

CELEBRATIONS

Advent

Teacher's notes

Age: Adults and young adults

Level: Intermediate to upper-intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: 90 minutes +

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. Read a short text about Advent in Germany, looking at the language used;
2. Complete an Advent recipe;
3. Research and discuss Christmas markets in different cities, deciding as a group which one they would most like to visit.

Language focus: vocabulary related to Advent, including words to describe particular kinds of feelings and atmospheres, a traditional recipe and Christmas markets

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; access to the internet for Exercise 6

Procedure

1. Warmer

Students look at the images, say what they see then read the article to check if they were correct. They then write the names of the items (as they appear in the article) under each image.

Key:

1. Advent wreath
2. cinnamon sticks
3. a cup or glass of mulled wine
4. Advent biscuits
5. Advent calendar
6. ribbons
7. evergreen pine twigs

2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and write them next to the definitions while noticing how the words are used in context.

Note: the definitions are in the order that the words appear in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. cosiness | 4. atmospheric |
| 2. aromas | 5. community |
| 3. good cheer | 6. commercialism |

7. glow

8. woven

9. peel

10. count down

3. Understanding the text

Students read the sentences, decide with a partner whether they are true or false, and decide how to correct any that are false.

Key:

1. False – it lasts for four weeks up until Christmas Eve on 24th December
2. False – it begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (this might be at the end of November)
3. True
4. False – this type of Advent calendar exists, but people also like to make home-made Advent calendars – and not only grandparents for their grandchildren
5. False – they are made and eaten at any time during Advent, preferably with friends and family

4. German cinnamon star Advent biscuits

a. Students decide how to complete the ingredients list using the words provided.

Key:

- 250g of icing sugar
- 3 whisked egg whites
- 2 teaspoons of cinnamon
- 350g of ground almonds

b. Students cut out the recipe instructions and put them in a logical order so that anyone reading it would be able to make the biscuits.

Key:

1. f
2. l
3. c
4. k
5. a
6. e
7. i
8. d
9. j
10. h
11. g
12. b

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5. Web task – Advent markets

Working individually, students research Advent and Christmas markets in one of the specified cities. Try to ensure that students research different markets, so that when they report back in groups, the information isn't duplicated. If you have lots of students, add further major German cities to the choice, such as Cologne and Hamburg.

Note: You may wish to exclude the capital city, Berlin, as there was a terrorist attack at the Christmas market there in 2016 which may come up when students search.

Finally, the groups should vote on which market they would most like to go to on a group outing.

Key:

Possible information that could be included is:

- Stuttgart – particularly attractive market stands with decorated roofs and an ice rink
- Dresden – Germany's oldest market, includes a Medieval market
- Nuremberg – Germany's most famous market, opened by the Christkind, also famous for its sausages and Lebkuchen (a type of gingerbread)
- Constance – cross-border stands from the countries surrounding Lake Constance: Germany, Switzerland and Austria
- Munich – has the largest manger; live Advent music is played every evening from the town hall

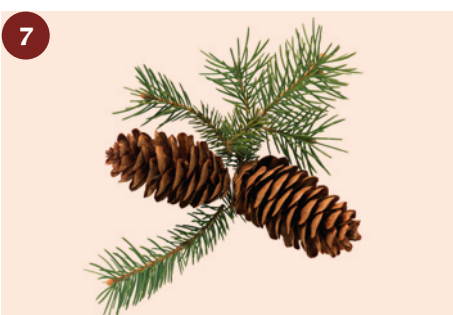
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Worksheet

Exercise 1: Warmer

Read the article and write the names of what you see in the images below.



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Advent in Germany is a tradition-rich time of warmth, cosiness, soft lights, spicy aromas, and friends and family. It helps bring about a sense of good cheer, known as *gemütlichkeit*, which adds to people's well-being during the cold and dark weeks leading up to Christmas.

Advent lasts for around four weeks and always includes four Sundays, the fourth of which is the last Sunday before Christmas. Depending on which day of the week Christmas Eve (24th December) falls on, Advent will begin sometime between November 27th and December 3rd.

