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# 25 Magical Christmas Markets in Europe That Feel Like a Fairytale

You're going to want to add gingerbread from Strasbourg and pottery from Kraków to your wishlist.

BY [SARAH DIMARCO](#) PUBLISHED: OCT 23, 2025



All across **Europe**, the start of the holiday season is signaled by the arrival of **Christmas markets**. Cities transform into winter wonderlands with string lights illuminating every cobblestone street and **finely decorated trees** standing on every corner. Spiced, savory notes waft through the air, while cozy wooden chalets filled with festive finds and **mouthwatering delights** populate snow-dusted town squares. It's a sight straight from the pages of a storybook, and it's a tradition that dates back as far as the late Middle Ages.

You'll find seasoned artisans who've been sharing their craft at these Christmas markets in Europe for years, along with new makers ready to show their unique takes on homemade **ornaments**. Some festivals even have online marketplaces that allow you to support the artisans and craftsmen without having to be at the festival in person.

Whether it's the zesty mulled wine in Prague or a visit from Santa in Estonia, these European Christmas markets offer one-of-a-kind experiences that are sure to put you in a festive spirit. Read on to discover more magic from the 25 most charming Christmas markets in Europe.

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## Colmar's Christmas Markets in France



Sami Sert // Getty Images

Walking through Colmar, France, feels as though you've entered your favorite holiday storybook, with its Alsatian architecture and whimsical markets. Instead of just one Christmas market, Colmar boasts six different ones spread throughout the Old Town, each with its own unique theme. In the gourmet market, you'll find local wine and oysters; another market is dedicated to local handicrafts, and there's even one specifically for children—there's truly something for everyone.

**WHERE TO STAY: LA MAISON DES TÊTES**

## Riga Christmas Market in Latvia

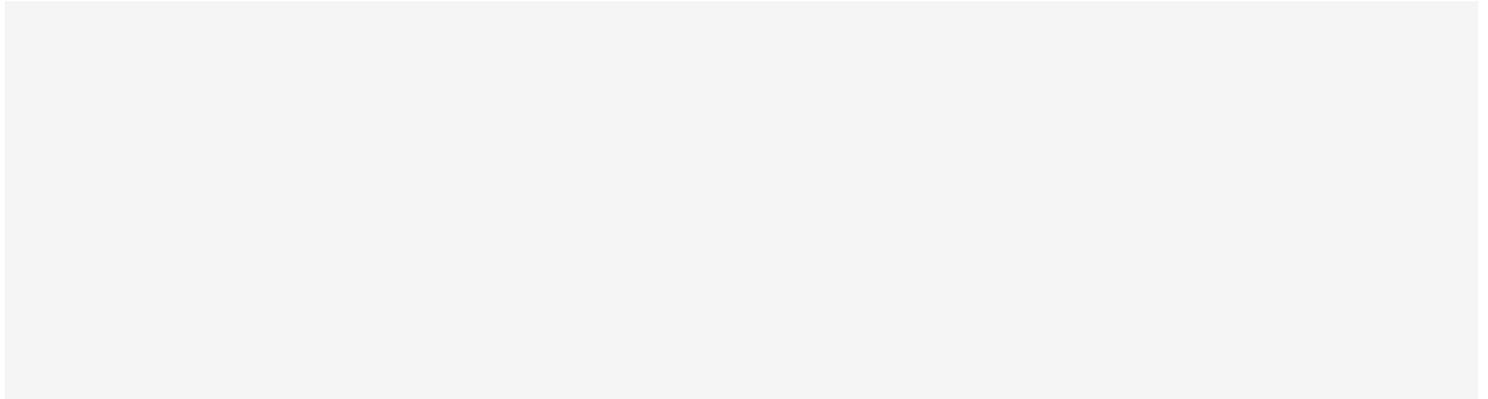


imantsu // Getty Images

Latvia's capital radiates holiday cheer with its twinkling lights and bustling market stalls in the heart of the city. Nestled in the historic Doma Square is Riga's famous Christmas market, where visitors of all ages can savor traditional hot blackcurrant juice, homemade *piparkūkas* (gingerbread), and roasted almonds while exploring a variety of artisan offerings.

