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## **Bratislava Xmas market sees bumper crowds**

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0612/061219-xmas.html>

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	<b>19<sup>th</sup> December, 2006</b>

## THE ARTICLE

### **Bratislava Xmas market sees bumper crowds**

This year's annual Christmas market in Bratislava, Slovakia, has opened. The first week saw bumper crowds attend. The historical old town square bustles with people jostling to buy the various Christmas goodies on sale. These range from woollen hats and scarves to decorative candles and Bratislava T-shirts.

At night, the place heaves with partygoers all eager to enjoy the festive spirit that Xmas brings. Decorative stalls sell hot red or white wine and traditional foods like pork and chicken burgers. There is also the more unusual black poppy pancakes or goose fat and raw onion that is spread on sliced bread.

Tourists from the UK flock to Slovakia's capital using cheap airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the new, cheap 'in' place to visit. It attracts many partygoers from England, who come to participate in single-sex, pre-wedding parties. These celebrations, "stag" nights for the groom and his male friends; "hen" nights for the bride-to-be and her female companions, are big revenue earners for Bratislava.

A downside for locals again this Christmas is Bratislava's outdoor plastic ice rink. The fake "Winter Wonderland" ice rink in the downtown area is a cost cutting exercise of the city mayor. However, the plastic ice cuts no ice with the locals. Lifelong enthusiasts of the old ice rink have stayed away en mass. Sadly the frozen ice rink is now melting away from peoples' minds.

## START

**1. DICTATION:** The teacher will read to you slowly and clearly the first half of the first paragraph, repeating passages where necessary. Students will write down the speech. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again.

Self correct your work. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total no of errors. Less than 5 is very good. 10 are acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than 20 - we need to do some work!

**2. CHRISTMAS MARKETS:** Walk around the class and find out what people know about Christmas markets. Share your findings with new partners / the class.

**3. READING:** Get students to read the passage aloud. Swap readers every paragraph.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Students circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting (circle) and which are most boring (underline).

*Bratislava / Xmas markets / Prague / bumper crowds / Slovakia / parties / cheap airlines / candles / scarves & woollen hats / hot wine / ice rinks / Vienna*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Student A thinks Bratislava is a better place to visit than Prague. Student B thinks Prague is better to visit than Bratislava. Debate this with your partner.

**7. CHRISTMAS MARKETS:** Name ten things you would buy at a Christmas market.

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

## **8. ROLE PLAY: SPEAKING 1: BRATISLAVA CHRISTMAS MARKET.**

In pairs, imagine you are at a Christmas market.

**Student(s) A** is/are on a Christmas shopping trip. You would like to buy some local souvenirs to take home for your family and friends.

**Student(s) B** is/are Christmas market stallholder(s).

**Activity: Student(s) A** visit various stalls (run by student B), seeing what is for sale. Buy some gifts. Move round to other stallholders (students B). Try the stalls selling Xmas local drinks or food.

Happy Christmas shopping!

**The teacher** will select some students to see what they bought.

**9. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A believe plastic ice rinks are better than ice rinks with real ice. Students B believe they aren't - that real ice is better. Debate this with your partners. Change partners often.

**10. ONE MINUTE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the words **Christmas market**. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**11. FIVE MINUTES:** Choose six of these words. Write three sentences using two words in each. Try to associate them with **Christmas market**. Discuss with your partner. Spend five minutes on this exercise.

Note this exercise can be adapted to allow more 'words' you have written down to be included in each sentence etc.

### 13. ROLE PLAY: SPEAKING 2: ICE RINK

#### 'Exclusive' TV interview with the old town mayor of Bratislava!

**Student A.** Imagine you are a TA3 (the local Slovak TV news station) television news reporter. You have an 'exclusive' interview with the mayor of the historic old town of Bratislava. Prepare five questions you want to ask the mayor about the controversial plastic ice rink. Consider why the ice rink is back yet no one goes on it.

**Student B.** You are the mayor of the historical old town in Bratislava. (Choose whether you are the former or new mayor!) Think of five things (write them down) you want to mention to the country/world about your decision to replace the original ice with plastic for the second year running. Think about what you intend to do in the future.

**Role play:** Student A asks Student B (the mayor) your questions. Listen to the Mayor's response. Argue with him/her.

The teacher will select some students to role play their situations in front of the class.

**14. SENTENCE STARTERS:** With your partner(s), finish these sentence starters. Change partner(s) and talk about the sentences you made.

