

From 20 November
till 31 December 2015



PRESS KIT

www.noel-colmar.com

City of Art and History, the dynamic, bon vivant city of Colmar in the heart of Alsace has made the Magic of Christmas part of a natural community-wide effort. You sense that this is a city that wants people to enjoy themselves. Not only that, when it comes to love, you don't count the cost in Colmar: here, there are five Christmas Markets to visit, each with its own ambiance!

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Rue des Marchands (Colmar TO)

Five Christmas Markets in one single city!



Christmas in Colmar, an authentic atmosphere (Colmar TO)

An authentic experience

Each of Colmar's five Christmas Markets is a separate *mini-village* with its own collection of passionate craftsmen. Installed in squares with their own architectural signature, these *islands of festivity* reflect the character of the city hosting them: *friendly and authentic*.

For six weeks, the whole of Old Colmar, miraculously protected from the vicissitudes of history, becomes one huge multi-faceted Christmas Market. Here, as you browse round the *180 stalls*, you really *feel* the magic of Christmas seeping into you. It's all about experiencing the wonder of a child again; it's not something you can control, you just have to feel it.

In Colmar, miracles do happen... But a huge amount of *preparation work* goes on behind the scenes: maintaining the chalets, putting up the decorations and lights, organising entertainment, overseeing the installation of the stands and selecting exhibitors. The exhibitors, mostly from Alsace, are selected on the basis of the *quality and originality* of their products.

This is also an inspiring time of year for the artists and craftsmen exhibiting their work in the impressive Renaissance *Koifhus* (the old customs building). Whether its a traditional Advent speciality, a winter-themed work of art or a contemporary decorative item, *the impulse buy definitely plays a part here*.

A theatrical setting !

A route studded with lights links the town's five Christmas Markets. And then, when it gets dark, *dynamic illuminations* bring the whole city centre alive. Hundreds of spot lights adorn the city's venerable buildings like a *theatre set*.

The special atmosphere in Colmar is the result of a *synergy* between the soul of a city that cultivates a sense of welcome and know-how, and the work of service providers who stage the magic of Christmas like an event. The City, the Colmar Tourist Office and the technical service provider, Vialis, work in partnership to achieve this *magical night-time experience*.

The set-up includes static lights comprising *landmarks* (on houses, gables, roofs) showing the way. While the use of dynamic cross-fade lighting on key locations creates varying *ambiances*, changing in intensity or colour with the hours.

The magic of Christmas in Colmar is also created by the *decorations and installations* put up by the City, business owners and private individuals, as they compete to be the most creative. Enchanted visitors can simply be guided by the truly *cinematographic* sights on offer.



The illuminations of Petite Venise (Colmar TO)

A whole city comes to life!

A *whole host of attractions* help to make the Christmas experience in Colmar totally unique: guided tours of the historic centre, wine tastings in wine cellars, Christmas skating rink with festive entertainment, exhibitions of old toys or performances and concerts. All this illustrates *the involvement of the City, its residents and its associations* in the event. Of course, children are also the focus of attention! There's a special market just for them in the picturesque district of Petite Venise.

A little tour of the five Markets

In all, there are 180 stands waiting for visitors in the five Markets evenly spread throughout the old city of Colmar.

The fact that the whole city comes together for six weeks has a lot to do with the warm atmosphere that is so characteristic of the magic of Christmas in Colmar. Although the lighting set-up is intended to illuminate and enhance the historic buildings at night time, it also helps manage the flow of visitors. So, at each crossroads, the attention of visitors is drawn by a spotlight encouraging them to stroll and shop...

From 20 November to 31 December

- Monday to Thursday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- Friday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday 20 November: open from 2 to 8 p.m.

Thursday 24/12: open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Friday 25/12: open from 2 to 8 p.m.

Thursday 31/12: open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Place des Dominicains Market



Overlooking the Market, the elegant *Eglise des Dominicains* lights up at night with its spectacular 14th century stained glass windows, making this remarkable square even more stunning. Browse round this Market with its sixty or so little wooden chalets and let yourself be tempted by an original decoration which will make your Christmas tree the happiest of all pine trees!