While the market features typical trinkets such as wooden toys, homeware, and fragrant candles, be sure to keep an eye out for sparkling silver and amber jewelry, local honey, and Riga Black Balsam, a well-known herbal liqueur from Latvia.

**WHERE TO STAY: GRAND POET HOTEL**



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## **Craiova Christmas Market in Romania**

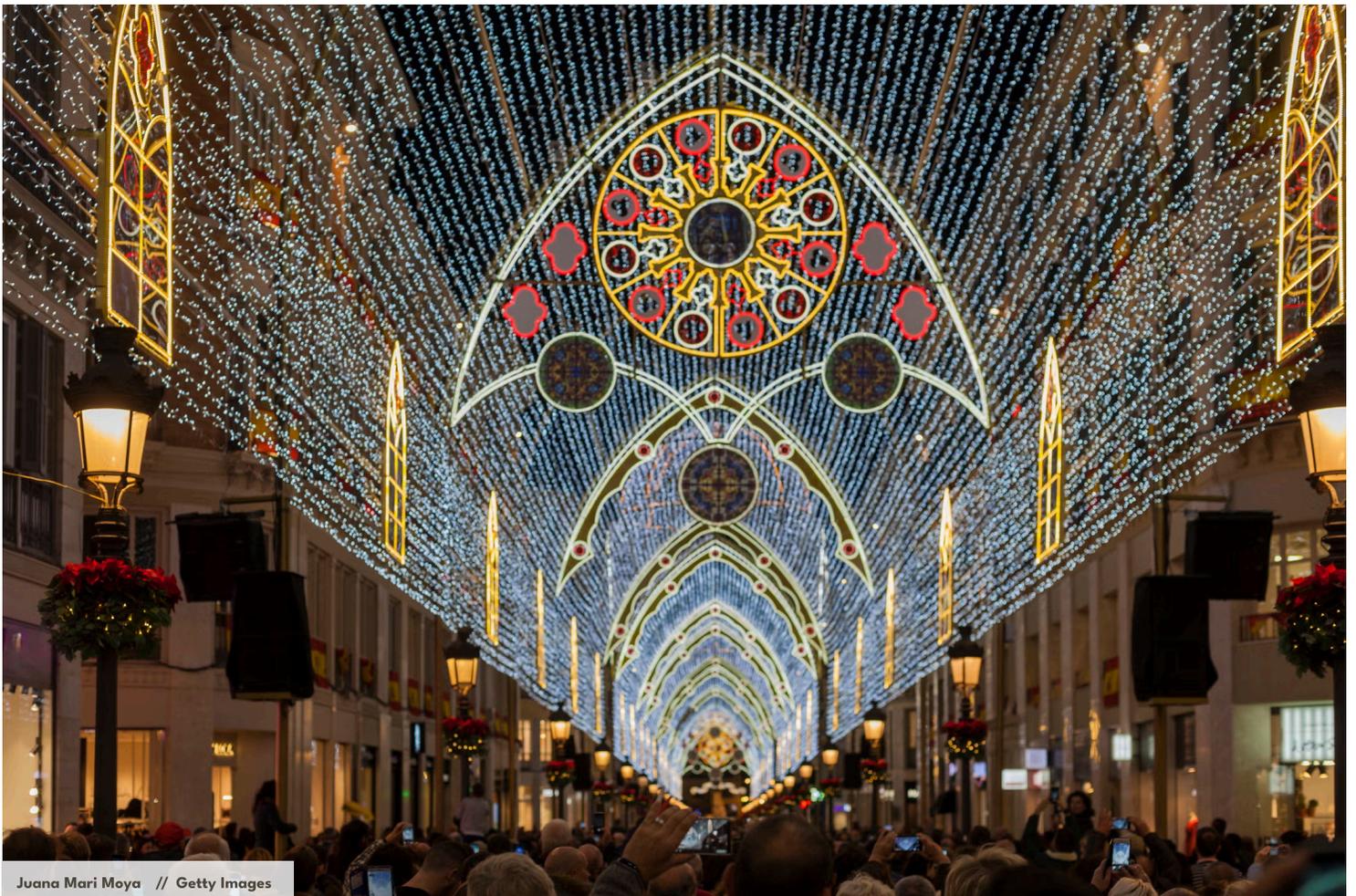


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The historic city of Craiova, Romania, is home to a hidden gem of a Christmas market that beautifully blends centuries-old traditions with modern flair. Technicolor lights illuminate charming cottages that sell a variety of items, including *cozonac* (sweet Romanian bread), *tuică* (a spirit similar to brandy), hand-painted glass ornaments, and knitted scarves. For those seeking festive adventure, the market also features a classic ice rink, a soaring Ferris wheel, and a thrilling roller coaster.

**WHERE TO STAY: HOTEL BOUTIQUE 5 CONTINENTS**

## Málaga Christmas Market in Spain



Juana Mari Moya // Getty Images

Málaga, Spain, may not initially seem like the top destination for festive fun, but this Mediterranean city is ready to change your mind. The entire city sparkles with millions of lights, illuminating Calle Marqués de Larios and the surrounding markets. At Paseo del Parque, you can find some amazing handmade gifts, ornaments, and local crafts. For a unique treat, try *borrachuelos*, which are wine-flavored pastries that are fried until golden brown.

**WHERE TO STAY: PALACIO SOLECIO**

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## **Jul i Vinterland in Oslo, Norway**



Artur Dancs // Getty Images

