

Once upon... a Christmas time



There's no doubt about it: fairytales are on the up. Classics like Snow White are now being rediscovered in the cinema – for example in the recent movie, Snow White and the Huntsman – and even being retold in text messages: [like Snow White in 160 characters](#).

Hm, but where is this resurgence coming from? And why are fairytales often associated with Christmas? We asked people whose profession (or passion) is fairytales. [Find their answers on our blog >](#)

We've also found you the best places to find [fairytales in Christmas markets](#). Plus, our head-chef host Michel has shared his [exclusive recipe](#) for a fairytale Christmas meal.

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PS: More likely to say "bah humbug" than "ho ho ho"? No problem, here are our [anti-Christmas survival tips](#) to help you get through this difficult time.

Christmas markets go Brothers Grimm



Christmas markets began in Germany over 600 years ago: supplying people with winter goods to help them survive the cold season. Today, you'll find delicious food and drink (mulled wine, roasted almonds, sausages), as well as handicrafts and Christmas decorations. In many of them, you'll also find fairytales...

Dresden

Cockermiese (1-30.12)
Stroll along Grimm Alley in the 'Sparkling City' or watch fairytale silhouette films in the cinema.
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Kassel

Königs-/Friedrichsplatz (26.11-23.12)
The [Documents](#) of all Christmas markets? Not quite, but it does have the world's largest fairytale pyramid.
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Berlin

Jagdschloss Grunewald (8-9.12)
Meet Cinderella's stepmother in person, amongst other legendary characters. Autographs on request.
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Lubeck

Kirchplatz St. Marien (26.11-30.12)
Twenty fairytale cottages, where characters like Snow White are waiting for you to call in and say hi.
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Erfurt

Domplatz (27.11-22.12)
Listen to readings of Grimm's fairytales in a magic forest (Tue/Wed, 10-11am, Sat/Sun, 1.30-3.30pm).
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Cologne

Rudolfplatz (26.11-23.12)
In this beautiful market, fairytale characters make themselves comfortable on top of the litte stalls. [Read a mummy blogger's adventure with 9flats >](#)
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Experience a real German Christmas near you. But of course Christmas markets have spread from Germany and are now all over the world. Here are some of our favourites...

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Host Michel wishes you 'bon appetit'



A Belgian in the middle of Germany... no, not living in a gingerbread Hansel and Gretel house, but in a romantic [fairytale palace in Nausitz, Thuringia](#). 9flats host (and head-chef) [Michel](#) has lived in Germany for eight years, and he has happily shared with you this very special Christmas recipe.

Duck bonbons (or 'Christmas quackers')



Ingredients (for 4 people)
2 ducks (approx. 2kg)
8 sheets of filo pastry
250g long grain rice
50ml oil
50ml sweet red wine
2 onions, chopped
300g carrots
300g courgettes
300g leeks
100g butter
50g thyme
Bunch of chives, plus parsley, salt and pepper to taste

Method

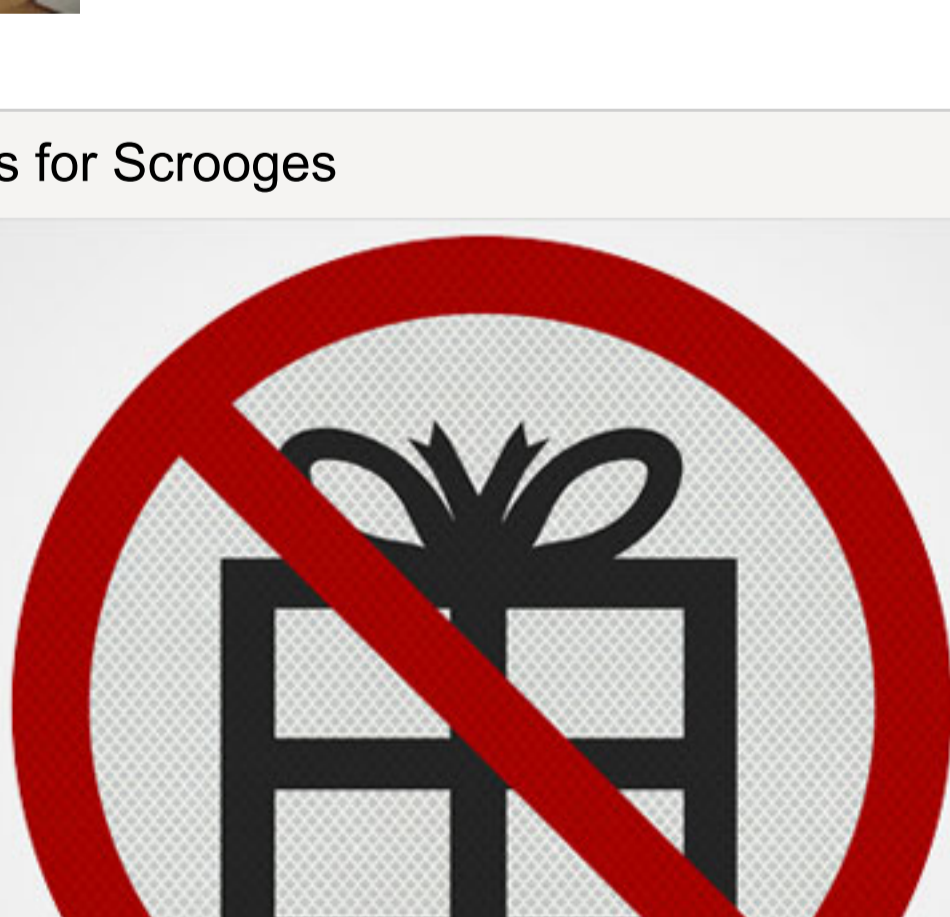
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Season the duck with salt and pepper. Fry it in the oil with the onion and time until golden. Add the wine towards the end. Then add a splash of water and leave for 20 minutes.
3. Remove the meat from the bones and cut into thin strips. Sieve the stock and keep aside to make the sauce later.
4. Boil the rice in salted water.
5. Cut the vegetables into 'julienne' strips (about 6cm long, and 3-5mm thick). Reserve some courgettes and carrots for a garnish. Sweat in a little oil, seasoned with salt, pepper and thyme. When cooked, add the strips of duck.
6. Lay out two sheets of filo pastry, and add around 250g of the duck/vegetable mixture. Roll into a sweet wrapper/christmas cracker shape (see photo). Press together at each end and tie with chives. Make three more parcels.
7. To give the filo pastry some colour, put bonbons in the oven, on the middle shelf for 5 minutes.
8. Now, you can thicken the stock with some flour. Season well.
9. Drain the rice and mix with a little oil and parsley. Press it into into a small bowl or cup, then turn onto warm plates (heated in the oven for 10 minutes at 50°C).
10. Now, place the bonbons next to the rice and pour sauce onto the plate (don't pour it all over it!).
11. Add your garnish.



