



OLD WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKET: DECEMBER 2-3; National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. 10/23/23 11 AM

Old World Christmas Market

*The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Invites You to
Kick Off Your Holiday Celebrations in Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

Experience a delightful market with local handcrafted items, delicious treats, entertainment, and activities for people of all ages. The Old World Christmas Market, inspired by traditional European markets, is an enchanted celebration of culture, community, and holiday cheer. It is free for the entire weekend, including admission to all NCSML galleries.

Traditional European Christmas Markets are typically found outside in the town square, so initially NCSML's was outside — in Czech Village, in the parking lot, and on the lawn by the river. It was lovely. However, it was very cold and sometimes muddy. After a few years of trying it outside, the event moved indoors and was expanded into the galleries with even more activities for families to enjoy!

As the museum confirms its final plans, please check our website (www.ncsml.org) for additional vendors, activities, and schedules. One thing's for sure: Saturday hours will be extended, and all admission fees waived during the celebration.

New this year is a pop-up restaurant featuring authentic Czech and Slovak foods (opens at 11 a.m. on both days). As always, Old World Christmas Market features:

- Wreath Raffle (Winners drawn on Sunday at 3 p.m.)
- Cookie Walk (Saturday at 9:30 a.m. – noon, or as long as supplies last)
- Kolache Café
- Live Entertainment
- Visits from Svatý Mikuláš
- Photo Ops in front of the tree decorated with traditional ornaments (Saturday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
- Family-Friendly Crafts both days. Come make paper doll finger puppets featuring Czech and Slovak fairy tale characters in kroje. Cut out and color pre-made puppets or design your own and have fun making up stories with them! No one is too young or too old to enjoy!



THE TREE IN ROZEK GRAND HALL

Standing guard over Rozek Grand Hall is a 13.5-foot-tall Christmas tree decorated with more than 1,500 ornaments. Most are hand-made and have special meanings drawn from Christianity and Czech folklore.

The Angel represents the angel who appeared before Mary, announcing that she would be the mother of Jesus. Strung popcorn signifies the rope Joseph held as he led the donkey to Bethlehem. Walnuts represent the gifts from the Three Wise Men. Oranges are a special fruit only available during the Christmas season. Wheat is a symbol of life, prosperity, and nourishment.

Cloth at the base of the tree represents Jesus' swaddling clothes. Apples remind us of Adam and Eve, or are decorated with raisins on toothpicks to look like a hedgehog. A White Dove is placed near the top of the tree to evoke peace. Carrots are often given to a new wife to bring good luck in the kitchen. Mushrooms are considered to be lucky and mean good fortune is at hand. Pine cones and evergreen trees symbolize eternal life. Moravian stars signify the beginning of Advent.



Vendors at the 2023 Old World Christmas Market

The vendor marketplace at OWCM is full of artisan vendors who are chosen based on quality and craftsmanship. No mass-manufactured products or name brands are allowed. If you're looking for unique gifts, you'll be in the right place. A sampling of the 2023 vendors:

[CR Beads](#)

Czech Heritage Foundation Wreath Raffle

[Echoes of the East](#)

[Hue Hill](#)

[Lori Ann's Candies](#)

Midwest Basket Guild

[Myrtle Tyrtle Creation – Sewing and Craft Business](#)

[Pasta of the Prairie](#)

[Pickle Creek Herbs](#)

[The Barkery LLC](#)

The Crafty Needle

[The Wright Touch Catering Company](#)

More vendors will be announced, so please visit ncsml.org/ncsml-events/old-world-christmas-market/



MASTER CZECH FOLK ARTIST MARJ NEJDL

The Christmas season is a very special time at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, but one of the true heroes of the holiday is Master Czech Folk Artist Marj NejdI. Year round, Marj donates her precious time and extensive talent to hand paint personal messages on mouth-blown glass ornaments sold in the Museum Store.

Marj is a first-generation Czech-American and comes from a long line of creative people. She learned egg decorating from her uncle when she was a child, but she feels her artistic flair comes from her mother. She paints wax-resist Czechoslovakian decorated eggs for Easter, employing a variety of traditional techniques, and also works with wood, ceramics, glass and “anything with a good surface for painting.”

But perhaps her favorite time of year is Christmas. “I love it, and I love coming into the museum during December, because everybody’s in a good mood, and it’s fun,” Marj says.

The Museum Store: A Family Tradition

Finish your shopping extravaganza in our award-winning museum store, where you can find everything from pickle ornaments to history. The Museum Store’s famous annual ornament sale will be happening during OWCM.

The store offers a wide variety of items that will appeal to visitors whether or not they have Czech or Slovak heritage. Though it is perceived as a high-end museum store, the inventory features a wide variety of price points.



