

The Blue Bear

Newsletter #9
December 2022

Christmas Market in front of the Charlottenburg Palace
© [micharl_foto](#)



Wintery greetings from Duke in Berlin!

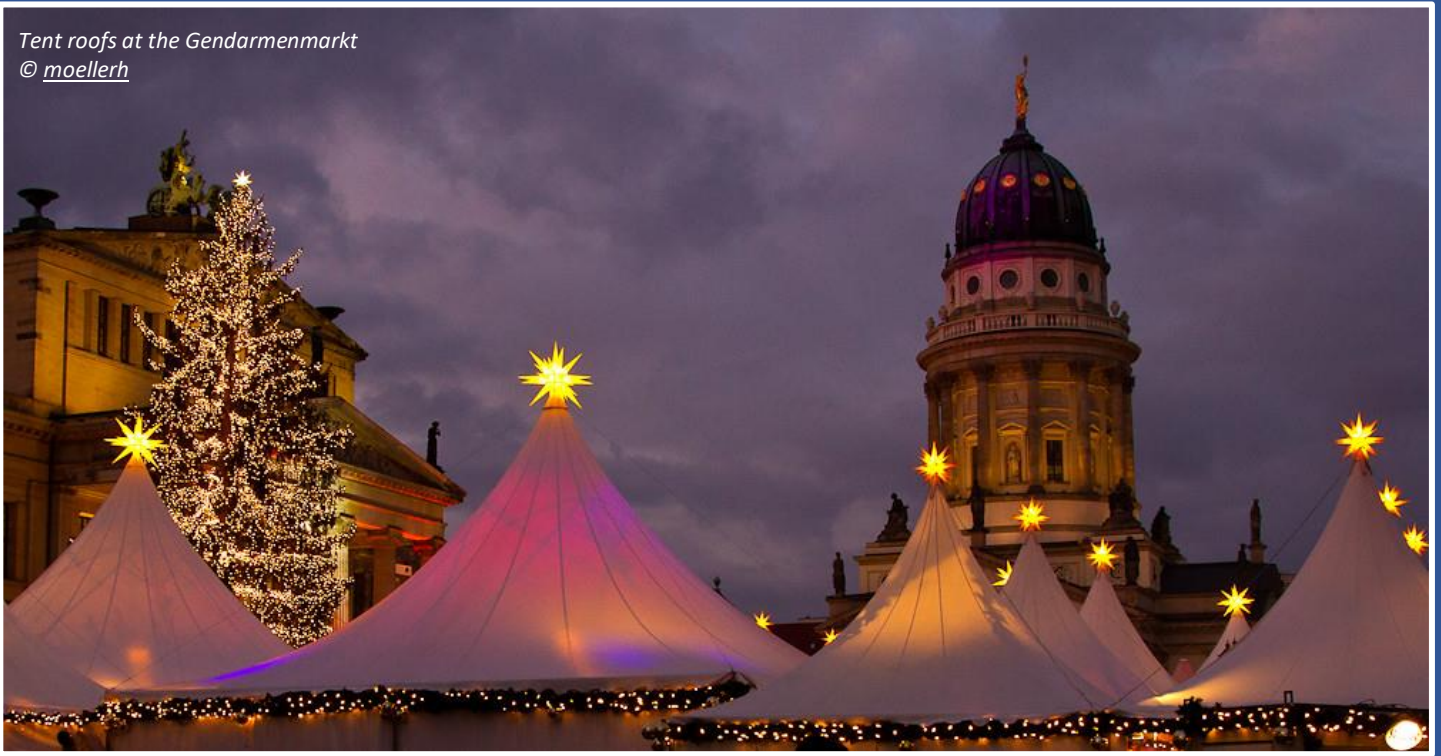
Our students from Fall semester 2022 have concluded their studies with Duke in Berlin and are back home. Duke in Berlin is also slowing down for the holidays and Germany will soon come to a standstill for the traditional two and a half days of Christmas celebrations followed by quieter days until the New Year's celebrations with fireworks across Germany will interrupt the lull. In the meantime, you may enjoy reading about Christmas markets in Berlin. We are wishing everyone a Happy New Year!

Mit herzlichen Grüßen

Tin Wegel (Resident Director)

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Tent roofs at the Gendarmenmarkt
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Christmas Magic at Gendarmenmarkt

Weihnachtsmärkte (Christmas markets) are a German tradition dating back some 600 years.

In Berlin, the prettiest of them all is the *Weihnachtszauber* (Christmas Magic) at the Gendarmenmarkt, one of the most beautiful squares right in the center of Berlin, just a fifteen-minute walk from the Brandenburg Gate.

