

## Top 7 Best Christmas Market Destinations in Europe

19 June 2018

Europe's affection for the Christmas season extends back to the medieval ages, seeing still based food, wine, crafts and more endearingly re-created in the 21st Century, incorporating twinkling snow-fingered locations surrounded by grand halls, churches, and cathedrals seemingly frozen in time.

Read further for our choices of the best destinations in Europe to celebrate Christmas this year, ranging from the ice risk of Bruges to the tantalising traditional treats of Tondheim, each providing an unforgettable festive experience.

### Lille, France



Combine a love of good food and a romantically without Christmas spirit when travelling to Lille's Place Rihour, representing a gourmet thrill in the form of nougats, waffles, apples, deliciously baked breads and a range of enticing confectionery found among 80 shops also twinking with boutique stores in and around the markets where you can find the perfect quirky gifts to take back home.

Sparkling decorations and nativity figures line the markets filled with regional specialties and internationally sourced arts and crafts.

### Stuttgart, Germany



Stuttgart's Christmas markets represent one of the longest running seasonal celebrations on the continent. Having begun life in 1612, the Stuttgarter Weihnachtsmarkt is one of Germany's most popular destinations for celebrating the festive period, situated in the traditional charm of the old district in the city, expect to see a refreshing throwback to age-old festivities as you savour spiced wines and the refreshing smell of fresh pine filtering through over 300 stalls adorning extravagant decorations and twinkling lights.

### Prague, Czech Republic



Christmas market celebrations are as synonymous with Prague as is the traditional Christmas Eve dinner in the city consisting of wine sausages and freshly caught carp. The most prominent market stalls can be found at Wenceslas Square and in the appropriate medieval feelings of the Old Town Square, where the bright lights of a large Christmas tree overlook a nativity scene and small patting ice-children will appreciate. Authentic wooden toys, Czech-marionettes, and handmade jewellery can be bought alongside an appealing array of gingerbread and baked pastries for those with a sweet tooth.

### Bologna, Italy



Championing southern Europe as a less obvious destination for the best Christmas celebrations, Bologna's offering consists of one of the oldest Christmas markets to be found in Italy. The embraced connection of the country's inhabitants with the symbolism of Christianity ensures there are fewer better places to spend the seasonal wintry days, with the Piazza di Maggiore market situated in the piazza opposite the striking San Petrus Cathedral, and the Piazza Fiera di Santa Lucia combining to offer visitors gastronomy led market stalls inclusive of delicious nougat with almonds and honey alongside the continued tradition of hand-crafted nativity figures making up the nativity scene.

### Trondheim, Norway



When you consider market snow coverings and everything winter comes to mind for Christmas in northern Europe, Norway's Trondheim markets are difficult to beat. Featuring quality hand-made arts and crafts, seasonal food, beer, cheese and sweet treats, this Viking capital of the country is brimming with history reflected in the markets' placing in front of the famous Nidaros Cathedral, where former Norwegian King Olaf the Holy is said to be buried.

### Bruges, Belgium



One of the most picturesque Christmas markets in the world, Bruges' main square, Markt, sparks its life as the colourful buildings surrounding the square provide vibrant, architectural based Christmas decoration combining stalls selling wares as varied as leather goods and handmade jewellery to Santa Claus shaped chocolate treats, each spread out adjacent to the medieval Belfort bell tower which can be climbed for magnificent views of the fair and city. For the complete seasonal experience, head over to Simon Steenvinkel and the central ice rink for a romantic evening skating together before unwinding in the cosy calm of a traditional pub.

### Vienna, Austria



With over 20 Christmas markets to choose from, festive variety is in abundance when visiting Austria's capital. Having hosted seasonal markets since as far back as 1298, the city certainly knows what it's doing when it comes to laying on a shopper's paradise, with today's iteration of the markets perhaps best showcased in the City Hall, where international choirs, kids' Christmas cookie baking workshops, and bright lights put everyone in the height of festive cheer.

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