NCSML's eighth annual limited edition 2023 collector's ornament has been delivered and is in stock. The store is celebrating another year of its custom-designed collector's ornament by the Czech-American Master Folk Artist, Marj NejdI. Inspired by the beauty of the traditional folk designs, Marj has created yet another stunning ornament to add to existing collections — or to begin NEW collections.



Totally free admission to all galleries, permanent and travelling

Don't miss the one-of-a-kind exhibition of priceless antique and modern garnets from the National Museum in Prague: ***Brilliant Bohemian Garnets***. This exhibit is only making one stop in America, and that's in Iowa. Once it returns to the Czech Republic, it will become part of Prague's permanent exhibit.

Sanctuary: a series of paintings on wood panels inspired by Slovak folk art patterns. Artist Zuzka Vaclavik is a dual citizen of the United States and Slovakia. She grew up in Germany, where she took art lessons from a Czech painter. Vaclavik has exhibited her work in New York, California, Cambodia, Germany, Austria, and across the United States.

Noah Breuer — Reclamation: Through research trips to his family company's archive of fabric samples and designs held at The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, artist Noah Breuer has amassed a rich collection of primary source material in the form of digital scans depicting designs, and printed fabric and letters of correspondence. He creates an array of printed works that not only tell his family's story of persecution and emigration, but also raise questions about labor, authorship, and appropriation.



Visit **NCSML's permanent exhibits**, including *Faces of Freedom: The Czech and Slovak Journey*, and the Sleger Immigrant Home.

Beyond the Museum and Into the Neighborhoods

In conjunction with OWCM, “The District” (Czech Village and New Bohemia) will be decked out and hosting a variety of holiday-themed events. NCSML sits on the Cedar River, overlooking the Bridge of Lions, which connects Czech Village to New Bohemia (New Bo). On Friday night, December 1, The Czech Village Association will be lighting a large Christmas tree in the center of the museum’s circle drive. The Royal Court will be there to grace the festivities.

Czech Village and New Bo are two thriving historic neighborhoods, full of award-winning restaurants, live music, vibrant art, culture, and fun for all ages. The “Very Cherry Art Sale” and open house will be open Saturday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., and the gallery will be bursting at the seams with handmade items for sale by local artists. New Bo’s historic Cherry Building, housing a creative center for both artists and entrepreneurs, is located at 329 10th Ave SE (across the river from the museum).

On the Czech Village side of the bridge, The Lion Bridge Brewing Company is hosting a workshop in their tap room from 2 to 4 p.m. Participants will make a holiday tree from clay using various hand building techniques. Add garlands, ornaments, texture, and glaze —the decorative options are endless! The projects will then be taken back to the Iowa Ceramics Center and Glass Studio and fired in their kilns. Finished projects, approximately four inches by four inches, will be ready for pickup at ICCGS three weeks later.

For more information about other happenings in the district, go to the-district.org.

(sidebar)

OWCM AT A GLANCE

- Saturday, December 2, 9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- Sunday, December 3, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Address:
1400 Inspiration Place SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Phone: 319-362-8500
- Parking options:
Parking garage entrance is located on 15th Ave. Free to use and handicap accessible.
Outdoor parking: Next to the museum on 15th Ave. and across the street in Czech Village.
- The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is fully ADA accessible. For additional information, assistance, or an accommodation, please call **319-362-8500** or



OLD WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKET: DECEMBER 2-3; National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. 10/23/23 11 AM

email info@ncsml.org. If you need personal assistance before attending the museum, please contact Visitors Services Coordinators at 319-362-8500.



OLD WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKET: DECEMBER 2-3; National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. 10/23/23 11 AM

PHOTOGRAPHS AND GRAPHICS





SVATÝ MIKULÁŠ

Early in December, Svatý Mikuláš (aka Father Christmas), along with Čert and Anděl (the Devil and Angel) would go around to all the children and ask them if they had been good that year. The kids would then recite a poem or sing a song. If they had been good, the angel rewarded them with a treat of fruit, candy, or a small toy. If they were naughty, the devil didn't give them coal — that had value — but a rotten potato! Sometimes if the kid was particularly naughty that year, the devil would threaten to toss them into his sack and take them with him.



OLD WORLD CHRISTMAS MARKET: DECEMBER 2-3; National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. 10/23/23 11 AM

THE GALLERIES ARE OPEN AND ADMISSION IS FREE

PERMANENT GALLERY: *Faces of Freedom*



Tatra and Communist Era, Puppetry: Playful or Political?



Kroje on Parade, Wenceslaus Square at the height of the Velvet Revolution