

German Christmas traditions: **die Bescherung**



On December 24th (Christmas Eve) it is time for the gifts to be opened that were placed under the Christmas tree by the Christkind.

This exchange of gifts under the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve is called "Bescherung".

In German, the custom first started in the 16th century. At that time, the Christkind sent a bag with five things to the house: toys, sweets, a coin, a piece of clothing and things for school.

It was not until the last century that the tradition of the "Weihnachtsmann" appeared who originally comes from America, where he is called "Santa Claus". In many parts of Germany, especially in the south, the presents are still brought by the "Christkind".

The centerpiece of Christmas is the Christmas tree that is usually put up on the 24th of December and decorated with candles and ornaments. Some people also place a nativity scene under the Christmas tree. The event of Bethlehem is re-enacted with various figures. In a stable there are a donkey and an ox, as well as Mary and Joseph.

On December 25th (1st Christmas holiday) and 26th (2nd Christmas holiday) the celebration continues. Families come together for big festive meals like Raclette, Fondue, Weihnachtsgans (goose), or Karpfen (carp). Every family has their own festive traditional meals.

On Christmas Eve Germans also like to raid their "Bunte Teller". For every family member there is a Christmas themed plate, which is loaded with a variety of nuts, chocolates, marzipan, nougat, and other sweets. The word "bunt," means multicolored in German.

