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#AdventZagreb



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# Zagreb Advent guide



# The best Advent in Europe

From the moment the first Advent candle is lit at Manduševac on the last weekend in November to the first weekend in January, Zagreb is all about Advent. It's all here, the Ice Park, Fuliranje, the Christmas fairytale at Zrinjevac, the biggest tree and Christmas wreath at Ban Jelačić square, a spectacle of lights, music, flavors and scents in the Upper and the Lower Town, and millions of lights and balls on the streets, squares and promenades... Welcome to the best Advent in Europe!

## ADVENT VENUES AND EVENTS

### Advent at Zrinjevac

The Christmas fairytale under the centuries-old plane trees in the heart of the city, Advent at Zrinjevac has been the best overture into Christmas season for over 15 years. The charming stalls offer handicrafts, traditional delicacies and gifts. Even prettier and greener, this year's Advent also features multi-use ceramic cups as a lasting souvenir.

## EVERYTHING ABOUT ADVENT



infozagreb.hr  
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\*The Zagreb Tourist Board is not responsible for the decisions of the organizers regarding changes in dates, performers and program or in case of event cancellation. Please follow the latest announcements from our organizers and official channels.

### Fuliranje at Strossmayer square

Fuliranje, the favorite Advent event, returns to the Strossmayer square with a new theme, "Nature and Society". Discover the history of Zagreb in a fun way and enjoy 17 stalls with a diverse gastro offer.

### Ice Park at King Tomislav square

The biggest ice-skating rink in Croatia, the Ice Park at King Tomislav square attracts skaters of all ages with its sparkly setting and expansive rink. Along with delicacies from Advent stalls, enjoy unique après-ski hangouts.

### Europe square with a thousand lights

Europe square becomes the EU Advent. Every corner of the square with a thousand lights revives its own story through music, homemade cuisine delights, theatre plays and humanitarian actions.

### Baš Naš Advent

Baš naš Advent is happening right on Ban Josip Jelačić square. Over ten workshops, like making Nutcrackers and Christmas wreaths, to a Christmas play, a live band and DJ performances. There are also stalls of local craftsmen offering foodie delights and handmade products.

### White Christmas at the square

Ban Jelačić square is the postcard of the best European Advent, with the Christmas wreath around Manduševac and a decorated photo point for the winter fairytale on Zagreb's main square. The biggest Christmas tree, thousands of sparkly lights and lush decorations ooze holiday magic in the city center.

### Fooling Around by the Esplanade

This winter, Fooling Around redefines holiday ambiance as the most versatile and relaxed afterwork event in the city. From November 26, Oleander terrace at Hotel Esplanade becomes the holiday Orient Express, where nine wagons deliver a gastronomic journey created by renowned chefs.

### Advent Caffe de Matoš at Stross

Every day at Strossmayer promenade, where A. G. Matoš watches over the city, visitors can enjoy a musical program by young bands and foodie delights. Don't miss the kids' New Year's program on December 31 at noon.

### Jinglingz at Kvaternik square

At Jinglingz, happening on Kvaternik square, take in music, food, creative workshops and many other activities that awaken the Christmas spirit.

## ADVENT INSTALLATIONS

### Layers of Christmas

The holiday installation of unusual trees made of translucent textile turns Masarykova street into an illuminated forest. Its warm lighting brings a unique ambiance to the streetscape.

### The First Snow by Saša Šekoranja

In the space of the former savings union in Oktogon passage, find the light and sound installation, an 8-meter-tall tree built of *The First Snow* lyrics. The exhibit is a gift to the city and an homage to Gabi Novak.

### Orašar & HNK

The magic of art and light on the Republic of Croatia square – the Croatian National Theatre building gets a new Christmas attire with light decorations. Visitors are invited to come to the square in the afternoon hours for perfect holidays photos.

### The big, big Christmas

The King Petar Svačić square becomes a supernatural winter fairytale with oversized sculptures of traditional Christmas ornaments. The small, glass and sparkly jingle bells, snowflakes and balls turn into huge decorative giants.

### Miraculous Christmas at the Flower square

Situated in the very heart of Zagreb, the Flower square becomes a true holiday miracle this winter. Through lush decorations, shiny installations and interactive elements, the square pairs the charm of old Zagreb with modern holiday vibes. The special photo point is an opportunity for visitors to record their fabulous holiday moments.

### The Geometry of Silence

Nenad Sovili's installation *The Geometry of Silence* at the Archaeological Museum lapidarium shows a sculpture evoking

a snowflake and the sparkle of a gemstone. Changing its character between day and night, it creates a space for a pause and contemplation. You can also visit the exhibit (2+2) x 5 by the same author at the Ethnographic Museum, which marks 20 years of his career.