The Place Jeanne d'Arc Market



This Market recreates the atmosphere of a traditional Alsace village. Dedicated to **local products**, it offers a whole host of tasty treats like foie gras, cold meats, wine, liqueurs (schnapps), biscuits (*bredalas*), and many other temptations to be enjoyed on the basis that "you only live once"! Surrounded by a set of buildings ranging from traditional half-timbered dwellings to the purest classic French style, the Market offers visitors a wonderful glimpse of the turbulent history of Alsace. A story that is also told through its specific architectural features.

The Place de l'Ancienne Douane Market



In the heart of the old city, this square has around fifty chalets **arranged around the imposing Schwendi fountain**. Once night comes, the imposing old customs building or Koifhus is adorned with lights illuminating a magnificent Renaissance stairway. The Market, which is set up on both sides of the **Lauch river**, extends right up to the porch of the Koifhus. Clearly, the old business heart of the City is still beating! Here, contemporary creations can be found alongside traditional Christmas decorations. The perfect gift for your memory box is waiting for you!

The Koïfhus Indoor Craft Market

29 Grand'rue



This impressive mediaeval building has some wonderful surprises in store for you to enjoy in the warmth. Here, you'll be able to admire the creations of **about twenty local craftsmen and women**. Ceramicists, potters, master glass-makers, cabinetmakers, wood sculptors, hat-makers, jewellery makers and other artisans carrying on the traditional skills of a whole region will be delighted to share their passion with you. On the first floor, indulge your imagination with the exhibits that have been given permission to leave the **Musée du Jouet** toy museum during the Christmas Market period, particularly a large-scale electric train set.

The Petite Venise Children's Market

Place des 6 Montagnes Noires



The original alignment of the half-timbered houses on either side of the River Lauch gave this emblematic area of Colmar its name, **la Petite Venise**, which is transformed into a real **kids' paradise** at Christmas. Let yourself be guided by the little ones as they gaze in wonder at the rabbits or sheep and wander around the wooden chalets, before taking a break to admire the **mechanical nativity**. They won't be able to leave this market without the usual delights: a drink of mulled apple juice, a ride on the horses and posting their letter in **Santa's Giant Letter Box**.

Shopping

The shops also get into the festive spirit!



To participate in the Magic of Christmas, the shops in Colmar open on Sundays:

**29 November,
6 & 13 December
2 to 6.30 p.m.**

**and 20 December
10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.**

Meisenthal Christmas baubles



On sale at the Tourist Office, Meisenthal hand-blown glass baubles, **marvels of the art of glass-making** practised in the Vosges in the North, delicately condense the whole Magic of Christmas. Definitely the "Must Have" Christmas decoration!

Colmar Tourist Office, Place Unterlinden

A rich programme full of stars!

A whole city comes alive during this Christmas period....

Boats with children singing Christmas songs



*21/11 to 19/12
Saturday and Wednesday from 5 p.m.
Pont Turenne - Quai de la Poissonnerie*

Floating along the canal in the picturesque Petite Venise area, these are **a wonderful experience** not to be missed! Enchanted visitors watch as beautifully lit boats pass by with children singing traditional Christmas songs.

Programme of various choral groups performing on www.noel-colmar.com

Colmar bursts into song for Christmas

In various emblematic locations around the city, including Saint Matthieu Church, there's a whole variety of **different Christmas concerts**. These events will include performances by pupils from the Conservatoire de Colmar, the Brass Band of the Conservatoire de Colmar, the Petits Chanteurs de Saint-André, the Pré-maîtrise de Garçons de Colmar and many other choral groups. You're sure to be delighted by these performances, which have been rehearsed for weeks, full of both enthusiasm and contemplation.

Programme of various concerts on www.noel-colmar.com

Guided tours

Starting at: Colmar Tourist Office, Place Unterlinden

20/11: 5 p.m.

