Your notes

GCSE German: revision notes

Customs, festivals and celebrations

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Christmas and New Year

- Advent: der Adventskalender and der Adventskranz (an advent wreath with four candles). On 6 December (Nikolaustag), children put out a boot, and Nikolaus fills it with sweets.
- **Heiligabend** (Christmas Eve, 24 December) is when most German families give presents (die Bescherung), around der Weihnachtsbaum (the Christmas tree).
- **der Weihnachtsmarkt** (Christmas market) sells Glühwein (mulled wine), Lebkuchen (gingerbread) and gifts.
- **Silvester** (New Year's Eve): **das Feuerwerk** (fireworks) at midnight. Neujahr (New Year's Day). Frohes neues Jahr! (Happy New Year!)

Other festivals

- **Ostern** (Easter): der Osterhase (the Easter bunny) hides Ostereier (Easter eggs).
- Karneval / Fasching (February, before Lent): people dress up (**sich verkleiden**) and there are parades (Umzüge), especially on Rosenmontag in Cologne.
- das Oktoberfest in Munich starts in September: beer tents, fairground rides and traditional clothes (Lederhosen and Dirndl).
- der Tag der Deutschen Einheit (3 October) celebrates the reunification of Germany in 1990.
- Other festivals: Ramadan and das Zuckerfest (Eid al-Fitr, at the end of Ramadan), Diwali, Chanukka (Hanukkah), das chinesische Neujahrsfest.
- Personal celebrations: **der Geburtstag** (birthday), die Hochzeit (wedding), der Muttertag (Mother's Day).

Useful phrases

- **feiern** (to celebrate), **schenken** (to give as a present), **das Geschenk** (present), Geschenke bekommen (to get presents), den Baum schmücken (to decorate the tree).
- die Familie besuchen (to visit family), ein traditionelles Essen essen (to eat a traditional meal), in die Kirche / Moschee / Synagoge gehen.
- Frohe **Weihnachten**! (Happy Christmas!) Frohe **Ostern**! (Happy Easter!) Alles Gute zum Geburtstag! (Happy birthday!)
- Mein Lieblingsfest ist..., weil... (my favourite festival is... because...).

Grammar to use

- The perfect tense for one event: Letztes Jahr haben wir **Weihnachten** bei meinen Großeltern gefeiert.
- The imperfect for description: Es war toll. Es gab viel zu essen (there was a lot to eat).
- Man (people / you): Man isst Lebkuchen (people eat gingerbread).
- Dates: am ersten Januar, am dritten Oktober, am vierundzwanzigsten Dezember.

Key terms

das Fest	festival (celebration)
feiern	to celebrate
Weihnachten	Christmas
Heiligabend	Christmas Eve
Silvester	New Year's Eve
Ostern	Easter
der Weihnachtsmarkt	Christmas market
das Feuerwerk	fireworks
der Umzug	parade (also moving house)
schenken	to give (a present)
das Geschenk	present
sich verkleiden	to dress up (in costume)
der Geburtstag	birthday
der Feiertag	public holiday

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. When do most German families give their Christmas presents?

Your notes

2. What happens on Nikolaustag (6 December)?
3. What is "Silvester"?
4. What does "das Feuerwerk" mean?
5. What does "sich verkleiden" mean?
6. How do you say "Happy birthday" in German?
7. What does "schenken" mean?
8. What is "der Weihnachtsmarkt"?

Answers

1. on Christmas Eve
2. Children find sweets in a boot they put out
3. New Year's Eve
4. fireworks
5. to dress up in a costume
6. Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!
7. to give as a present
8. a Christmas market

What to do next

Practise 14 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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