It's only fitting that a beloved winter destination such as Oslo has its own booming **Christmas market** during the holiday season. Guests are sure to find one-of-a-kind Norwegian crafts and decorations from the stalls lining the streets. Make sure to come hungry, as there's an assortment of culinary treasures to enjoy such as elk dishes, caramel apples, and currywurst.

**WHERE TO STAY: SOMMERRO**



## Edinburgh's Christmas in Scotland



Journey under the tree-canopied pathways of East Princes St. Gardens with a mulled wine in hand as you take in the joyous sights at Edinburgh's Christmas. The holiday market located in the center of the city has a host of artisans selling bespoke trinkets and Scottish crafts (including traditional tartan ornaments!). Take a ride on the sparkling ferris wheel for impeccable views of the capital and Edinburgh Castle.

**WHERE TO STAY: THE BALMORAL**

## Liseberg Christmas Market in Gothenburg, Sweden



Every winter, Gothenburg's **Liseberg Amusement Park** glows with more than a million lights decorating market stalls and Christmas trees across the grounds. Guests can warm up with a steaming cup of Scandinavian mulled wine or rich hot chocolate as they wait their turn to enter Santa's workshop or take a twirl on the ice rink. The neighboring harbor also puts on a show with beautifully decorated trees on boats floating across the water.

**WHERE TO STAY: ELITE PLAZA HOTEL**

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## **Helsinki Christmas Market in Finland**



Subodh Agnihotri // Getty Images

The **Helsinki Christmas Market** welcomes over 300,000 people each year to discover more than 120 chalets and attractions studding the city's Senate Square. You'll of course find the traditional market stalls and hot mulled wine at every corner, but the market also appeals to a more modern crowd with countless vegan options and even a wood-heated sauna. After picking up a few handmade wooden lanterns, take a spin on the old-time carousel near the towering Christmas tree.