21/11 to 23/12 & 25 to 30/12: 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.

24/12: 11 a.m

31/12: 11 a.m and 4 p.m.

Only in French

Day and night, let yourself be "transported" into the historic centre of Colmar by one of the Tourist Office guides. Discover the **best kept secrets** and hidden places of Colmar ... During this winter period, the paved streets edged with **half-timbered houses** - which are shown in a new light by the night-time illuminations - are worthy of illustrating a book of myths. Adorned with spectacular lights, the old city becomes a **dream setting** for tours accompanied with the **tales and traditions of Christmas** in Alsace.



Place Rapp Skating Rink (J.M Hédouin)

Place Rapp and Christmas Skating Rink

20/11 to 03/01

Take to the ice on the beautiful **800 m²** skating rink on Place Rapp and enjoy the delights of skating accompanied by music. Experienced or budding skaters can take part in a range of activities. With bubble or snow storms and a Visit to Saint Nicolas and Santa, excitement is guaranteed. Close by, **theCarrousel Bar**, a moving bar concept, will get the adults' heads spinning. Through a forest of pine trees and illuminated decorations, come and enjoy a magical and totally amazing family experience on board the **Christmas Caterpillar!**

Times and programme of events on www.noel-colmar.com

Christmas wine cellars

Oh yes, Colmar has some wine cellars in its old buildings! Specially decorated for the occasion, the Christmas Cellars offer you a chance to meet the **wine-makers of Colmar** and sample Alsace wines, eaux-de-vie (schnapps) and typical liqueurs of the region during tasting sessions with various entertainment.

The participating vineyards are:

Le Domaine Martin Jund: 12, rue de l'Ange – Colmar

Le Domaine Karcher: 11, rue de l'Ours – Colmar

Le Domaine Viticole de la Ville de Colmar: 2, rue du Stauffen – Colmar

Le Domaine Gilbert Marschall: 7, rue de la Gravière – Houssen

Programme of wine cellar events on www.noel-colmar.com



The little horses of the Children's Christmas Market (Colmar TO)

Children at the heart of the celebrations

Children have their own dedicated Market, on the Place des Six Montagnes Noires, in the heart of the Petite Venise but the surprises don't stop there! The little visitors won't know where to go first there is such a variety of activities in store for them in every part of the city.



Letter box (B. Naegelen)

The Colmar Skating Rink will keep the little ones enthralled with a "Curious Christmas", a show inspired by a story by Charles Dickens, while *the Théâtre Municipal* will delight all audiences with puppet shows, an Opera for young audiences and a comedy about the famous Father Christmas. The show entitled "Graine de Sagesse" organised by *the Ecole Buissonnière* will take place in the Toy Museum, the stuff of dreams. While the brand new *Salle de spectacles Europe* introduces spectators to "Traditional Christmas Tales in Alsace".

Proudly installed in the Petite Venise Market, the giant *Santa's letter box* is waiting for children to post their letters to Santa. Write the address clearly on the back of the envelope and *Father Christmas will reply to all the letters posted*. The box is emptied daily and 2 letters are picked at random. Every Wednesday, at 4 o'clock, *from 20 November to 18 December, 14 children* will receive *a gift from Father Christmas*.

The gifts are donated by exhibitors at the Colmar Christmas Markets.

A land of traditions in the "Land of Stars"

The privileged geographical location of Colmar, the capital of the Alsace wine area, makes it the *ideal base* for discovering the various Christmas Markets of the *Pays des Etoiles* : Eguisheim, Kaysersberg, Munster, Neuf Brisach, Ribeauvillé-Riquewihr, Rouffach and Turckheim, cities with a unique style.

Each village, surrounded by vineyards overlooked by the Vosges mountains, is the setting for authentic, festive Christmas Markets. Along the decorated streets with ancient half-timbered houses, wine cellars, restaurants, shops and little wooden chalets invite visitors to stop and linger. In such a magical setting, there's a whole host of activities and entertainment on offer based on each city's specific theme.

