

## Berlin Capital of Christmas markets and shopping

Before the end of the year, more than half a million extra visitors from Germany and abroad are expected in Berlin - the European shopping paradise

**Berlin, 22 November 2011** The perfect combination: Visiting Christmas markets and going on a shopping spree in Berlin. Berlin has started the Christmas season with over 60 Christmas markets. Whether traditional arts and crafts, exclusive food outlets or even fancy designer shopping - visitors to Berlin and locals alike are spoilt for choice when it comes to Christmas markets.

Berlin is expecting an extra 550,000 visitors from Germany and abroad during the Christmas season. International tourists consider the capital as one of the most attractive European shopping cities. This is also confirmed by the recent study "Globe Shopper City Index Europe". For many tourists, good shopping facilities are the deciding factor when planning a trip. According to the study, the German capital particularly impressed with its well-known brands, its wide range of cultural offerings and international flair. When compared to the rest of Europe, Berlin is ranked sixth behind London, Barcelona, Madrid, Paris and Rome - Berlin is undisputedly the number one choice in Germany.

The Christmas markets that are opening this week include those at Potsdamer Platz, Gendarmenmarkt, Gedaechtniskirche and Charlottenburg Castle. There is something here for everyone: The Weihnachtszauber (Christmas magic) market at Gendarmenmarkt delights locals and visitors alike with its exclusive food outlets - and the imposing backdrop is hard to beat. Between the concert hall and the German and French cathedrals, numerous artists display their unusual crafts such as flax embroidery or wood sculpture.

The Lucia Christmas market set in the historic surroundings of the Kulturbrauerei radiates a Scandinavian atmosphere. Alongside some 40 stalls from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are pine and log fires. The absolute highlight on cold days is so-called jacket heating, an art project with a warming effect.

If you are looking for unusual Christmas gifts, you should have a look around the Berlin designer markets. Aspiring fashion designers, designers and graphic artists present their work during the four weekends before Christmas at the Trendmafia Designer Christmas market at Hackesche Quartier. The Alte Muenze Berlin opens its doors on the weekend of 3 and 4 December for the annual "Holy.Shit.Shopping" experience. Every year, this market brings together the best of Berlin's young design scene.

For further information and an overview of all Christmas markets - divided into areas and including opening times - go to [www.visitBerlin.de](http://www.visitBerlin.de)