WHERE TO STAY: HOTEL KÄMP



## Poznań Christmas Market in Poland



kateafter // Getty Images

One of the oldest cities in Poland, Poznań has been dazzling guests every holiday season for centuries. The town's Old Market Square transforms into a wintry escape with snowflakes, winter delicacies, and handmade trinkets. Merchants sell a variety of carefully crafted toys and decorations, but it's the vendors selling delectable pierogies, smoked cheeses, and warm goulash that really stand out. The International Ice Sculpture Festival happens here each year around the same time as the market, making the heart of Poznan truly a Christmas wonderland.

**WHERE TO STAY: PURO POZNAŃ**

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## **Vilnius Christmas Market in Lithuania**



kateafter // Getty Images

Design aficionados, the Vilnius Christmas Market is the one for you. Year after year, the Lithuanian city is regarded as having one of the most beautiful Christmas trees in all of Europe. Not only that, the dazzling fairy light displays seen throughout the Christmas market almost always coincide with the breathtaking tree display at the center of the old town. Stop into the chalets and igloos for delightful honey cakes, gingerbread, and teas.

**WHERE TO STAY: GRAND HOTEL VILNIUS**

## Funchal Christmas Market in Portugal



© Santiago Urquijo // Getty Images

One may not expect a subtropical island to be a Christmas haven, but Madeira proves to be the exception. Its main capital, Funchal, hosts a market filled with rare flowers, delicious Portuguese entrees, and plenty of Christmas spirit. You won't get enough of the wine-marinated grilled meats and local Madeira punch while there. There are also performances every night from traditional Christmas carolers to folklore groups.

**WHERE TO STAY: REID'S PALACE**



**CHANEL**  
HIGH JEWELRY

COLLECTION N°5  
THE 55.55 NECKLACE

► DISCOVER

The advertisement features a black background with a large, intricate diamond necklace centered. The necklace has a multi-strand design with a large, central rectangular-cut diamond pendant. The pendant is surrounded by smaller diamonds and teardrop-shaped drops. The necklace is set against a black background, making the diamonds stand out.

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## Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, Denmark



klug-photo

A year-round favorite of locals and tourists, the whimsical park in Copenhagen turns into a winter wonderland with extravagant light displays and countless stalls selling sweet items like honey cake. As you walk through exploring the market, you're sure to be greeted by traditional bands playing festive songs at various points.

**WHERE TO STAY: PARK LANE COPENHAGEN**

## Cologne Christmas Market in Germany



Thomas Schmidt

Wooden stalls begin popping up all throughout Cologne at the end of November, marking the official start of the Christmas season for the residents of the classic German city. The most impressive of these markets happens beneath the city's iconic Gothic-style cathedral with hundreds of sparkling fairy lights decorating red-topped gables. Each year, the market grows to include more and more attractions like the "Christmas Avenue," an LGBTQ+ market featuring live performances.

**WHERE TO STAY: EXCELSIOR HOTEL ERNST**

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## **Basel Weihnachtsmarkt in Switzerland**



The quaint town of Basel glows each holiday season from thousands of twinkling lights lining two squares—Barfüsserplatz and Münsterplatz—and spotlighting rustic wooden chalets. The market officially starts each year with the lighting of a towering Christmas tree filled with Johann Wanner ornaments at the center of Münsterplatz. Kids will also love exploring the fairytale forest and decorating their own gingerbread houses.

**WHERE TO STAY: HOTEL LES TROIS ROIS**

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## Strasbourg Christmas Market in France



FREDERICK FLORIN // Getty Images

Twinkling fairy lights illuminating narrow alleyways, a magnificently dressed tree at the city's center, and nearly 300 wooden chalets lining every square make Strasbourg the Christmas capital of France. One of the oldest Christmas markets in Europe, the end-of-year festivities have embraced the traditions and flavors of an Alsatian Christmas since 1570.

Guests can explore stalls for hand-blown glass ornaments and carved wooden toys and enjoy spicy gingerbread cookies and crisp Alsatian wine. The market also hosts a Sharing Village that allows people to donate to local nonprofits and charities.

