



### *Christmas time in Germany*

December has always been my favourite time of the year; it always feels so magical. I just love the feeling one gets when walking down Grafton Street and the Christmas lights are up and everyone is out and just so friendly. Ireland during Christmas is heart-warming, however, spending the Christmas month in Germany has always been a dream of mine. Due to Covid-19 the Christmas markets were unable to open in 2020 which created disappointment for many as they travelled to Germany particularly for this experience. However, luckily for me, in 2021 it was announced that the Christmas markets were to open—yet this was also cut short as they were only open for a week due to the sharp increase of covid cases here. With the pressure of the Christmas markets closing and not wanting to miss the chance of going, I decided to go by myself on the last evening.

### *Christmas Markets in Ulm*

“Herzlich willkommen auf dem Ulmer Weihnachtsmarkt”. To say I was excited to attend the Christmas markets was an understatement, the night was bitterly cold, yet the main thing was that there was no rain. There were so many so many stalls offering different food, drinks, toys, clothes, you name it. If you need to know anything about Christmas markets in Germany it is that they have the tastiest food ever. Between the Bratwurst, Schupfnudeln, Lebkuchen and the Raclette stalls a foody like me was simply in heaven. The problem now was how to not explode from the food intake. The prices were relatively cheap, and you

essentially wanted to have cash as there were little to no stalls which accepted card-- completely acceptable. Glühwein was obviously a must especially with weathers of that sort. Below you have several pictures of the food stalls which I saw, the food options were simply dazzling and the smells inevitably had people lining up for long periods at different stalls.



(Double tap to play video\*)

### Weather in Ulm

An aspect which I have had to get used to while living in Germany is the cold weather. If you thought Ireland was cold, you really will be shocked to find out that Ireland's cold mornings really do not compare to those in Germany. Between the low temperatures and constant

snowfall, getting up in the morning has become extremely tough. However, it is interesting to view the differences in mindsets between Ireland and Germany and how they can be easily identified, even in the simplest things such as weather. When it snows in Ireland we basically go into lockdown, the roads become icy, the footpaths full of snow, no pans of bread left in the supermarket and life becomes super hard, however, the Germans have a very different and may I say, efficient working system. Between the enforced laws such as, where the locals are obliged to clear the snow surrounding their property by 8am (*in Ulm and surrounding villages anyway!*) and the government employing workers to salt the roads and move the snow, a build-up of snow is essentially not allowed, and therefore, Germany never stops functioning efficiently. One thing you will learn about the Germans is that they are efficient, punctual and may or may not cycle into work even in the snow! Ha ha 😏. Although the snow can get irritating sometimes when having to walk to work or just run simple errands, Ulm becomes so beautiful covered in white.

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(\*Double tap to play video on no.2,3 &4)

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### Missing home comforts

Coming to the end of this blog I want to share my feelings about missing Ireland. Although Germany has been treating me amazingly and has now become my second home, it is the little things that I miss, such as our food in Ireland (*Chicken fillet roll... absolutely unreal!!*). Yes, pretzels and butter are great, however, a good Sunday dinner would be missed when you can't have it. I am sure that Germans do have their own equivalent of a delicious Sunday dinner however I have yet to taste it. The one thing I have most definitely noticed in Germany is that the people here are not really mad into their crisps ... crazy right! You could blindfold me and pass me a bowl of Kings and Tayto crisps and I would tell you straight without a doubt which is which. I must say the Germans lack in their crisps department, a real tragedy. Although 'Chipsfrisch' are delicious, nothing will ever beat the mighty Tayto!



Germany has most definitely shown me a different aspect of life and being an English Language Assistant in Germany has provided me with the most interesting experience. Home will always be where the heart is. Ireland has always taken a special place in my heart, and I just can't wait to come home and spend the holidays with all my special people. So, goodbye for now, until our next blog! I want to wish every single one of you a very happy holiday season and a Happy New year, may the year 2022 bring us all prosperity, health, and joy!

*Albina Haliti*