

Zoya - Der Weihnachtsmarkt

There is nothing more magical than a Christmas market at Christmastime. Luckily Germany is rich in Christmas markets, with one (or more!) in almost each city. Unfortunately, due to Covid many of them were either closed or never opened this year. Thankfully the Weihnachtsmarkt in Bremen began on the 22nd November and has been opened everyday since. I must've been there at least 10 times by now – 0 judgement please! My *Mitbewohner* stopped acting surprised everytime I came home with my red armband on, which gives away straightaway where I was.

To enter the Weihnachtsmarkt you have to either be vaccinated (and you need to show your *Personalausweis* too) or Covid tested. They're very strict with their *2G-Regel* both here and all over Germany as far as I know. After you "check in" at the entrance, you're free to explore the different stalls. There is however still a *Maskenpflicht* in place, unless you're eating or drinking *Glühwein*. I must say I'm not the biggest fan of *Glühwein*, however I do quite enjoy the non-alcoholic alternative – *Kinderpunsch* (yes that word does begin with "children" I am well aware that I'm not its target market).

You have to pay a *Pfand* everytime you order a drink, just in case you steal the cup/mug/glass. This is normally around 2€ and you're given a plastic chip in exchange. When you're done with your drink you can either return the plastic chip and you'll be given your 2€ back or you can always just leave with the cup. Some of the glasses are just normal glasses, although I was once served *Glühwein* with a side of lipstick on mine – which I didn't find exactly normal and ordered another *Glühwein* but "*ohne Lippenstift*" this time.

Most of the goods sold are either food or handmade items, which are *in der Regel* really *teuer* (understandably so). Handmade toys, knitwear, trinkets etc. can be found at almost every stall at the Weihnachtsmarkt. The food is definitely the highlight of the Christmas market, in my opinion. *Bratwürste, Schmalzkuchen, Crêpes, Maronen* – the list really does go on and on. You can order a Crêpe with a sweet, savoury or alcohol filling. They really like adding Baileys to things at the Weihnachtsmarkt as well – coffee, hot chocolate, crêpes – you name it and I bet you can add Baileys to it! In Germany they really love Christmas and really enjoy celebrating Christmas – you can tell by the shops having way more Christmas things in early October even and *fast nichts* for Halloween – even on the 31st! I would recommend anyone and everyone to visit a German Weihnachtsmarkt at some point in life – it really does capture the Christmas spirit.