### Bells Are Jingling at Grč tunnel

Inside the Grč tunnel, the central installation of this Advent consists of eight bronze bells that symbolize celebration and togetherness. The automated mechanisms play the melody of *Jingle Bells*, turning the tunnel into a music counterpoint to all the visual attractions in the city.

### Zagreb in the Upper Town

The light spectacle begins in Zakmardi Passage and continues up the steps to the Klovicévi Dvori Gallery atrium, where a majestic chandelier turns the space into a true fairytale ballroom. The path is decorated with art installations from December 13 through 30.

### Moon Garden on the Strossmayer promenade

The Moon Garden is coming to Zagreb's prettiest path, the Strossmayer promenade (west). Stroll beneath a thousand shooting stars and starlit trees, sit on the Moon overlooking the town and make a wish.

### Winter nocturne at Grč park

The association Art for the City invites you to the Advent's most romantic corner, inspired by night and stars. Walk under starry skies with sparkly lights and listen to Chopin's nocturnes.

### Advent Open House Zagreb

The Open House Zagreb association opens the doors of the most attractive, but otherwise inaccessible works of architecture in the city center. Visitors can tour residential and commercial buildings, cultural institutions and public spaces with expert guidance in Croatian and English.

## ADVENT CONCERTS

### Zagreb Soloists Advent concerts

One of the most renowned Croatian chamber ensembles plays wonderful valtzes, polkas and the best-known Christmas songs. Zagreb Soloists perform four festive concerts at the Zagreb City Museum. Reservations are mandatory at [press@zagrebacki-solisti.com](mailto:press@zagrebacki-solisti.com).

### Zagreb Chamber Orchestra Advent concerts

Enjoy the four concerts by the Zagreb Chamber Orchestra and their talented soloists. Reservations for the concerts at the Church of St. Blaise and Češka Beseda at [zagrebacki.komorni.orkestar@gmail.com](mailto:zagrebacki.komorni.orkestar@gmail.com).

### Evenings with Brahms

Brahms' classics come to life performed on the

rare Streicher piano from 1868, once owned by the Vranyčany family. Reservations for the four concerts at the Hungarian Cultural Center at [info@uocristoforium.hr](mailto:info@uocristoforium.hr).

### Advent by Ivan Filipović Chamber Choir

Performing classic choir compositions and well-known Christmas tunes, the Ivan Filipović Chamber Choir plays three concerts at the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord at Preobraženska street and the Church of St. Francis of Assisi at Kaptol.

### Music at St. Mark's church

The oratory choir of the Church of St. Mark, Cantores Sancti Marci accompanied by organ, performs on December 14 and 24. Admission is free.

### From the Christmas balconies

At some of the city's prettiest balconies – by the Stone Gate, at the Croatian National Theatre and Tkalciceva street, the brass ensemble Ad Gloriam Brass performs Christmas songs, but also film theme songs and classics.

### Zagreb Advent postcards

Vox, the quartet of professional vocal artists, performs at the frequented spots in the city center. Advent pop-up concerts await in Masarykova street, Oktogon and the Zagreb Youth Theatre atrium.

### Advent under Lanterns

Advent under Lanterns takes place in the Upper Town every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday through Christmas Eve. By the Lotrščak tower, join the carol singers and a lamplighter as he lights the gas lamps.

### Advent symphony of the city

The music and art Atelier Kralj performs Christmas melodies at multiple spots around the city center. The seven concerts start at 7pm by the Stone Gate, on Radičeva street, at Krvavi most and the old Vlaška plateau.

### Surprise concerts in the tram

Zagreb ZET orchestra's music patrol starts from Remiza Ljubljanička station on two Saturdays in December. Along with Zagreb orchestra surprise concerts, there's also Čvenk by the Funicular.

### Flash mob in the tram

In December, join in one of the ten random concerts in the trams. Sing with singers and be a part of the memorable flash mob concerts.

## ONE-DAY EVENTS

### High school Advent at Kennedy square

By selling handmade Christmas ornaments at six stalls on December 11, student-volunteers gather means for the Association of Parents of Children with Developmen-

tal Difficulties and Persons with Disabilities – Path to Life (PUŽ). The program includes a raffle and music performances.

### Advent Run

On December 14, join thousands of runners at the costumed Christmas race for the whole family. Zagreb Advent Run is a humanitarian run, this year for the early discovery of cardiovascular diseases campaign.



