweden is known for its *glogg*, Munich is renowned for its *gluwein*—a type of mulled wine that is nowhere better consumed than at the holiday village in the [Munich Residenz](#). Pair a glass with freshly baked cookies and enjoy the festive backdrop of this former royal palace. While in Munich, don't miss a look at Neues Rathaus, the city hall, which is festively lit up during the holidays.

Paris

Marché de Noël Paris Notre-Dame is held on René Viviani Square for only about two weeks each year. Hosting 40 local craftsmen, the market offers charming French *objets d'art* and *Boules de Meisenthal* (Christmas ornaments) along the Seine. Be warned, per usual, this area is extremely crowded.

At the Left Bank's charming St. Germain des Prés Christmas Market, vendors are focused on evergreen, locally sourced products (such as accessories) and high-quality provisions rather than sweets and holiday tchotchkes. The market is small, and perhaps a bit less festive than the others, but worthwhile. Another favorite local holiday activity is visiting Avenue Montaigne's haute couture Christmas trees, which are decorated and auctioned off annually by designers.

While only a couple years old, the Village de Noël du Champs de Mars offers a smorgasbord of international foods and crafts, but the highlight is the skating rink at the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

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Prague

Wenceslas Square Market, named after the fabled Good King, is made up of small, wooden huts serving Pilsners, mulled wine, spit-roasted hams and *trdelniks*, or delicious fried pastries. Baked over a flaming hot grill, these rolls of dough are covered in cinnamon sugar and filled with Nutella—and are reason alone to visit the market.

Just a five-minute walk from Wenceslas Square, Old Town Square Market has an extremely impressive Christmas tree that is illuminated daily at 4:30 p.m. Children will also appreciate the host of animal stables depicting the Nativity Scene, which also functions as a petting zoo.

Naples

Southern Italy's pizza capital embraces the country's religious heritage with a year-round Christmas market in front of the stately 12th-century San Pietro Cathedral. Marzipan, candy and other local Christmas treats are served with an elaborate nativity scene as a backdrop. Be sure to pick up an intricate figurine as a souvenir; these hand-crafted pieces are the market's main attraction for many.

Salzburg

Located in the world's capital of *The Sound of Music* and Mozart, Cathedral Square Market offers a superb collection of artisanal goods and handicrafts, especially ornaments. Favorites include engraved horseshoes, hand-painted cowbells and needlepoint pillows sewn with traditional German phrases.

Schloss Hellbrunn Market adds to the beauty of the Schloss Hellbrunn palace with its decorated fountains, grottoes and the iconic gazebo from *The Sound of Music*. Petting zoos, pony rides and a Christmas-themed post office pop-up are pluses for families. There's even a portion of the castle devoted entirely to the eerie myth of Krampus.

Stockholm

Skansen Christmas Market is centered around a charming outdoor museum that pays homage to traditional agricultural practices and ways of life. Go for the holiday cheer and the delightful scent of traditional sausages, cheeses and sweet spices that fill the air.

Stortorget's Market has been held in Stockholm's oft-photographed Gamla Stan (Old Town), since 1837, and is one of the world's most popular and recognizable venues for holiday shopping. Indulge in such Swedish Christmas dishes as *halmbockar* (goat) or *råraka* (hash browns), served with lingonberry jam and fried pork. Or, purchase a traditional advent candle holder; the handicrafts here are unique and wholly indigenous to the region.

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Strasbourg

One of the oldest in Europe, Christkindelsmärik, made up of 11 smaller markets, is a charming ode to the traditions of French Christmas. We recommend attending a classical concert and going for a horse-drawn carriage ride around town before admiring the 100-foot Christmas tree.

Vienna

Held outside the former imperial summer palace, Schonbrunn Palace Market is well-paired with a late afternoon tour of Gloriette and the Schonbrunn Apartments. As the sun sets, enjoy a tapas-style dinner of traditional delicacies from several of the food stalls.

City Hall's Rathausplatz Market is easily accessible from the city center, and offers an ice skating trail full of twists and turns. We suggest visiting in the evening, when the rink is at its most atmospheric.

Located in a historic district of the city, Spittelberg Market is intimate, with stalls lining narrow alleyways and side streets. Vendors sell some of the most handsome artisanal handicrafts in the city.

Warsaw

Located in the heart of Old Town beside the Barbakan Fortress, Barbakan Christmas Market is popular with both locals and visitors for its hot beer, fresh pierogis and the best holiday shopping in the city. Highlights include handmade amber jewelry, hand-knit sweaters, leather slippers and traditional Polish ornaments. For those craving sweets, opt for a loaf of *piernik* gingerbread.

Zurich

Wienachtsdorf is one of Zurich's largest Christmas markets and is located directly in front of the Opera House. Selling Swiss fondue and other traditional dishes, locally sourced jewelry and ornaments, Wienachtsdorf's main attraction is its gorgeous ice rink. Here, visitors are invited to enjoy a casual skate or try their hand at curling.

Weihnachtsmarkt and the Singing Christmas Tree is both bizarre and enchanting. Standing on multi-tiered, elevated platforms, carolers from varying Swiss regions sing nightly beside a large Christmas tree structure.

At Christkindlimarkt, in Zurich's main train station, a 50-foot-tall Christmas tree rivals Rockefeller Center's. With one of the largest indoor markets in Zurich, Christkindlimarkt is a good shopping stop prior to a train ride to the Alps.

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- Avery Carmichael on October 26, 2021