Most traditional German Christmas markets start on the first weekend of Advent. These have become well known all over the world and, especially those in big towns and cities, are visited by many thousands of tourists. But they are also atmospheric places where locals enjoy meeting after work for a hot mulled wine and something to eat, and to shop for Christmas gifts. These larger markets are usually on for the whole four weeks of Advent. Most villages and small towns hold their own smaller Christmas markets on the first weekend of Advent. These are more about community and less about commercialism, and provide an opportunity for local groups, clubs and associations to raise money by selling home-made cakes, sausages, drinks and handicrafts.

Special kinds of biscuits such as *Lebkuchen* and *Pfeffernüsse*, types of spicy gingerbread, are sold in shops during Advent. At home, adults show off their baking skills and children have fun in the kitchen baking special traditional Advent biscuits such as cinnamon stars (*Zimtsterne*), coconut macarons (*Kokosmakronen*), and bear claws (*Bärentatzen*). These biscuits are given as gifts or shared with friends and family and eaten with hot tea or coffee in the cosy glow from candles on the Advent wreath.

Advent wreaths, made of evergreen pine twigs woven together to form a circle, are placed on the dining table or in a window. Each circular wreath holds four candles and is decorated with dried orange peel, cinnamon sticks and ribbons. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. One candle is lit each Sunday in Advent so that by Christmas all four candles are burning at the same time.

Advent calendars have 24 doors to help count down the days until Christmas. Door number one is opened on 1st December and a further numbered door opened every day until the final one announces to excited children that Christmas Eve has finally arrived. Although many toy and chocolate companies sell their own Advent calendars, many parents and grandparents prefer to make them themselves. These personal and home-made Advent calendars contain not only sweets and small gifts, but also love.

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Exercise 2: Key words and expressions

Look at the words in the box below. Find them in the text and underline them. Then match the words to the correct definitions below.

aromas	atmospheric	commercialism	community	cosiness
count down	glow	good cheer	peel	woven

1. a feeling of being warm, comfortable and relaxed _____
2. smells that are strong but pleasant _____
3. a feeling of happiness _____
4. creating a special positive mood or feeling _____
5. the people who live in a particular area _____
6. the activities or attitudes of people who think that making a profit is more important than anything else _____
7. a soft warm light _____
8. made by crossing long pieces over each other so that they join together _____
9. the skin of a fruit or vegetable _____
10. wait for something to happen, usually noticing every day or moment that passes until it happens _____

Exercise 3: Understanding the text

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the information in the text? Correct any that are false.

1. Advent lasts for the whole of December.
2. Advent begins on December 1st.
3. Many Advent traditions provide people with a feeling of cosiness, warmth and general well-being.
4. German grandparents traditionally buy their grandchildren an Advent calendar with a chocolate present for each day of Advent.
5. It is a tradition to make and eat Advent biscuits on Christmas Eve.

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Exercise 4: German cinnamon star Advent biscuits

These simple but delicious Advent biscuits are easy to make. But first the recipe needs some help.

a. Use these words to complete the list of ingredients.

cinnamon	egg whites	almonds	sugar
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Ingredients:

250g of icing _____

3 whisked _____

2 teaspoons of _____

350g of ground _____

b. Now put the recipe instructions in the correct order



	a. Add the ground almonds and cinnamon to the smooth mixture to make a dough.
	b. Any leftover biscuits can be stored in an airtight container for two to three weeks.
	c. Stir the icing sugar into the egg whites to make a smooth mixture.
	d. Brush the rest of the egg white mixture thinly onto the biscuits for the glaze.
	e. Roll the dough out so that it is half a centimetre thick.
	f. Preheat the oven to 150°C.
	g. Enjoy eating the cinnamon star biscuits with family and friends.
	h. Let the biscuits cool completely.
	i. Use a star-shaped cookie cutter to cut out approximately 50 cookies.
	j. Bake for about 15 minutes.
	k. Keep aside two tablespoons of the egg white mixture for the glaze.
	l. Beat the egg whites until they become stiff.

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Exercise 5: Web task – Advent markets

Find out more about the Advent and Christmas markets in one of these cities.

Stuttgart

Dresden

Nuremberg

Constance

Munich

Think about:

- **When does the market open?**
- **How long is the market on for?**
- **What special events or attractions does the market offer visitors?**

Get together in a group and present your findings. Then decide which market you would most like to go to and why.