German Christmas traditions: **der Nikolaus**

On December 6, people celebrate St. Nicholas Day, the commemoration of Bishop Nicholas of Myra. who lived in the 4th century and took special care of children. St. Nicholas became the patron saint and protector of young children. This is why the Nikolaus wears a bishop's miter on his head and carries a bishop's crozier.

On the evening of December 5th children leave their boots outside their bedroom doors for Nikolaus to put chocolate, cookies, and sweets in them. Sometimes St. Nicholas is also accompanied by Knecht Ruprecht (servant Ruprecht). Knecht Ruprecht is usually dressed in a brown or black robe and has a big beard. He carries a sack of coal and a switch made of a bunch of twigs for the naughty children.

It is important to clean the boots well. This shows Nikolaus that you are a good child. Because only good children get presents from Nikolaus.

Until the 16th century, children received their presents on St. Nicholas Day. However, the church reformer Martin Luther rejected the worship of saints and changed this tradition. From then on, children received their gifts at Christmas.

In the city of Weiden in Bavaria, Nikolaus and Knecht Ruprecht also make house calls
www.nikolaus-weiden.de