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“STRASBOURG, CAPITAL OF CHRISTMAS”

“Strasbourg, Capital of Christmas” is a time-honoured tradition. With its markets, lights, concerts and solidarity, it captures the magic of Christmas throughout the month of December, all across the city centre.

France’s oldest Christmas market

Strasbourg’s Christmas market is **the oldest one in France and one of the oldest in Europe**. Originally, in **1570**, the *Christkindelsmärik* (Market of the Baby Jesus), was created under the influence of Strasbourg Protestantism, to replace the Saint Nicholas Market (St. Klausenmarkt), one of the so-called extravagant Catholic traditions associated with saints’ names. It was held a few days before Christmas at the foot of the Cathedral.

Since then, the market has continued to grow. In 1830, the market was moved to Place Kléber, and then to Place Broglie in 1870, where it is still held to this day. Nowadays, hundreds of merchants and craftsmen occupy the **300 chalets** set up almost everywhere in the city centre.

An enchanting ambiance

During the Christmas market, the ambiance in Strasbourg is truly unique. It’s especially in the late afternoon, at dusk, that **the magic starts to happen**. The facades and streets are

beautifully decorated, the shop windows sparkle, the smells of cinnamon and spices waft through the air, bringing back childhood memories, and Christmas carols ring out from churches. Throughout December, Strasbourg is **one of the most illuminated cities in Europe**. The streets, houses, windows and balconies twinkle with lights and decorations each year more original than the last. This fairy-tale atmosphere enchants every visitor.

“Strasbourg, the Capital of Christmas”

Through its Christmas Market, Strasbourg upholds its centuries-old status as a market town, but it also strives to promote the **city’s humanist values**.

And that is what the concept of “Strasbourg, Capital of Christmas” – created in 1992 – is all about: proposing, in addition to the traditional markets in the city’s streets, hundreds of events aiming to carry on the tradition and a spirit of openness, sharing and generosity

Objective: getting ready for Christmas

The first objective of the Christmas Market in Alsace is to get ready for Christmas. So market-goers find **original gifts**, unique items to **decorate** their Christmas trees and traditional treats, such as the little Christmas biscuits called **bredle**, and **mulled wine**, to keep them warm!

The great Christmas tree

Strasbourg has boasted its traditional Christmas tree for centuries: a manuscript from **1605** describes decorated fir trees placed in Strasbourg's guild houses during Advent.

Every year, a **thirty-metre tall Christmas tree** is brought to Place Kléber and decorated with colourful ornaments and shimmering lights. This essential symbol of "Strasbourg, Capital of Christmas" is also the **highest decorated Christmas tree in Europe**.



A rich programme

"Strasbourg, Capital of Christmas" skilfully brings together spiritual, cultural and artistic events. Throughout the month of December, lots of concerts, many of which are free, are offered, including Christmas carols. Many exhibitions are held as well. For example, every year, the Cathedral exhibits in its nave the **17th-century tapestries** that it has had since 1739. These 14 tapestries, which were commissioned by Richelieu, tell the story of the Virgin's life.

① noel.strasbourg.eu/en

A famous Christmas Market

Users from around the world on the European e-tourism website, "European Best Destinations" have twice voted the Strasbourg Christmas Market as the most beautiful Christmas Market in Europe. In 2018, it was even named the "Best Christmas Market in the World" by CNN Travel.



The Strasbourg Christmas Market takes to the road!

In 2009 and 2010, the Strasbourg Christmas Market went to **Tokyo**, attracting over 1.2 million visitors. In 2012 and 2013, it went to **Moscow**, setting up at the gateway to the famous Red Square, drawing over 750,000 visitors. After **Beijing** in 2015 and **Taipei** in 2016, it was **Seoul's** turn in 2017: 275,000 Koreans eagerly went to discover Alsatian gastronomy and craftsmanship.

In 2019, it was none other than **New York City** that welcomed the Strasbourg Christmas Market. This was proof, if proof were needed, of the market's excellent reputation.

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