

## German Christmas traditions: **der Adventskranz**



In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, people put up an Advent wreath on the first day of Advent. It is a decorated wreath of fir branches with four candles on it.

Advent season always begins on the Sunday four weeks before Christmas. This year, for example, Advent begins on December 3.

Each Sunday during Advent, a new candle is lit. On the first Sunday only one candle is lit, on the second Sunday two candles, on the third Sunday three candles, and on the last Sunday all candles are burning.

Families gather around the wreath each Sunday to light the next candle, listen to Christmas music, eat cookies, sing Christmas carols, and get into the Christmas spirit.

This is a traditional Advent song that we sing on the last day of Advent:

Advent, Advent,  
a little light is burning,  
first one, then two,  
then three, then four,  
then the Christkind  
is at the door.

1. Ad - vent, Ad - vent, ein Licht - lein brennt, erst  
eins, dann zwei, dann drei, dann vier, dann  
steht das Christ - kind vor der Tür.

This tradition was even more important in the past, when the Christmas tree was usually reserved for a special unveiling only on December 24<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Eve). Until then, it was the Adventskranz that provided the festive look and special aroma in the house. This year is a special Advent season. Why? The first Advent is always on a Sunday. That is why the date shifts from year to year, and this year, the fourth Advent is on Christmas Eve.

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