For example, *Munster* has picked the theme of the *Bredala* (little Christmas biscuits), while for *Kaysersberg*, it's "Christmas in the Forest", for *Turckheim* it's the "Advent Calendar", for *Eguisheim* it's "Christmas Traditions" and for *Ribeauvillé and Riquewihr*, it's "Presents and Christmas decorations". *Neuf Brisach*, a little town in the Alsace plain, listed as a Unesco heritage site as one of the key sites of Vauban, will offer you "a Christmas in 1700" experience. *Rouffach* will put the focus on "traditional crafts" while the healing resort of *Trois Epis* will play host to the "pilgrimage of Mary". Many other opportunities to meet warm, friendly people are waiting for you in the little villages where eyes shine brightly in the name of Christmas...

Programme of events on www.noel-colmar.com/fr/pays-des-etoiles-de-noel

Dates and times of Christmas Shuttles in the Pays des Etoiles on www.navettedenoel.fr



The Eguisheim Christmas Market (C. Dumoulin)

Arts and crafts in the spotlight: "Exceptional objects" exhibition



Artwork (P. Lemoine)

Eglise des Dominicains – Place des Dominicains
20/11 to 31/12:

- Sunday to Thursday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- Friday & Saturday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

24 & 31/12: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

25/12: closed

La Fédération Régionale des Métiers d'Art d'Alsace (FREMAA) invites you to experience a world of wonder. This exhibition will include about twenty **unique objects created specifically for the Magic of Christmas in Colmar** by professional craftsmen based in Alsace.

Gilders, painting restorers, cabinetmakers, glass-makers and many other artisan artists are happy to share the fruit of a know-how combining ancient traditions with current technological innovations.

The traditions of Advent



In Alsace, the lead-up to Christmas cannot be imagined without a pine tree wreath decorated with ribbons, pine cones or dried fruit, adorned with **four candles corresponding to the four Sundays of Advent**. Every Sunday, a new candle is lit, until Christmas. The custom of the Advent wreath originated in Germany in the 16th century, most probably with the Lutherans who were in turn influenced by the Moravian Brothers of Bohemia (Hussites).

The custom of the wreath is linked with that of the **Advent Calendar**. This is a cardboard calendar in the shape of a house, with twenty-four windows each opening onto a biblical verse. Nowadays, calendars often have winter scenes behind the windows but also sweets.

The ultimate sharing experience, the period of Advent is by definition a time of *waiting* to be enjoyed with your loved ones. This period of time is punctuated by **masses and vigils**, particularly travelling illuminated vigil on 28 November. An opportunity to discover Colmar's splendid protestant and catholic churches.

Programme of services on www.noel-colmar.com



A world of legends

Alsace is a land of tales and the Christmas period is a time for stories which work their magic on even the most sceptical ... Over the centuries, an Alsace nobleman from the Middle Ages, the fearful **Hans Trapp** who established a reign of terror over the whole region, has become a legendary character. The alter ego of Father Fouettard, he accompanies **Saint Nicolas** on his rounds and deals with the naughty children. In the evening of 24 December in Alsace, it's a luminous young girl dressed in white, wearing a wreath with four candles on her head, who rewards the children who have been good: this is the kindly **Christkindel**.

According to tradition, on the night of 6 December, Saint Nicolas comes and leaves a few sweets in the shoes children have left outside their bedroom door the night before. On Saint-Nicolas Day, children are invited to dip their "mannalas" (Alsace brioche in the shape of a snowman) in a bowl of hot chocolate.

Christmas treats



Irresistibly drawn to the good things in life, Alsace is a land of traditions where recipes are passed down from generation to generation. In the centre of this generous region, Colmar happily combines the values of hospitality and know-how.

