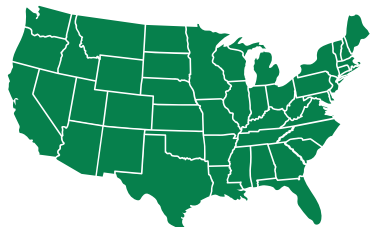


Written and Photographed by Whitney O'Halek



**T**he Christmas season is synonymous with gifts, warm beverages and singing carols. In recent years, however, a previously European tradition has made its way over to the United States: Christmas markets. Here are the top 10 destinations for European-style Christmas markets in the USA—no passport needed.



**DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY MARKET, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**10** The nation's capital city has a lot of Christmas going for it: Christmas trees galore, The Nutcracker (played by George Washington himself) and its very own Christmas market. Officially called the Downtown Holiday Market, this annual event runs from mid-November to Christmas Eve Eve (December 23). You'll find everything, including first-edition books, original art, handmade jewelry, hats and sweets, savory items and live entertainment.



**HOLIDAY MARKET, ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, FLORIDA**

**9** Looking for Christmas without the white stuff? You'll find it in Florida. This particular market is one day only (December 9, 2023), but it will undoubtedly get you in the Christmas mood. Shoppers can pick up locally made gifts, foodies can sample holiday fare from various food trucks, and everyone can have fun with their Grinch-themed photo booth. If you want to experience the best of Christmas by the seaside, head to St. Augustine Beach.



**CHRISTKINDLMARKT, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

**8** If you prefer a more classic Christmas, the weekend-long Christkindlemarkt in Salt Lake City is your answer. It takes place November 29 through December 2, 2023, at This is the Place Heritage Park. Visitors can shop for Christmas gifts, find decorations for their homes, and meet St. Nikolaus. And to put it over the top, there's a variety of live entertainment all weekend long. Because this is a classic, German-themed Christmas market, you'll want to come hungry to sample all the authentic German food and Glühwein.



**GRAPEVINE CHRISTMAS MARKET, GRAPEVINE, TEXAS**

**7** Dubbed the "Christmas Capital of Texas," you'll find some Christmas spirit for everyone in your RV. Starting November 20 and running through December 30, 2023, their website lists 69 events. The Palace Theatre will play classic movies like Home Alone and The Bishop's Wife. Santa is available for photo-ops daily, and local live entertainment will bring the Christmas cheer. Check their calendar to find out when their parades are happening, take the kids to Story Time with Santa and shop local for all your Christmas gifting needs.



**PEOPLES GAS HOLIDAY MARKET, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

**6** Pittsburgh is a hidden gem when it comes to Christmas Markets. The Peoples Gas Holiday Market takes place downtown in Pittsburgh's Market Square each year, from mid-November until Christmas Eve. Vendors range from ultra-local to international, so you'll find something for everyone on your Christmas list. You can pick up authentic German strudel, Balinese woodwork and locally made perfumes all in a single afternoon. Don't forget to stop by the life-sized Christmas creche while you're in town. It's the only authorized replica of the nativity at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



SOLVANG JULEFEST, SOLVANG, CALIFORNIA



DICKENS OF A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL, FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE



HOLLAND KERSTMARKT, HOLLAND, MICHIGAN



NORTH POLE WINTERFEST & HOLIDAY BAZAAR, NORTH POLE, ALASKA



CHRISTKINDLMARKT, BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

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**5** Solvang is a Danish town, through and through. It's a charmer all year round, but it comes alive at Christmastime. It's been dubbed one of the "Most Magical Christmas Towns and Villages Around the World," and its seasonal festivities run from the day after Thanksgiving through January 6. Their European-style, open-air Christmas market is known for its unique gifts and seasonal Danish eats. Visitors can also take a guided candlelight tour led by a costumed guide who will tell of Danish traditions and Solvang's history. You'll feel as if you've been transported to Denmark.

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**4** Believe it or not, your dream of experiencing a Charles Dickens-style Christmas can be realized in Franklin. Each year, the town transforms itself for one weekend into Victorian England, complete with Ebenezer Scrooge, Oliver Twist, and Father and Mother Christmas. Visitors can enjoy traditional food and beverages, listen to costumed carolers in the Victorian Village, and shop with locally made arts and crafts vendors. This year's Dickens of a Christmas Festival will be on December 9 and 10, 2023, so start planning.

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**3** You may have heard of Holland, Michigan's, tulip festival in springtime, but did you know the town transforms into a Dutch Christmas dream each weekend (Fridays and Saturdays) from mid-November to mid-December? Kerstmarkt is Dutch for Christmas Market, and while you're here, you'll find a variety of chocolate-covered delights, seasonal décor and locally made gifts. On Saturdays, the Kerstmarkt shares its space with the weekly farmer's market, which multiplies your eating and gifting options.

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**2** Christmas at the North Pole? It doesn't get more authentic than that. This aptly named town's Winterfest & Holiday Bazaar festivities occur on Saturday, December 9, 2023, with vendors, food and fireworks. Be sure to stop into the Santa Claus house, which is open year-round. What's better? Right next door is Antler Academy, where Santa's reindeer team trains.

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**1** Is there anywhere better to celebrate Christmas than Bethlehem? True, it's not the same Bethlehem where Jesus was born, but it certainly does do the Christmas season well. The city's German-style Christmas market combines traditional German foods, an ice-skating rink and St. Nicholas himself. Local and international vendors return year after year, offering their best Christmas gifts, food and unique handmade wares. The celebration goes on Thursdays through Sundays from November 17 to December 17, 2023.

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**Get ready for locally made gifts, holiday eats and good tidings of comfort and joy. You're headed to the Christmas markets.**