

‘The Striezel is finally back!’

The 588th Dresdner Striezelmarkt is opening on 23 November

In a few days, the wait will finally be over, with the 588th Dresden Striezelmarkt opening at 4pm on Wednesday 23 November. ‘The last proper Striezelmarkt was nearly three years ago. It has been a hard test of citizens’ and visitors’ patience, and caused intolerable stress for traders and organisers. But now it’s full steam ahead and the Striezel is back!’ says Lord Mayor Dirk Hilbert.

And the setup process is indeed currently in full swing: The Christmas tree – a 22-m-tall giant fir from Striegistal, which has already been decorated – has now been joined by the Ore Mountain candle arch and pyramid. Special installations like the enchanted forest and Wichtelkino, as well as initial attractions that include the nostalgic grand carousel and historic Ferris wheel, are also building up the sense of excitement. Most of the stalls and pavilions are in place, including the popular display workshops of the Dresdner Stollenschutzverband (Dresden Stollen Association) and the Ore Mountain artisans. The structures will continue to be decorated and stocked up, and ultimately connected to power, water and sewage systems, until the market opens.

‘Setting everything up is a science in itself; it’s a game of Tetris for advanced players. But we’re on schedule and don’t seem to have forgotten how to do anything. Over 200 stalls, ranging from arts and crafts to culinary treats, will bring visitors to the Altmarkt, and link up with the markets that were successful in pre-pandemic times’, adds Dr Robert Franke, director of the Office of Economic Development and manager of the municipal markets.

Expanded cultural programme

An expanded cultural programme is set to make the market even more attractive, and it starts right with the opening, with a novelty performance by the Kreuzchor choir. In previous years, the boys only ever sang at the church service directly prior to the opening, but this year they’re taking to the stage at the Striezelmarkt itself with a very special song. ‘Although it is important for me and all of us to ensure everyone enjoys the Christmas market to the fullest, our thoughts are still with the people of Ukraine. The plea that many of us carry in our hearts is something I want to express through music with the Dresden Kreuzchor: Mendelssohn’s Verleih uns Frieden (“Grant Us Peace”) is more appropriate than ever this year. We want peace for ourselves, our country and the people of the world, but most importantly for the people of Ukraine’, says Kreuzkantor Martin Lehmann.

The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra will also be making its Striezelmarkt debut with a specially curated repertoire. ‘Christmas is a celebration of family and joy for many. This year, however, even this festive period is clouded by the current crises we are experiencing in the form of the Ukraine war, the energy shortage and climate change. So it’s all the more important to send signs of hope, community and empathy, which is what Advent and Christmas are also about. And that’s the focus of our “Advent aus dem Palast” (“Christmas time from the palace”) programme, which we will be performing right on the Striezelmarkt stage and daily on our “Red Stage” at the Kulturpalast. It includes performances by our children’s choir and the Philharmonic and Citizens’ Choirs, as well as a bit of chamber music and concerts by Dresden’s amateur choirs. We’re even going to have a whole day of music at the Striezelmarkt, which will involve the choirs, as well as our brass players, the Landesgymnasium für Musik ensemble and a Ukrainian ensemble’, says the orchestra’s general manager Frauke Roth.

And there will of course also be a classical stage programme. 'Guests this year can look forward to 214 events involving some 1900 participants', says cultural manager Alexander Siebecke. Traditional events such as "Dresdner Pfefferkuchenfest" (the Dresden Gingerbread Festival) (Saturday, 26 November), "Dresdner Pyramidenfest" (the Dresden Pyramid Festival) (Sunday, 11 December) and the Pflaumentoffelfest (Saturday, 17 December) also feature on the programme announced today.

The Stollenfest (Saturday, 3 December) is sure to be a highlight as usual. 'We are expecting around 400 participants for the festive procession – including hundreds of Dresden Stollen bakers, fanfare processions, traditional baroque associations, jugglers and affiliated craftsmen's guilds. They will be presenting Dresden's eventful Stollen history in the form of 20 creative floats', says Andreas Wippler, CEO of the Schutzverband Dresdner Stollen e. V. (Dresden Stollen Association). And there is guaranteed to be an appearance by Dresdner Stollenmädchen ('Miss Stollen') Salome Selnack, as patroness of the Stollenfest. In accordance with COVID-19 regulations, the giant Stollens will instead be replaced with 588 individually packaged Stollens for a good cause. The two-pound versions will be sold in a specially created Stollenbox at the Striezelmarkt stage, with the bakers this year donating most of the proceeds to the KinderArche association.

Souvenirs

A number of Striezelmarkt mugs will be taken home as souvenirs for a Pfand (deposit) price of four euros. Made by Neukirch company Kannegießer, this year's mug features an image of composer Heinrich Schütz, for whom 2022 marks 350th years since his death. 10,000 mugs have been pre-produced, but the 588 limited-edition versions decorated with gold and being sold for 24 euros are exclusively available from the Dresden Information Office. This year will also see 5.000 new children's mugs featuring a Little Red Riding Hood motif as a collectors' item.

The Striezeltaler coins, too, will once again be a recognised form of payment at the market. Ten euros will get you eleven coins, which can be redeemed at any Striezelmarkt trader. One Striezeltaler coin is worth one euro. A total of 10,000 have been produced.

Hygiene safety plan

There are currently no specific COVID-19 rules in place. Having worked intensively on the matter, the City of Dresden is effectively prepared to hold the market even if case numbers rise. The general safety plan has been further developed in co-operation with partners from the police, fire and disaster-protection office, municipal enforcement service, traffic supervisory office, sanitation service and Dresden's transport companies. Wilsdruffer Strasse southbound between Postplatz and Pirnaischer Platz will be blocked off from 3am on 17 November to 31 December 2022. In addition to the mobile police station, the German Red Cross and a private security service, the municipal enforcement service (GVD) run by the Ordnungsamt (local regulatory authority) will also be back in operation at the Striezelmarkt. Plus, the GVD officers will have their own market stall at the intersection of Seestrasse/Altmarkt. Marketgoers can report to the Striezelwache security service if they have any questions, require information or need to hand in lost property. To further boost security, a special Wi-Fi network has been set up for marketgoers to use freely. And to make visits to the Striezelmarkt even more hassle-free, this year there will once again be wristbands for children, on which parents can write their telephone numbers.

As usual, these free bands will be provided by City Management Dresden and are available from the Striezelmarkt Tourist Information Office, the mobile police station and City Management Dresden at Haus An der Kreuzkirche 6, among other places.