

Did you know? The Bauhaus professors had their own twist on the holiday season.

BAUHAUSLAND: Christmas traditions in the home of avant-garde design

Looking for a traditional Christmas? With Christmas markets, mulled wine, gingerbread and locally-made, one-of-a-kind gifts? Today's Christmas customs are part of the holiday season in BauhausLand, the German federal states of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt. Just south of Berlin, this is the region that gave us the Christmas tree and the Christmas carol – 500 years ago! But it is also the home of Bauhaus, the most avant-garde design movement of the past 100 years, celebrating its centenary in 2019.

Home of authentic Christmas markets.

The smell of spices in the frosty air; handmade gifts; carol singing: All are part of authentic Christmas markets that run from the end of November to Christmas Eve. Here are a few of our favorites.

Erfurt, State Capital of Thuringia: The vast medieval Domplatz, dominated by the cathedral, hosts 200 stalls, selling everything from hand-blown glass tree ornaments from nearby Lauscha to Schittchen, a fruity cake.

Bauhaus City Weimar: Students at the Bauhaus University Weimar hold their own Bauhaus Christmas Market, with unique handcrafted items. Take home the perfect gift: A piece of Bauhaus! (Saturday 8 December).

Bauhaus City Dessau: As well as jewelry and wood carvings, the Christmas market in the 500-year-old Marienkirche church features glass blowers creating tree ornaments while you watch.

Magdeburg: In Saxony-Anhalt's capital, travel back to the times of local hero, 10th-century ruler, Otto the Great. Blacksmiths, glassblowers, painters and potters, all dressed in medieval garb, display their wares. Find gifts made from traditional materials, such as wood, wool, clay, wax, horn and leather. The mulled wine and hot mead are served in clay jugs; bread is baked in wood-fired ovens. Welcome to the Middle Ages!

Martin Luther invented the Christmas tree.

The first outdoor Christmas tree was erected in Weimar in 1815, by a bookseller, who put a tree outside his shop for poor children to enjoy. That tradition continues, with choirs singing carols around a 65-foot silver fir at the opening of Weimar's Christmas Market. But the first tree came 300 years earlier. Walking through snowy woods under a starlit sky, Reformer Martin Luther was so moved that he cut down a fresh tree, set it up indoors and decorated it with real candles. Luther even composed the first Christmas carol, still sung today: "From Heaven above to earth I come, To bear good news to every home."

Did you know? The Bauhaus professors had their own twist on the holiday season. They called it "Julkapp" and said that gnomes had delivered the gifts!

Where do those tree decorations come from?

The tradition of tree decorations comes from Lauscha, 60 miles from Weimar. Its glass-blowers were known for their sparkling ornaments and in 1880, F. W. Woolworth, the five-and-dime store pioneer, took a batch to the U.S.A. Lauscha's glass-blowers still create glass tree ornaments. And, Thuringian toy makers continue their 150-year-old custom of carving the ever-popular nutcrackers in the shape of soldiers and kings.

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Spoil yourself with Christmas treats.

At Christmas markets, try Baumkuchen, like a waffle, but cooked on a spit over an open fire. Stollen, the sweet yeast bread packed with dried fruits, is another local creation, as is Pfefferkuchen, a yummy gingerbread. For savory tastes, charcoal-grilled Thuringian Rostbratwurst, Germany's best sausage makes the perfect partner for a glass of malty Christmas beer. Buy a souvenir pottery mug; have it refilled with Glühwein (mulled wine). Take home Halloren Kugeln, chocolate balls from Halle (Saale), made by Germany's oldest chocolate maker (1804).

TIP

Use the [Weimar Card](#) and [Thuringia Card](#) for discounted admission to the region's main attractions, and the [WelterbeCard](#) to explore the Heritage Region around Dessau.

How we can help

Whether you're looking for suggested driving routes through BauhausLand, detailed information on Bauhaus cities, or need the perfect picture, we're happy to help! Please visit the Press Area on our website to get free access to a variety of useful resources. Should you wish to receive our latest news, please register on www.gobauhaus.com/travel. And, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to get in touch at info@gobauhaus.com.



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