

## Newsletter – December 2018

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Dear Expats,

*This is a free English-language monthly newsletter from [expat-karlsruhe.com](http://www.expat-karlsruhe.com). Feel free to pass it along. Full versions (with working links) of the current and past newsletters can be found on our [website](#). Please contact us if you have any suggestions, questions or comments or if we are missing any events you think might be interesting &/or useful to the expat community. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, please click [here](#) or send a reply to this newsletter with the text "unsubscribe."*

Christmas, and the pre-Christmas season, is a great time in Germany. Just about every town stages a Christmas market starting at the end of November. This lights up the inner cities and makes being outside more enjoyable as the days get shorter (shortest day of the year is December 21st). Many towns set up temporary ice-skating rinks complete with skate rental and piped in holiday music. For a listing of the markets in the area as well as some background information, check out [Christmas Markets](#). Each market has its own charm. If it's cold out, remember to wear warm socks! Look for smaller markets in your neighborhood – often just one day.

This year the Christmas holidays require some planning. The 24th of December, the day when some of us rush out to do last minute shopping, falls on a Monday. Stores usually close early on the 24th. This is followed by two official German holidays where all stores are closed — December 25th and 26th. Best to get most of your shopping done on Saturday, the 22nd and if you've forgotten something, you still have a few hours on the 24th.

### Important dates in December

**December 6 — Saint Nikolaus (Nikolaustag).** Put your shoes out the night before and maybe they will be filled with sweets and other goodies – or a birch branch if you were naughty. Eat a Dambedei, the yeast dough formed like a man, sometimes with a pipe.

**December 24 — Christmas Eve.** Most stores close early and already have signs up listing when and if they are open during the holidays. Christmas Eve is considered the most important time for family in Germany. Those celebrating will probably have a decorated Christmas tree set up on that evening. Presents are distributed on Christmas Eve.

**December 25 and 26** are national German holidays. Just about everything is closed on December 25th. If you would like to eat out, be sure to make reservations. December 26th is like a Sunday — stores and government institutions are closed; most museums and restaurants are open.

**January 1** is a national German holiday. December 31st stores usually close earlier.

At midnight on **December 31st** (Silvester), you are allowed to shoot your own firecrackers — these may only be purchased a few days ahead of time and may only be used on New Year's Eve. If you live in a town with lots of old buildings, your town council **may forbid fireworks**. Even if you are at a private party or a celebration inside a club or restaurant, around midnight most people go outside to watch fireworks. One of the best spots for viewing in Karlsruhe is the Turmberg in Durlach – but you won't be alone! If you have pets, please keep them indoors away from the firecrackers and noise.

### Christmas Music

Look for special concerts in the local churches – most often organ concerts or choirs. Try the Evangelische Stadtkirche am Marktplatz, the Durlacher Stadtkirche, St. Bonifatius, Christuskirche, Lutherkirche, St. Stephan and more. Expect to pay something – either for a ticket or a donation.

On **December 1st**, the bells of St. Stephan's church will ring in the season starting at **4 p.m.**

Two opportunities to sing Christmas carols with others are:

- **November 30 — Christmas Carol Singing** at the [American Library](#) starting at 6:30 p.m. A family-friendly relaxed way to begin the holiday season. Songs are sung together in English (texts provided), and

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the tree is decorated, followed by cookies, punch and socializing. Admission free; cookies and Christmas ornaments cheerfully accepted! Please call or sign up ahead of time.

- **December 8 — [Christmas Carol Singing](#)** at the Kleine Kirche in the middle of Karlsruhe. Organized by the German-English Friendship Society and the Protestant Church in Karlsruhe. Start at 4 p.m. Come early — it fills up fast.

### Local Christmas Markets

**Karlsruhe (Nov 27 - Dec 23):** In **Karlsruhe** the [Christmas market](#) is at Friedrichsplatz and Marktplatz. For children, a special train is set up at Stephanplatz along with dioramas. Don't miss the flying Santa on his sleigh as he soars from the roof of the ECE Center — daily at 5 and 7 p.m. A special Christmas tree light and music show at Marktplatz daily at 6 and 8 p.m. A huge Ferris Wheel is set up at Marktplatz. A temporary ice skating rink is set up in front of the castle and is open until January 27th.

**Karlsruhe Durlach (Nov 27 - Dec 22):** Medieval Christmas market in one of the oldest Karlsruhe neighborhoods.

**Ettlingen (Nov 29 - Dec 28):** Sternlesmarkt throughout the center of town. Closed on Christmas Day.

**Rastatt (Nov 26 - Dec 23):** The market is at Marktplatz. In addition, a SchlossWeihnacht im Ehrenehof highlights food and handmade goods - just outside the castle.

**Baden-Baden (Nov 29 – Jan 6):** Most of the market is in front of the Casino/Kurhaus.

**Heidelberg (Nov 26 - Dec 22):** The old town is charming, as is the market. Outdoor ice skating rink open through January 6.

**Strasbourg (Nov 23 - Dec 30):** One of the oldest Christmas markets in Europe (400 + yrs. old) and the oldest one in France. The city is worth a visit anytime, but the Marche de Noel makes it that much nicer. Because of heightened security, be prepared for lines entering into the old town and expect bags and backpacks to be inspected at the pedestrian checkpoints.

**Stuttgart (Nov 28 - Dec 23):** Over 290 stands selling Christmas goodies and food.

### Weekend-Only Christmas Markets

**Kloster Maulbronn** (UNESCO World Heritage Site) hosts a Christmas market on the **8th and 9th of December**. A special shuttle train travels between Maulbronn West and the Kloster on these days.

