



Endure winter's cold weather and long nights by taking part in Europe's enchanting holiday festivities. Explore famous Christmas markets and finish your to-do list before unwinding at these cozy local restaurants.

Burgschänke Kaiserslautern

Though you're probably accustomed to cooking and carving a giant Butterball, roasted goose is Germany's much-loved bird. This year, try Christmas like the locals, and you'll discover that *Weihnachtsgans* is juicier and retains more flavors than the typical turkey. At the Burgschänke, delicious goose is available daily until Christmas and accompanied by dumplings, red cabbage and chestnuts.

The Burgschänke kitchen also serves a Christmas Day feast. At deadline, the 2014 bill of fare had not been finalized, but last year's spread was three courses: mushroom soup, each guest's pick from eight entrées, and wine-soaked plums with gingerbread whipped topping. Children's plates were also offered.

The quaint half-timbered restaurant is open every day of the month, except Dec. 24. Advance bookings are highly recommended, necessary for groups of eight or more. Visit www.burgschaenke-kl.de for contact information, directions and opening hours.



Festive Feasts

By Genevieve Northrup

Hotel Rosenhof Ramstein

Hotel Rosenhof provides numerous dishes and promotions in December. Spice up your week at the surprise three-course dinners on Mondays, or choose one of three holiday-themed set menus available Dec. 1-23. Observe Advent during the buffet lunch on Dec. 14, featuring chestnut soup, appetizers, slow-cooked beef, peanut-crusted chicken, traditional stollen and more. Plus, the evenings of Dec. 3, 10 and 17, bring your coworkers to sip Glühwein and peruse smorgasbords of starters, mains and sweet treats.

If prepping, cooking and cleaning is not how you plan to spend the holiday, arrive between 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Dec. 24-25 for a family- and budget-friendly buffet; children under 6 eat for free, and children 6-12 eat for half price. Serious foodies will appreciate the sit-down gourmet meal at 6 p.m. on these days. Request your table and browse the Rosenhof's extensive Culinary Calendar at www.hotel-rosenhof.de.

Zum Kääser Erzenhausen

From now to Dec. 30, gather a group to eat Zum Kääser's *Gans* banquet. I've been the past two years and can assure you it's yummy! After steamy soup (pumpkin cream both times I've visited) and fresh salad, a chestnut-stuffed goose is carved tableside. Cabbage and *Knödel* are also presented family style. To have this house favorite, you must notify the restaurant several days prior.

Additional Christmas menus will be determined in mid-December and prepared for lunch and dinner Dec. 25-26. Find details at www.zum-kaeaeaser.de.

I'll bet you're starving right now — I was by the time I finished researching and writing this — so make reservations before it's too late. Remember, calories don't count until Jan. 1, so here's to celebrating the season with decadent, mouth-watering food! *Guten Appetit!* ■

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