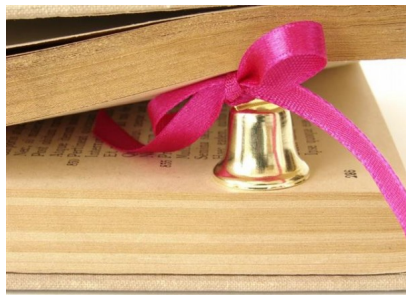


CHRISTMAS IN EUROPE - TRADITIONAL MARKETS ARE MOST POPULAR



From the German and Austrian markets to the Jewish Prague - European tours take the traditional and cultural route for this year's Christmas.

One of the examples with a new cultural program is the French Château d'Amboise in the Loire Valley presenting how the Christmas traditions were founded. **The tour that leads the visitors through the castle's halls includes an expo of Neapolitan nativity scenes on loan from the National Museum of San Martin in Naples.** Children ranging from 8 to 12 years old may also participate in an atelier to create Christmas decorations.

Frankfurt in Germany on the other hand hosts one of the most ancient Christmas markets, whose history dates back to 1393. The 200 stalls open as early as November 26th with their show of artistic crafts, Christmas decorations and local cuisine. Right in front of the town hall stands a 30 meter tall fir tree as a symbol of these celebrations.

Prague in the Czech Republic offers to its visitors unique experience as well - celebrating the Jewish holiday of Chanukkah, the "festival of lights" in the ancient city ghetto.

As for London we can step back in the Dickensian atmosphere thanks to the Christmas Carol, that sweetens the atmosphere in Trafalgar Square with choirs all around a gigantic fir in the square.

Vienna and Salzburg in Austria get ready for Christmas with their traditional markets as well. Only in the Austrian capital nine markets are held. **Those heading to Velden am Woerther See will have a chance to admire the famous Swarovski Christmas tree.**

Burgenland, one of the Austrian states, is renowned for its markets and castles animated with lights and sounds. In Hall Wattens, also in Austria, right in the heart of the Tyrolean Alps, all the villages have a market and tours with barouche and pony rides for children.

Farther north, Finland holds the Santa Claus Village of Rovaniemi where tourists have the opportunity to meet Santa Claus in person visiting his own home.

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