### Q'art - connect in love

An urban performance of connection, warmth and humanity – that's the description of this unique festival that runs on December 21 on Ilica, from Frankopanska street to the British square.

### Nutcracker ballet streaming in front of HNK

Enjoy the streaming of the most performed classic ballet in front of the Croatian National Theatre. Tickets for the newest *Nutcracker* were sold out long ago.

### Choirs on Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, eight Zagreb choirs perform a concert at Ban Josip Jelačić square, an overture to Christmas with lovely Advent evergreens and polyphony of choirs.

### Zagreb Soloists at Oktogon

Zagreb Soloists' Advent is on every Sunday at noon at Oktogon. In their four concerts, they perform favorite Croatian songs and global hits.

## ADVENT WORKSHOPS

### Christmas Story at the Ethnographic Museum

Make unique memories at the Ethnographic Museum; you can create gifts or Christmas wreaths, bake a holiday cake with a TikToker or enjoy a concert. Advent at the museum lasts throughout December.

### Advent at the Zagreb City Museum

Advent at ZCM brings a new edition of the Paper Nativity exhibit, concerts by the Zagreb Soloists, Christmas workshops and Zbigecani Holidays guided tours, plus the Christmas pub quiz, hosted by Morana Zibar and Krešo Mederla.

### The Magic of Advent at the Croatian Natural History Museum

During Advent, the Croatian Natural History Museum pairs education, fun and the arts. Lectures about the secrets of the universe, plays, film screenings and interactive DNA workshops for young detectives.

## Advent at Obrtnički prolaz

The program by the Zagreb Chamber of Trades and Crafts is filled with music and creativity at the Big Hall and Pasaž of Matica Hrvatskih Obrtnika in Ilica. Don't miss the visit of St. Nicholas.

### Advent at the Museum of Chocolate

The Chocolate Holidays exhibit explores how Christmas motives changed in the design of chocolate products. On through December at the Museum of Chocolate.

### Advent at the Caricature House Oto Reisinger

combines humor, creativity and family warmth. On Fridays and Saturdays, the House is open until 11pm, with music, a gastro offer and caricature drawing for visitors.

### Advent at the Museum of Unfinished Art

Each Friday evening, the Museum of Unfinished Art hosts the Art Under Candles program. Explore different techniques, from linocut and weaving to contemporary mixed media, and create your own art.

### Advent at the Museum of Lost Tales

The Museum of Lost Tales presents traditional Croatian Christmas tales and customs. On Saturdays, kids can meet the winter fairy, while "Evenings with Lanterns" storytelling events are on Thursdays.

### Advent at the Museum of Laughter

HaHaHouse offers many interactive activities and photo spots. Smiling Advent at the Museum of Laughter is on throughout December.

## KID'S ADVENT

### Teatrino Klincolino

The children's puppet theatre performs kids' plays at the Gradec plateau and Catherine's square. More than 30 performances of popular and lesser-known tales are on until January.

### Ride in Santa's sleigh

Ride in Santa's sleigh around Zrinjevac park, every evening except Mondays, from 6 to 8pm. The sleigh doesn't operate when it rains.

### Old Tour Zagreb

A unique ride in an electric Ford T at Kaptol and the Upper Town Advent venues. Join the Advent Ride every evening from 6pm, except on Christmas.

### Live Nativity

For the 24th year in a row, the Cenacolo community organizes live nativity in the city center. Designing the whole concept by themselves, including scenography, costumes and dances, they create an authentic event steeped in love and support of their families and the community. Plays are performed at 4, 5 and 7pm.

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## Go with the flow this Advent

Your first Advent in Zagreb? What a magical time to arrive, as the city lights up with festive cheer from dawn till dusk. The best way to soak it all in: simply go with the flow. Wander from one charming market stall to the next, savoring sweet *fritule* or warming up with a cup of spiced mulled wine.

As you meander through the streets, strike up a chat or two. Locals and fellow visitors often share tips about concerts, hidden spots and special events. It's the small moments of connection that make Advent in Zagreb so memorable.

It's more than just a season; it's an embrace of togetherness and joyful surprises. The energy of merrymaking and the cheerful crowds... and it's all quite contagious, inviting you to join in the celebration. Whether you're browsing handcrafted gifts, enjoying live outdoor music or just soaking in the buzz of laughter and music, the city offers warmth that melts away the winter chill.

Keep a flexible spirit – some of the best experiences happen when you least expect them. From impromptu street performances to spontaneous new friendships, the city invites you to step off any planned route and find your own Advent adventure.

**Tip:** Warm up with a traditional glass of *rakija* at a cozy wine bar on *Tkalčićeva* street, a perfect spot to rest between festive strolls.