With its local artisans, wine producers, sweet or savoury culinary specialities, traditional brasseries and award-winning restaurants, **the capital of Alsace Wine Country loves the good things in life but, more than that, loves to share them ...**

The five Christmas Markets feature local producers of foie gras, cheese, cold meats, honey, gingerbread, cakes and other gourmet delights. There will be something to suit all tastes! And **make sure you enjoy the specialities that are only available during Advent** because you'll have to wait a year before you'll have another chance

Berawecka and Christollen

Two traditional sweet treats which symbolise the Alsace Christmas: Berawecka which is a bread made with dried fruit macerated in kirsch and Christollen, a traditional brioche with glazed fruit and cinnamon, filled with marzipan.

Mannala

This little Alsace brioche, either plain or with chocolate chips, always in the shape of a snowman, is prepared to celebrate Saint Nicolas on 6 December. It is eaten with a delicious hot chocolate

Bredalas

Making these little Christmas biscuits in various shapes is an inseparable part of the preparations for the festive season. This is one of the most popular Alsace traditions at Christmas.

To be eaten "exclusively" during the Christmas period!

Alsace foie gras

Begun in Alsace in 1780, the tradition of Alsace foie gras is continued today by around fifty breeders. To enjoyed cold or warm, in many culinary variations using Alsace wines (fried in Gewürztraminer, Riesling terrine...), foie gras is the ultimate festive dish.

The Wines of Alsace

In the cellars or at the Christmas Markets, come and meet the region's wine producers and sample some extraordinary wines: the famous Alsace whites will seduce you by their elegance and variety, leaving you wanting only one thing: to have them with your festive meals... As for the Crémant d'Alsace, this is the choice for sophisticated fizz.



Traditional mulled wine (J.M Hédoïn)

Mulled wine

As winter approaches, Alsace mulled wine is an essential "ritual". White wine or Pinot noir is warmed without coming to boiling point, and flavoured with spices (clove, cinnamon, star anise), lemon and orange and finished with a spoonful of honey before drinking. The Colmar Christmas markets will have several non-alcoholic "variants" on offer: mulled apple juice, orange juice and strawberry juice.

Christmas Beer

In the Middle Ages, the monks used to prepare a full-bodied, spicy, malty beer for the Christmas festivities. Brewed for the Nativity, it was a gift from the brewers. This seasonal beer goes equally well with little Christmas biscuits and savoury dishes. Micro-breweries are very dynamic in the region, with a long-standing brewing tradition. Sample their particular creations, some of which are very different!

More information

Museums

Musée Unterlinden: a museum with a new look!

Place Unterlinden

From 12 December 2015

www.musee-unterlinden.com

In the heart of Old Colmar, an impressive architectural and urban museum project! The Musée Unterlinden, extended and renovated under the guidance of the famous Basel architects **Herzog & De Meuron**, with the Department of Historic Monuments, is establishing itself as an exceptional site. Here, you can (re)discover the famous **Issenheim Altarpiece by Matthias Grünewald**, a jewel of Western art, which never ceases to fascinate visitors who come to gaze at it and artists who are inspired by it. The surface area of the museum has been doubled to house a vast collection, ranging from archaeology to modern art, for visitors in search of a profound aesthetic experience.



The Issenheim Altarpiece (O. Zimmermann)

The Musée Hansi: a brand new museum in Colmar!

28, rue des Têtes

From 20 November 2015

www.hansi.fr

Discover the world of Jean-Jacques Waltz (1873-1951), alias Hansi, in a brand new Colmars museum which presents the **celebrated Colmar artist's idealised vision of Alsace** through a collection of unique and original works.



The Musée du Jouet

40, rue Vauban

www.museejouet.com

In the magical setting of an old cinema, marvel at **this rich collection of toys** from the 19th century to the present day and discover the amazing temporary exhibition for Christmas.



"Generation Robot"

20 to 30/11: 10 to 12 a.m. & 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

1 to 31/12:

- Monday to Friday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 2 to 6 p.m.

