Press release

Münchner Christkindlmarkt (Christmas market) A Christmas market steeped in tradition

(Nov. 27, 2023) This classic Christkindlmarkt is considered Munich's oldest, which makes it the city's original and best-known festive market.

The roots of the Christkindlmarkt are said to date back to the 14th century – to the so-called St. Nicholas markets. The first mention of a *Nikolaidult* ("St. Nicholas market") in the city's annals dates back to 1642, when such an event was held on Kaufingerstrasse near the Schöner Turm. This market was held on December 5 and 6 and, unlike other Munich fairs, only Munich traders were allowed to supply it. At the beginning of the 19th century (1803), the *Nikolaidult* moved to today's Promenadeplatz (square). As chronicler Michael Schattenhofer has established, the wares sold at the last St. Nicholas market in 1805 included "goods from Oberammergau and *Lebkuchen* from Nuremberg, cotton clothes for children, nativity figures and chimney sweeps made of plums and almonds, and small pictures of St. Nicholas, nuns and hermits". Held on Max-Joseph-Platz, this market is considered the immediate predecessor to today's Christkindlmarkt.

Christkindlmarkt
MÜNCHEN

Under the influence of the Enlightenment and the growing importance of Protestantism at the beginning of the 19th century, something that had already occurred during the 16th century in other regions and cities such as Nuremberg and Strasbourg now happened in Munich, too – the change from St. Nicholas to the Christ Child as the bearer of gifts, hence the change from the St. Nicholas market to the *Christmarkt* or Christmas market: "What is more, the ancient market of St. Nicholas has been removed and a Protestant-style *Christmarkt* has been set up instead ... at Residenzplatz or Max-Joseph-Platz", as Lorenz Westenrieder noted in his diary on December 6, 1806.

The Munich Christkindlmarkt has been held at various locations in the course of its history:

1806	on Dultplatz, today's Maximiliansplatz
1886 – 1938	on the grounds in front of Sendlinger Tor (gate) up to Sonnenstrasse
1938	in Blumenstrasse on the site of the former Schrannenhalle
1939	on Mariahilfplatz in the district of Au
1940	on the site of the synagogue on Maxburgstrasse, which was demolished in1938
after 1945	at the high-rise bunker in Blumenstrasse
since 1972	on Marienplatz (main square)

The range of goods offered has not changed substantially over the course of 200 years. The more than 130 stalls on and around Marienplatz today offer *Lebkuchen* (gingerbread) and *Zwetschgenmanderl* (figures made of

plums), articles made of wood from Oberammergau, South Tyrol and the Erzgebirge mountains – and everything else that is typical of the Advent and Christmas season. The little paper pictures are also to be found here too, adding a touch of nostalgic flair to the Christmas market.

The large section with nativity scenes and nativity scene accessories occupies a special position as part of the Munich Christkindlmarkt: this *Kripperlmarkt* (Nativity market) at Alter Peter church, just a few steps away from Marienplatz, is probably the largest in Germany. Here visitors will find everything from grand oriental nativity scenes and miniature alpine variants to guaranteed non-breakable nativity figures made of plastic that is deceptively similar to wood. Here you can find everything you need for a genuine nativity set-up – from the stable lantern to the chaff for the ox and donkey to the gifts of the Magi. The *Kripperlmarkt* at Munich's Christkindlmarkt has a long tradition. This dedicated section became separately established as early as the middle of the 19th century as an independent nativity scene market lasting from the first Sunday in Advent through to Epiphany (January 6). It was not until after the Second World War that the Christmas and nativity markets were reunited.