## Follow the lights to Čazma

**60 min**  
from Zagreb

Just an hour from Zagreb, SalajLand is calling. The Salaj family farm in Čazma lights up December nights with millions of Christmas lights, winding trails, glowing cottages and pure festive magic. Kids can dive into themed workshops and run wild under twinkling trees. It's a place where your inner child runs the show, happily mingling with all the holiday characters.



**Tip:** Warm up with a mug of cocoa with some traditional biscuits at the coffee house Ana in the center of Čazma.

**ANDREA PISAC**

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## Honestly, do it with your hands

This winter, I've decided to give my fingers a creative workout. That old Croatian saying – *dok imam svojih deset prstiju, dobro je* – needs a modern polish. Our hands have been scrolling and swiping for too long. What they need is more flour under the nails and more analogue action to stay nimble and supple.

Here's what my winter hand spa looks like. Instead of grabbing a plastic tray of Christmas biscuits at the supermarket, I'll bake my own. I'll likely fumble the first two kinds – *zvjezdice* and *kiflice* – but my fingers will find their rhythm as I carve out *breskvice* or roll embossed *paprenjaci*. And while the kitchen still smells of cinnamon, I'll sit at my biscuit-filled table and handwrite Christmas cards to friends abroad. As Christmas Eve draws closer, I'll paint walnuts and hazelnuts in gold and silver. Maybe there'll be ribbons lying around. Maybe a dried orange slice that didn't end up in my gin and tonic. Whatever I find – that's my decoration.

And when the old ambition of knitting a scarf comes knocking, I'll remind myself: it's not about being crafty or perfect. It's about doing, not consuming. I'll pick up those knitting needles and battle my cats for a ball of yarn. Life will return to my fingers – because they'll finally be doing something my phone can't.

**Tip:** If your fingers are frozen stiff, warm them up on a cup of mulled wine. Then join a baking class at *Kuhaona* and let your hands take it from there.



# ADVENT MENU: COMFORT FOOD, ZAGREB STYLE



MARKO LUKIĆ/PIXSELL

Zagreb's Advent menu is all about comfort, warmth and rich aromas that spill from kitchens and market stalls alike. Whether you're fasting, feasting or just snacking on the go, these seasonal classics will see you through December with a full belly and a happy heart.

## Sarma

The queen of Croatian winter food. These sauerkraut rolls stuffed with minced meat are stewed until tender and tangy. They cure everything – from cold hands to holiday hangovers.

## Sausages

From smoky to spicy, sausages are a Zagreb street food staple during Advent. Eat them hot in a bun from a festive stall, or cold on a platter paired with mustard and pickles.

## Bakalar

This traditional cod stew, *na mornarski* (sailor-style), is slow-cooked with potatoes and olive oil for Christmas Eve. Silky, savoury and deeply satisfying, it's the definition of Croatian fasting done right.



## Roast turkey with *mlinci*

The star of Christmas Day, this Zagorje-style turkey comes with thin, soft-baked pasta sheets soaked in pan juices. It's the dish that gets everyone to the table – on time.

## Mulled wine

No Advent stroll is complete without a cup of *kuhano vino*. Red is classic, white is trendy, both are spiced and steamy. Sip as you wander through the lights and let the cinnamon do its magic.



## Saints of Advent – the spirit behind the season

As the scent of cloves and cinnamon fills the air, locals in Zagreb turn to age-old customs that bring warmth and togetherness. Many are tied to saints whose feast days quietly shape the rhythm of Advent. Here are five that still light the way:

### St. Andrew – Nov 30

Advent in Zagreb begins with St. Andrew, the first apostle. He's remembered as the one who ushers in the season of reflection. This is when the first candle on the Advent wreath is lit, and festive lights flicker on across the city.



### St. Barbara –

**Dec 4**

Also known as *mali Božić* (little Christmas), St. Barbara's Day is when families sow Christmas wheat in small bowls. If the sprouts grow tall and green by Christmas, the new year will be lucky and abundant.



### St. Nicholas – Dec 6

The night before this feast, children leave their boots by the door – and wake to find sweets if they've been good. If not? A golden twig (*šiba*) awaits. Even adults might get one, just to keep them in line.



### St. Lucy – Dec 13

St. Lucy's Day comes with old folk beliefs. The twelve days from Lucy to Christmas once predicted the weather for the year ahead. Young girls played games to divine the name of their future love.



### St. Stephen – Dec 26

The second day of Christmas is all about being outdoors and with others. People went door to door singing carols, and if snow had fallen, it meant sledding, mulled wine and laughter echoing through the neighborhoods.

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