**WHERE TO STAY: REGENT PETITE FRANCE HOTEL & SPA**

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## **Old Town and Wenceslas Square in Prague, Czech Republic**



Anadolu Agency // Getty Images

With stalls nestled between soaring examples of Gothic and Renaissance architecture, the markets at Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square feel as though you are exploring a bit of Prague's history while celebrating the holidays with themed performances and handmade trinkets. A mere walk away from each other, visitors can stay warm while exploring both of the festive venues with delectable Czech treats such as *trdelník*, a spit cake—cooked over a rotating spit—rolled in cinnamon sugar, and citrusy mulled wine.

**WHERE TO STAY: FOUR SEASONS HOTEL PRAGUE**

## Bratislava Christmas Market in Slovakia



Jon Hicks

Draped in thousands of fairy lights with hundreds of chalets selling wooden toys and a gleaming ice rink in the center of town, the Slovakian capital is the ideal wonderland to take your children during Christmastime. The ceremonial lighting of the magnificent tree in the Main Square kicks off the season and the opening of the markets. An added bonus: Bratislava also has an official Christmas tram that makes it easy to travel between the different squares.

**WHERE TO STAY: GRAND HOTEL RIVER PARK**

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## **Frankfurt Christmas Market in Birmingham, United Kingdom**



Christopher Furlong // Getty Images

An ode to the traditional German Christmas market, **Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market** boasts over 120 stalls selling unique presents such as delicate crystal lamps, one-of-a-kind jewelry, and of course, winter wines and beers. Holiday-lovers can enjoy buttery pretzels and mouthwatering schnitzels as they listen to the festival's singing moose, Chris, serenade the masses on the corner of Waterloo Street.

**WHERE TO STAY: THE GRAND HOTEL BIRMINGHAM**

## Tallinn Christmas Market in Estonia



Focus // Getty Images

With blankets of snow covering the cobble streets, a clear starry sky, and a heavenly aroma of gingerbread permeating throughout Town Hall Square, the **Advent market in Tallinn** looks and feels as though you've just walked onto the set of a Christmas movie. And there's important history here, too: It was at this market in 1441 that the first-ever Christmas tree was displayed in Europe. While the towering masterpiece remains one of the market's highlights, families can also look forward to meeting Santa, who often pays a visit in his reindeer-pulled sleigh.

**WHERE TO STAY: HOTEL TELEGRAAF**

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## **Vienna Christmas Dream Market in Austria**



JOE KLAMAR // Getty Images

The first recorded winter market in Vienna dates back to the Middle Ages, when Albrecht I of Habsburg allowed citizens of Austria's capital to hold a December event in 1298. Centuries later, Vienna hosts an impressive 20 official Advent Markets, but none are quite as charming as the **Vienna Christmas Dream**. The market, which takes place in front of City Hall, has over 150 stalls selling roasted chestnuts and all the Christmas decorations imaginable. Children can even learn how to make Christmas cookies and candles on the ground level of City Hall and take a ride on an actual reindeer.

WHERE TO STAY: ANANTARA PALAIS HANSEN

## Kraków Christmas Market in Poland



Pawel Litwinski // Getty Images

The iconic Cloth Hall, magnificent St. Mary's Basilica, and storied medieval streets prove to be the perfect backdrop for a bustling Christmas market in Kraków's Old Town. Local vendors offer a fun array of goods and gifts from hand-crafted Bolesławiec pottery and sweet-boiled candies to fresh pine wreaths. But one of the main attractions of the market is the honored Kraków Christmas Crib

Contest, where decorated re-creations of nativity cribs and Baroque churches are paraded around the square for judging. The winners are shown in the Historical Museum of Kraków.

**WHERE TO STAY: BACHLEDA LUXURY HOTEL KRAKÓW**

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## **Nuremberg Christkindlesmarkt in Germany**