Illuminated trees and tents against the backdrop of two cathedrals and a concert hall, everything looks just a bit more magical. Unlike at most other Christmas markets, visitors pay a small admission fee, but this symbolic euro seems to keep the crowds at bay. Under the open sky you can wander the stalls in peace and enjoy browsing handmade regional products, watching live performances, and indulging in one of the best selections of dishes small and big of all Berlin Christmas markets.

If you happen to be in town still this year or the following, you won't find this *Weihnachtsmarkt* in its usual location. Due to construction work, it moved temporarily to the neighboring Bebelplatz, another historic square with a wonderful scenery.

The French Cathedral in the Back
© [moellerh](#)



Two for One at Alexanderplatz

Ferris Wheel at Rotes Rathaus
© [Thomas Hassel](#)



Alexanderplatz is not quite as charming as Gendarmenmarkt, but after sunset – which comes at around 4 PM right now, this *Weihnachtsmarkt* is nicely illuminated, and Christmas spirit abounds.

What it lacks in charm, it makes up for in size: Towering over not one but two Christmas markets is the 1207-foot-high TV tower, Germany's tallest building.

In front of the Rotes Rathaus, the seat of Berlin's mayor, a 50-meter-high Ferris wheel competes with the TV tower and offers almost as good a bird's-eye

view. On the ground you'll find market alleys with façades of the old houses that stood there in the 19th century.

You can skate the big ice-rink or take advantage of the culinary offerings: staples of German Christmas markets are *Glühwein* (mulled wine), *Stollen* (Christmas cake, if you will) and *Bratwurst*, or delicious yeast pastries called *Mutzen* or sometimes *Schmalzkuchen*, a delicious greasy specialty covered in powdered sugar.



Gingerbread Hearts
© [Eirik Newth](#)

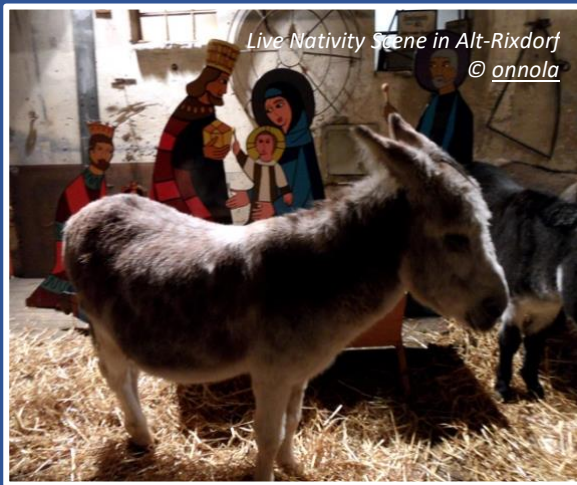


Mutzen
© [Eirik Newth](#)

On the other side, on the actual Alexanderplatz, there are once again over 100 stalls and towering next to the World Clock sits huge Christmas pyramid – Europe's largest, of course – which features a cozy place to enjoy some *Glühwein*.

If you like it a bit quieter, take the U2 subway to Eberswalder Straße for the Lucia Christmas Market: the Christmas Market in the Kulturbrauerei, the courtyard of a former brewery, and is very *hygge* – or cozy – as the Danish say.

For Only Two Days a Year: Alt-Rixdorfer Weihnachtsmarkt



Shortage creates demand! That is why many locals are drawn to the hip district of Neukölln on the second weekend of Advent, when the Alt-Rixdorf Christmas Market is held for two days only.

Despite the masses of people, you barely feel like you're in the middle of Germany's capital anymore. The scenery of the old bohemian village of Rixdorf creates an intimate atmosphere since many buildings date back to the 17th and 18th centuries and are now protected under historic preservation.

What distinguishes this market from the others: Only non-profit groups are allowed to sell their handicrafts, candles, honey, and jams. 200 vintage stalls offer unique handmade gifts. And part of the proceeds goes to good causes.

So you won't get very far in the city without stumbling across a Christmas market. In addition to the large and well-known Christmas markets presented here, there are plenty of smaller and sometimes theme-based markets.

Medieval, queer, Italian, Japanese markets, some in forests, at lakes, along rivers or next to techno clubs such as "Heissa Holzmarkt" near the Kater Blau Club – Berlin truly has something for everyone!



Feel free to email us at duke@international.fu-berlin.de with any questions about the program or to get in contact with one of our former Duke-in-Berliners.