Michel's 65 qm apartment has space for four guests. There's a good-sized lounge, dining room and kitchen (where you can try out his recipe).

See Michel's accommodation

Survival tips for Scrooges



Not everyone looks forward joyfully to celebrating Christmas. For some, 'the most wonderful time of the year' is the worst time of the year: constant streams of Christmas carols, decoration overkill in shop windows, shopping stress... If you're one of them, here are some survival tips...

Plug your ears

Always carry an mp3 player with you to respond quickly to blaring Christmas music. Metallica always helps.

Give a little

Can't be bothered buying Christmas presents? Tell your friends and family you're going to [donate money to charity instead](#).

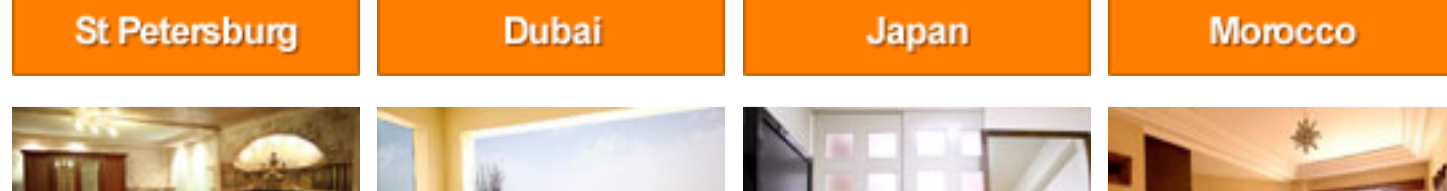
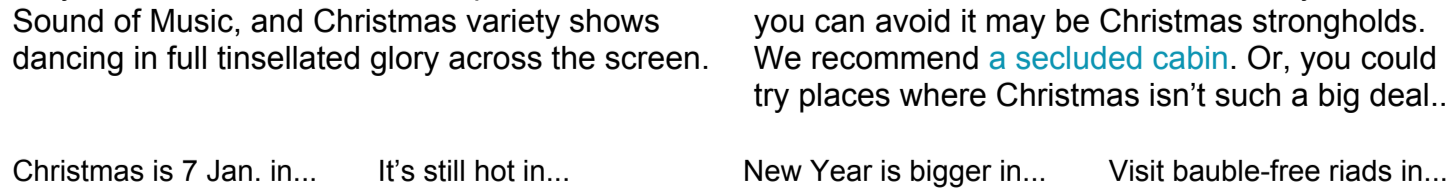
Turn off the TV

So you can avoid the 1,452nd repeat of The Sound of Music, and Christmas variety shows dancing in full tinselled glory across the screen.

Get away

But, beware! Even destinations where you think you can avoid it may be Christmas strongholds. We recommend [a secluded cabin](#). Or, you could try places where Christmas isn't such a big deal...

Christmas is 7 Jan. in... It's still hot in... New Year is bigger in... Visit bauble-free riads in...



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What have fairytales got to do with Christmas?