- Saturday & Sunday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

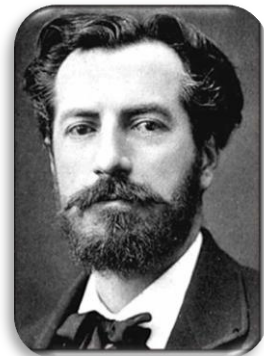
Japanese robots from 1970 to 2000 are already invading the Toy Museum: part of Baptiste Caillaud's private collection, there are almost 200 of them! Come and discover these **superheroes** (Mazinger, Goldorak, Gundam...) and learn about their origins, special features and truly exceptional appeal!

The Musée Bartholdi: glory to the creator of Liberty

30, rue des Marchands

www.musee-bartholdi.fr

The **birth place** of Auguste Bartholdi, situated in the heart of Old Colmar, houses the museum dedicated to this emblematic artist. Models of various monuments erected in many towns and cities are displayed in rooms on three floors. A special place is reserved for the original models of Bartholdi's masterpieces, the most famous of which is still **the statue of Liberty**.



The Natural History Museum : adventure is just around the corner!

11, rue Turenne

www.museumcolmar.org

Whether you're a fan of zoology, mineralogy, ethnology or Egyptology, make a visit to this museum, which **takes children and adults alike on a fascinating journey!**

Some useful information

Free Park & Ride to the City Centre

More info about parking on www.noel-colmar.com

P+R to city center on weekends



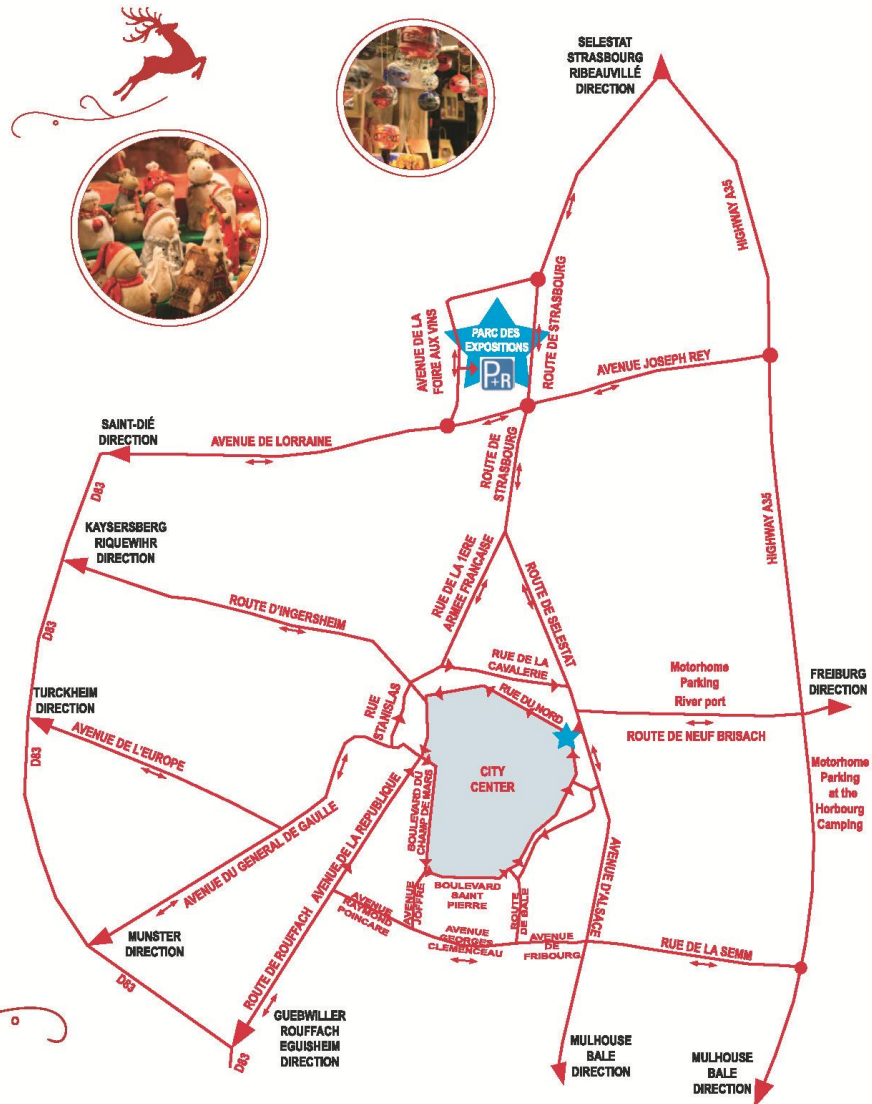
From November 21st to December 27th, the car access to the historic city center of Colmar is closed to all vehicles on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 20 p.m., in order to facilitate visitor access to the 5 Christmas markets.

