

European Christmas Market Tour 2024
7 – 15 December 2024
Itinerary (subject to change)

Saturday 7 December 2024 (**Arrive in Stuttgart, Freiburg**)

We gather at the Stuttgart Airport and board our chauffeured coach for the nearby [Mercedes Benz Museum](#). It was in Stuttgart where Karl Benz invented the world's first car in 1886. Stuttgart is famous also for another automaker: Porsche. From there we will drive into the Black Forest staying in [Freiburg im Breisgau](#), an historic university town along the Rhine and Germany's border with France. Check out your first Christmas market there to get a sense of how Germans celebrate Christmas. Because Freiburg is in a white wine-producing region, [Glühwein](#) here comes in white as well as the more common red. Be sure to try some of the famous delicacies from this part of Germany. If you want a light meal, try [Maultaschen](#), a type of ravioli served numerous ways here. Be sure to taste [Schwarzwälderschinken](#). Literally, it means "Black Forest Ham," but is nothing like the American pale pink pork product of the same name. It is more like prosciutto imbued with the smoky flavor of the forest itself. And of course, for dessert enjoy [SchwarzwälderKirschtorte](#), the world-famous Black Forest cake. We will end the night at the Hotel Victoria, a 19th century 4-star hotel in the heart of the old town. with its wine cellar converted into the Churchill Bar, rated as one of Germany ten best bars.

Sunday 8 December 2024 (**Alsace France**). **B, L**

After an early Sunday breakfast in our hotel, we will board our coach to visit two beautiful French cities. The first is [Strasbourg](#), known as the "[Capital of Christmas](#)." Here, the [Cathedral Notre Dame de Strasbourg](#) sits guard on the town square and its magnificent Christmas market. You will have the opportunity to attend Mass in this magnificent Gothic Cathedral, which was the tallest building in the world for over 200 years until 1874. There are many restaurants around town where you can try [Choucroute](#), a mild sauerkraut simmered in Alsatian wine along with local meats and sausages. [Tarte Flambée](#) (Flammkuchen in German), a flat bread with crème fraîche, bacon, and onions; it makes a great light lunch. And you will want to leave some room, since the smells of your first Christmas market of the trip undoubtedly will entice you to try more flavors like spiced nuts, mulled wine, gingerbread and more. In the early afternoon we will depart for [Colmar](#), a quaint town of half-timbered buildings and especially famous as a wine town. Alsace is the only region in France where, in the German tradition, the name of the grape is on the label. Most [Alsatian wines](#) are white and virtually all of them are dry—even the Rieslings and Gewurztraminers, which in America are often cloyingly sweet. We will attend a winery tasting at Domaine Karcher, a father-and-son winery. Then you can resume your Christmas market excursion at [Colmar's beautiful market](#). At the end of a long day, we return to Freiburg.

Monday 9 December (**Black Forest**) **B**

This is a day set aside to explore Freiburg and the surrounding [Black Forest](#). If the weather is nice, take the funicular to the top of the [Schlossberg](#), climb the tower, and view the city below, France to the west, Switzerland to the south, and the Black Forest all around you. Enjoy the cuisine of the region. This time of year, restaurants often feature wild game and [Pfifferlinge](#) (Chanterelle mushrooms). There are great wines from the area too; look for those from the [Kaiserstuhl](#) area. For those who prefer beer, try [Rothaus Tannenzäpfle](#); you will taste a hint of the Black Forest in your glass. Be sure to try the [Alte Wache](#) wine bar and its 200 regional wine offerings. Or stop in for a bit to eat at [Zum Roten Bären](#), the oldest hotel in Europe. at the oldest hotel in Europe, started in 1120. If you aren't too tired after so much food and drink, go downstairs to our hotel's Hemingway Bar. Located in the old wine cellar, it is rated as among Germany's best bars.

Tuesday 10 December (Rothenburg ob der Tauber) B, D

We say goodbye to Freiburg and drive to [Rothenburg ob der Tauber](#), a walled city which looks nearly as it did nearly 400 years ago when it was spared from destruction during the 30 Years War. It was saved from destruction again in 1945 when the U.S. 4th Infantry Division sent an envoy to allow it to surrender. Bypassed by early railroads, Rothenburg did not develop like other nearby cities its size. Then one day someone realized there were very few preserved medieval cities remaining; so starting in 1884 the city passed a series of ordinances to prevent demolition. Today it is one of only three German cities with its original medieval walls still standing. Be sure to visit [Rothenburg's Christmas market](#). If the weather is bad, you can always visit Kathe Wohlfahrt's [Christmas Museum](#) where you can view and purchase any Christmas ornament you can imagine. The [Medieval Crime Museum](#) offers an experience which is both interesting and macabre. For a unique perspective of Rothenburg, we will take the [Nightwatchman's tour](#) and learn about the city's history. Dinner is at our hotel, [Villa Mittermeier](#), a [Michelin-star restaurant](#) just outside the city's walls.

Wednesday 11 December (Nuremberg Christkindlmarkt) B

We will drive to Nuremberg to spend the day at the world's most famous [Christmas market](#). Enjoy the famous Nuremberger [Lebkuchen](#) sold in decorative tins great for gift giving. Tour [Nuremberg's Altstadt](#). Eat authentic [Nuremberger sausages](#). Visit the beautiful High Gothic [St. Lorenz Church](#). There is so much to see and do there that it will take all day. We can stay in Nuremberg or return to Rothenburg for dinner.

Thursday 12 December (Kloster Weltenburg) B, L

We will say goodbye to Franken and drive to Salzburg. Along the way we will drive through the [Hallertau](#) region, famous for its hops. Then we will stop at the Benedictine Abbey and second oldest brewery in the world, [Kloster Weltenburg](#), where we will get a tour of the Abbey. Then it is off to Salzburg, [Mozart's home town](#). The next two nights we will spend the next two nights at the 4-star, family-owned [Hotel Elefant](#) in the center of old town.

Friday 13 December (Salzburg, Austria) B, D

This is a day to tour the beautiful mountain city of Salzburg Austria. The [Christmas market](#) here is one of Austria's best. You can jump on a bus tour which takes you to the sites where the [Sound of Music](#) was filmed. If you still need to buy some gifts, visit the city's most famous shopping district, [Getreidegasse](#). We will end the day at the [Augustiner Bräustüberl](#), a 400-year-old monastery brewery, where we will enjoy dinner together.

Saturday 14 December (Munich) B, D

We depart Salzburg and head to Bavaria's capital of Munich. Tour the [Marienplatz](#), where there is a Christmas market in the town square at the foot of city hall. Visit to the city's largest market, the [Viktualienmarkt](#) where you can find culinary delights from around Germany and around the world. Or if it's raining, you might enjoy the [Dallmayr Delikatessenhaus](#) a 300-year-old coffee shop/pasty shop/delicatessen/gourmet grocery store/restaurant. If you're not too satiated with Christmas markets, one of Munich's largest stands in front of city hall at the [Marienplatz](#). We will conclude the last night of our tour with dinner together at the world famous [Hofbräuhaus](#). Our lodging for our last night in German is the [Hotel Torbräu](#). This highly-rated, 4-star, family-run hotel sits just inside the city's gates and has been serving Munich's visitors since 1490.

Sunday 15 December (**Depart Munich**) **B**

After breakfast, it is time to say goodbye to Germany and leave via Munich's international airport. Hope you have plenty of extra bags to carry all your gifts home. **Frohe Weihnachten und Eine Gutes Neues Jahr!**