**Schloss Neunbürg** (southwest of Pforzheim): **December 16 and 17** — Advent market with artists and artisans selling their wares.

**Bad Wimpfen** — it's not that close, but many consider this to be one of the most picturesque markets around. Be prepared for crowds. **First three weekends of Advent** (Fri-Sun). Info in German [here](#).

### Christmas Shopping

For hand-made or special articles, try these:

**Durlach - Artvent#18** in the [Orgelfabrik](#) on **November 30 – December 1**. More than 20 regional artists and designers sell their works on the first weekend of Advent.

**Lametta** — staged at [Tollhaus](#) in Karlsruhe on the **8th and 9th of December**. About 60 artists and craftspeople exhibit their unique products — often only available as limited issues. Live music, food, chill zone. €3 entry fee.

**Weihnachtsmesse (December 13 - 16)** — very high quality hand-made articles for purchase just in time for the holidays at the Regierungspräsidium (Rondellplatz) in Karlsruhe. €2 entry fee.

### Openings and Closings

The [Open Codes](#) experiment at [ZKM](#) is running through January 6th, 2019. Have a look before it's too late.

The special exhibition **Mycanea: The legendary world of Agamemnon** (Mykonos: Die sagenhafte Welt des Agamemnon) at the [Badisches Landesmuseum \(Schloss\)](#) opens on December 1st and goes through June 2nd. Antiquities from Greece. Special English tour through the exhibition on March 2nd.

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### Transportation

The prices for the local transportation system, kvv, increase starting December 9, 2018. This coincides with changes in some tram/train/bus schedules within the kvv region. Old tickets are valid until June 30, 2019.

The Deutsche Bahn also enacts schedule changes and price increases on December 9, 2018.

In Karlsruhe, plan a bit of extra time when trying to get from here to there, especially on the Saturdays before Christmas as everyone is out doing Christmas shopping. The Autobahns will also be more crowded than usual, so plan a bit of extra time.

Because of the Christmas market on Friedrichsplatz, the **bike street** is closed and a detour route is marked. In general, as a bicyclist in winter, remember to turn on your lights and wear reflective clothing! Just because you can see a car doesn't mean the driver (or the pedestrians) can see you.

### Snow

If you own a car, be sure you have [winter tires or all-weather tires](#). The past few years were unusually mild, but who knows what this year will bring. If you are in an accident and don't have tires appropriate for the situation, your insurance may not pay.

Depending on where you live and your house arrangements, you may be responsible for snow removal from in front of the building. This should be stated in your lease.

### What to do in Karlsruhe in December

#### Regular English-language Events

Karlsruhe's very own [English-Speaking Meetup Group](#) (sponsored by expat-karlsruhe.com.) is an informal platform allowing for the organization of events, activities and adventures. The most popular regular event is the monthly German-English Stammtisch where you can practice your English and meet nice people in a relaxed atmosphere. Start is 6:30 p.m. until around 9:30 ish. It's a mix of young and old and all those in-between, who come and go throughout the evening.

The [American Library](#) has regular events in English for kids and adults: **LitNite** (December 4 & 18), **Poetry, Please!** (November 27), **MovieTalk** (December 12), **Storytime for kids 3-5** (December 12), **Teen Time** (December 14) and **Storytime for kids 6 and up** (December 14). The American Library is closed from December 23rd through January 7th.

The [Karlsruhe Toastmasters](#) meet every 1st, 3rd and 5th Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. to practice public speaking in English.

### Improve your German!

#### Sprecht miteinander!

Practice your spoken **German** in a relaxed atmosphere. People of similar language ability form groups moderated by a native speaker volunteer. Free and no registration required. Wednesdays and Fridays from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. Just stop by!

Bürgerzentrum Mühlburg (BZM)

Hardtstr. 37 A/2

76185 Karlsruhe

The **IBZ** (Internationales Begegnungszentrum Karlsruhe - International Meeting Center Karlsruhe) offers a number of projects to help with integration. A listing in English is available [here](#).

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### Non-Christmas Calendar of Events

**November 16 - December 2 — Karlsruhe Book Fair (Karlsruher Bücherschau).** Guest country is the Netherlands. Browse through books, listen to lectures and podium discussions or readings - most in German - at the Regierungspräsidium in Karlsruhe. Admission charged.

**December 1 — Midnight shopping at Ettlinger Tor** in Karlsruhe. All stores in ECE open until midnight.

**December 1 — World Aids Day.** It's not gone. Almost 37 million infected worldwide. Help if you can.

**December 1 — Aids Gala** at the [Staatstheater Karlsruhe](#). Motto: Love and Freedom.

**December 7 & 8 — [inSonic2018: Algorithmic Spaces](#)** at [ZKM](#).

**December 8 - 21 — [Annual Juried Exhibition at the Art Academy of Karlsruhe](#).** Mo-Sa from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Su from 2 to 6 p.m. See what the artists of tomorrow are creating today.

**December 18 — [English/German Stammtisch](#)** organized by the [English-Speaking Meet-Up Group](#) at the [Vogel Bräu Karlsruhe](#) starting around 6:30 p.m. A great way to meet new people, chat with old friends and enjoy a night out.

**December 27 — [Screening of the documentary "Risk"](#)** on Julian Assange at [ZKM](#). Free.

### Relocation Service move-in

With 15+ years of experience in the region, [Relocation Service move-in](#) can help with your move to Karlsruhe, your move from Karlsruhe and with all those day-to-day problems expats experience.

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please pass it on!

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**We wish everyone a very merry holiday season and all the best in 2019!**