

Christmas Markets in Austria

Romantic lights, seasonal treats, festive carols, and snow-covered roofs and treetops as far as the eye can see: Christmas in Austria is a truly magical time, with locals and visitors alike flocking to the cities and small towns from mid-November to join in the celebrations leading up to Christmas Eve. The festive period has become one of the most popular times to visit Austria – and it's easy to see why: After all, the traditional Christmas markets, selling everything from punch to chestnuts, traditional handicrafts, and unique local gifts, are famous around the world.

Austria's charming markets date back to the 18th century and started out as day-time food and drinks markets, much like we still see them today. The festive lights were added in the 20th century, making the markets even more attractive – and romantic. Today, kids (and kids at heart) can not only browse through a huge variety of stalls but also mingle with angels or meet the "Christkind", the traditional gift-bringer in Austria.

Let us show you some classic destinations to experience Christmas the Austrian way – and a few insider tips only a local would know.

Christmas Markets in the City

Every major Austrian town has at least one Christmas market and it goes without saying that [Vienna](#) has by far the most. Austria's capital is home to more than 20 festive markets, with some of the biggest and most well-known ones right in front of attractions such as the [town hall](#) (including a giant Advent calendar on the building!), [Schönbrunn Palace](#) (combine it with a visit to Sisi's palace) and [Belvedere Palace](#). The Christmas markets in the Spittelberg artist district and in front of Karlskirche are long-term local favourites, while the Old Viennese Christmas Market at Freyung, right in the city centre, is where Vienna's Christmas market tradition started in 1772.

Then there's [Salzburg](#). Its [Christmas Market at Residenzplatz](#) was first mentioned in the 15th century, and is the perfect place to sample all the local festive delights while listening to choral tunes. Or how about sipping some traditional punch with the city at your feet? Head to the [Hohensalzburg Fortress](#) just a short cable car ride up from the city centre and check out their Christmas market in the courtyard. Just outside of Salzburg, the [Advent Magic at Hellbrunn Palace](#) awaits, one of the most romantic markets in the region, with over 700 conifers decorated with 10,000 red Christmas balls and strands of lights, while the palace's windows are turned into an XXL advent calendar.

[Innsbruck](#) has markets right under the famous Golden Roof, on the main square and the shopping street Maria Theresien Straße, as well as at Hungerburg Castle, where visitors can enjoy spectacular views over the town. An annual highlight is Innsbruck's [Christkind Parade \("Christkindleinzug"\)](#), on 17 December this year, featuring the „Christkind” riding down Maria-Theresien-Straße and the historic lanes in a splendid carriage, accompanied by a marching band, shepherds, angels, sheep, and some 600 local children. And then there's [LUMAGICA Innsbruck](#), a festive light park in the Imperial Garden. Bonus point for visitors to Innsbruck: Hop on a ski lift right in the heart of town before or after hitting the markets!

Other city markets worth checking out include the ones in [Graz](#), [Linz](#) and [Klagenfurt](#).

Christmas Markets in the Mountains

It almost goes without saying that Austria's Alpine regions, too, top up their game to get guests into the festive spirit in the weeks leading up to Christmas, making them a perfect destination to combine skiing and festive sightseeing.

Besides Innsbruck, Tyrolean resorts such as [Kitzbühel](#), [Seefeld](#), [St. Johann](#), Zillertal (check out [Mayerhofen](#)'s festive highlights), [Ski Juwel Alpbachtal Wildschönau](#), [St. Anton am Arlberg](#) and [Kufstein](#) await with punch and chestnut stalls, traditional handicrafts, cookie baking workshops, and Christmas trails. Love heights? [SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser Brixental](#) is the proud home to Europe's highest Christmas market at 1,555 m.

[Zell am See-Kaprun](#) in SalzburgerLand also has several Christmas markets, with a handful right in the heart of the skiing towns and one at Kaprun castle, while Salzburg's [Mountain Advent in Grossarlal](#) is a long-term go-to place for festive family markets.

In Austria's westernmost province Vorarlberg, [Kleinwalsertal](#) and [Schwarzenberg](#) in Bregenzer Forest are great places to experience Christmas magic amidst the Alps. And for holidaymakers wanting to add some Advent themed concerts on top, [Montafon](#) makes a great Christmassy destination (there are punch stalls too!).

Christmas Markets at the Lake

Floating candles on the water and festive lights and stalls on the shores: There's little more romantic than a Christmassy trip to the lake districts. And Austria has plenty of options for lovebirds!

Salzkammergut's [Lake Wolfgangsee](#) and its villages St. Wolfgang, Strobl and St. Gilgen turn into a Christmas wonderland every year, think markets, open fires, musical events, and a chance to experience all the Austrian festive traditions first-hand. The 16 m high, floating "Peace Lantern" on the lake, just off St. Wolfgang's shore, is the official symbol of the region. However, lights can be found all over the lake. The best way to enjoy all the festive decorations and markets is an advent-themed [boat tour](#).

Another great region for markets at the lake promenade is Austria's southernmost province [Carinthia](#). Head to [Lake Wörthersee](#) and check out all the stalls and festive lights in [Pörtschach](#) and the famous floating Advent wreath in [Velden](#), then book yourself into a guided torchlit walk to experience even more Christmas magic.

As always, we are happy to assist you in planning your research trip. Please get in touch at pressuk@austria.info.

Austrian National Tourist Office

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