



# CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRIA

# Advent



For most people in Austria, the main winter holiday is Christmas, which they celebrate on the night from 24 to 25 of December. At the beginning of the month, the Austrians begin a Christmas fast called Advent. Across Austria, residents decorate their homes with a Christmas wreath with four candles, each of which symbolizes four Sundays before celebration. The first candle is lit in the first week of fasting, the last is just before Christmas.

# Main characters of Christmas



*Christkind*  
In the evening of December 24, the long-awaited Holy evening comes. By tradition, this evening is spent with family. Instead of Santa Claus, the Baby Christ (or Christkind in Austria) comes to the children and puts gifts under the Christmas tree. In order for the Baby Christ to enter the house, it is necessary to open the window. Children are looking forward to a magical Christmas and begin to prepare for it in advance. They write their wishes on a piece of paper and put it on the windowsill. Along with the list for the Baby Christ, it is necessary to put some sweetness.

P. Mohr 1886.

Christkindlein kommt  
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# St. Nicholas , Krampus



An important role in the Austrian tradition is played by St. Nicholas and Krampus. At the very beginning of Advent, on the evening of 5 December or in the morning of 6 December, St. Nicholas - Nikolaus von Myra or Nicholas the Wonderworker - a tall, thin old bishop, comes to the children.

Saint Nicholas became famous for his miraculous actions, love and generosity towards children and the needy. He presents obedient children in Austria with sweets - in socks, pouches or even shoes. St. Nicholas is always accompanied by Krampus, a ghastly, kindly devil. Krampus carries a tub filled with twigs with which he can sometimes jokingly slap naughty children. Krampus, a representative of Alpine folklore, has been known since the 17th century.



# *Festive trees* *Christbaum and* *Bauernchristbaum*

Christbaum is the Christmas tree of Christ. For the decoration of the Christ tree, taste, style and sense of proportion are necessary. It is not covered with a solid layer of tinsel and toys. Another thing - Bauernchristbaum - "peasant Christmas spruce." Red dominates this tree. You can add other luxurious bright decorations: "gold« and "silver". Often use edible elements of decor: fruits, nuts, candy and gingerbread. Such decorations lead children to delight.



# Christmas crib



One of the favorite symbols of the holiday in Catholic Austria is the Christmas crib - a small copy of the birthplace of Christ. Most often, the figures of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds, the Magi and animals are carved from wood. These nurseries can be seen both on Christmas markets and under the Christmas tree in Austrian houses.

# Goose Christmas Evening

Before dinner, it is time to give gifts. On the radio at this time the famous Christmas song "Silent Night" sounds. On Christmas days, Silent Night becomes the Austrian national anthem. The signal to the beginning of the celebration is the ringing of the bell. Gifts are already under the tree next to the traditional wooden nursery. Bengal lights are lit. After that, people can open gifts and enjoy sweets from the Christmas tree. The traditional festive dish is carp. Popular and fried goose. However, the main decoration of the table is baking. Mistresses make many types of cookies and a famous Viennese strudel, but the leadership belongs to the vanilla bagel.





# Midnight

Visit the church service at Christmas - the most important tradition for the Austrians. This custom is the people of Austria honored holy. So it is accepted for a long time. Especially beautiful at this hour in the villages and mountain valleys. From all ends to the local temples come carts decorated with torches. In the dark, the midnight procession of lights looks impressive.



# Merry Christmas