Departing from the Parc des expositions (Exhibition park - Avenue de la Foire aux Vins), a free Parking & Ride (P+R) to city center is set up on Saturdays and Sundays. Shuttles drop off every 10 minutes, close to the Christmas markets (Rue Saint-Eloi ★) and bring you back after your visit to the Exhibition park Parking.

Parking opening hours:

- Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. (Last shuttle to the exhibition park: 11:30 p.m.) Shuttle every 10 mn Every 20 mn from 8:30 p.m.
- Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 9:10 p.m. (Last shuttle to the exhibition park: 9:10 p.m.) Shuttle every 10 mn

The car park is open non stop from 8 a.m. Saturday to Sunday 22 p.m..



Getting to Colmar

In the heart of the Alsace region, Colmar is situated between Strasbourg in the North and Mulhouse in the South, 35 km from Fribourg-en-Brigau in Germany and 67 km from Basel in Switzerland.

TGV: 2 hrs 50 mins from the Gare de l'Est or Gare de Lyon in Paris

Airports: 70 km from Euroairport Bâle-Mulhouse and Strasbourg-Entzheim Airport

Staying in Colmar

The Colmar Tourist Office offers breaks during the Christmas Market period, including Christmas Eve and New Year.

Check out all our offers on www.noelcolmar.com/fr/forfaits-sejours

Map of Colmar Christmas Markets



Christmas markets

- 1 Place des Dominicains
- 2 Place Jeanne d'Arc
- 3 Place de l'Ancienne Douane
- 4 Koiffhus - Indoor market
- 5 Petite Venise
- Christmas tree market

Lieux d'animations

- 6 Place Rapp
Christmas Ice rink
+ Merry-go-round
- 7 Toy's Museum
40 rue Vauban
- 8 Municipal Theater
3 rue des Unterlinden
- 9 Unterlinden museum
1 rue des Unterlinden
- 10 Public Library
Pôle Média Culture
1 rue de la Montagne Verte
- 11 St Matthieu Church
Grand'Rue
- 12 Dominicans Church
Place des Dominicains
- Christmas zone

Parkings

- P Parking
- P Covered parking
- 13 Drop-off / return
park and ride
Rue Saint Eloi
- Tourist bus: Rue de la Cavalerie
disembark of visitors
- Tourist bus: parking Lacarre
embark of visitors
- 14 Shuttles Stations
"Land of Stars"
- Camping-cars Parking

Informations

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www.noel-colmar.com
www.tourisme-colmar.com
www.festival-colmar.com
www.printemps-colmar.com

Colmar Magie Christmas

From 20 November till 31 December 2015

Let's go to Colmar, a city where the magic of Christmas can be experienced in its purest form for six weeks every year. There, your way will be drawn by illuminations linking to the city's five Christmas Markets in a labyrinth of small streets lined with century old half-timbered houses. Nestling in town squares with their own special architectural features, these islands of togetherness are like the city itself: intimate and authentic. Each Market is a mini-village, with its world of passionate craftsmen. Most of them are from Alsace and have been chosen for the quality and the uniqueness of their products.

Next to that, a wide range of activities make Christmas in Colmar an uncommon experience: guided visits, wine-tastings, skating rink, exhibition of traditional toys, as well as many shows and concerts...

www.noel-colmar.com
Infos & travel packages : +33 (0)3 3 89 20 68 92

Colmar tourisme 