

German Christmas traditions: **der Adventskalender**



Advent calendars are popular throughout Germany, not only with children but also with adults. You can buy advents calendars in many stores at Christmas time, but you can also make your own.

An advent calendar has 24 little doors for each of the 24 days in December until Christmas Eve. Children open the first door on December 1st. Behind each door is a piece of chocolate or other surprise.

Advent calendars date back to the 1800s, when German Protestants used various methods to count down from the start of Advent to Christmas. Techniques used included:

- drawing chalk markings on doors
- lighting candles (one for each day)
- attaching religious pictures onto walls
- burning an Advent candle that lasts 24 days

In Germany, Weihnachten is celebrated on December 24th because it marks the last day of Advent.

The first Advent calendars with little doors to open appeared in 1920. Little pictures or Bible verses were revealed behind them.

From the 1950s onwards, Advent calendars could be bought in bulk. Behind the little doors were often little pictures of snowy landscapes and towns or, again, Christian motifs.

These days, the 24 doors of an Advent calendar usually contain pieces of chocolate in various Christmas shapes. Many people also make their own calendars. For example, you can hang 24 little packets on a line.

You can find out more about the history of the Advent calendar on the website of the [German Christmas Museum](#) located in the city of Rothenburg ob der Tauber in Bavaria.

Here 2 links for printable calendars with different designs where children can color a box every day: [Kalender 1](#), [Kalender 2](#).