- a. The Christmas market \_\_\_\_\_
- b. TA3 reported \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Tourists visiting \_\_\_\_\_
- d. In an interview \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Candles \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Traditional foods \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Christmas \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Snow fell \_\_\_\_\_

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** After reading the article decide whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Lots of people bumped into each other at a Bratislava market. T / F
- b. Market-goers decorated Xmas candles and made festive T-shirts. T / F
- c. Partygoers drank hot red wine. T / F
- d. A famous Slovakian food is black poppy pancake sandwiches. T / F
- e. Fewer and fewer tourists are visiting Slovakia. T / F
- f. English singles visit Bratislava to find boyfriends and girlfriends. T / F
- g. Bratislava is famous for having an ice rink made from plastic. T / F
- h. The ice rink makes people's hearts melt. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. Christmas       | money makers        |
| b. bustles         | trendy              |
| c. partygoers      | congregate          |
| d. festive         | fans                |
| e. flock           | buzzes              |
| f. in              | makes no impression |
| g. revenue earners | revelers            |
| h. downside        | Xmas                |
| i. cuts no ice     | drawback            |
| j. enthusiasts     | Christmassy         |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. This year's                                 | buy the various Christmas goodies |
| b. The first week saw bumper                   | cutting exercise                  |
| c. bustles with people jostling to             | to Slovakia's capital             |
| d. eager to enjoy the festive                  | annual Christmas market           |
| e. Tourists from the UK flock                  | and her female companions         |
| f. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the | earners for Bratislava            |
| g. the bride-to-be                             | crowds attend                     |
| h. big revenue                                 | no ice with the locals            |
| i. a cost                                      | new, cheap 'in' place to visit    |
| j. the plastic ice cuts                        | spirit that Xmas brings           |

## GAP FILL: READING

Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### Bratislava Christmas market sees bumper crowds

This year's \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas market in Bratislava, Slovakia, has opened. The first week saw bumper crowds \_\_\_\_\_. The historical old town square bustles with people jostling to buy the various Christmas \_\_\_\_\_ on sale. These range from woollen hats and scarves to \_\_\_\_\_ candles and Bratislava T-shirts.

At night, the place \_\_\_\_\_ with partygoers all \_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy the festive \_\_\_\_\_ that Xmas brings. Decorative stalls sell hot red or white wine and traditional foods like pork and chicken burgers. There is also the more unusual black poppy pancakes or goose fat and raw onion that is \_\_\_\_\_ on sliced bread.

Tourists from the UK \_\_\_\_\_ to Slovakia's capital using cheap airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the new, cheap '\_\_\_\_\_' place to visit. It attracts many \_\_\_\_\_ from England, who come to participate in single-sex, pre-wedding parties. These celebrations, "stag" nights for the groom and his male friends; "hen" nights for the bride-to-be and her female \_\_\_\_\_, are big revenue earners for Bratislava.

A \_\_\_\_\_ for locals again this Christmas is Bratislava's outdoor plastic ice rink. The \_\_\_\_\_ "Winter Wonderland" ice rink in the downtown area is a cost cutting exercise of the city mayor. However, the plastic ice cuts no ice with the locals. \_\_\_\_\_ enthusiasts of the old ice rink have stayed away en masse. Sadly the frozen ice rink is now \_\_\_\_\_ away from peoples' minds.

*decorative*  
*eager*  
*attend*  
*spirit*  
*goodies*  
*annual*  
*spread*  
*heaves*

*companions*  
*fake*  
*melting*  
*partygoers*  
*flock*  
*downside*  
*in*  
*lifelong*

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Bratislava Christmas market sees bumper crowds

This \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas market in Bratislava, Slovakia, has opened. The first week saw bumper \_\_\_\_\_. The historical old town square bustles with people jostling to buy the various Christmas \_\_\_\_\_. These range from woollen hats and scarves to decorative candles and Bratislava T-shirts.

At night, the place heaves with partygoers all \_\_\_\_\_ the festive spirit that Xmas brings. Decorative stalls sell hot red or white wine and traditional foods like pork and chicken burgers. There is also the more unusual black poppy pancakes or goose fat and raw onion that \_\_\_\_\_ sliced bread.

Tourists from the UK flock to Slovakia's capital using cheap airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the new, cheap \_\_\_\_\_ visit. It attracts many partygoers from England, who come \_\_\_\_\_ single-sex, pre-wedding parties. These celebrations, "stag" nights for the groom and his male friends; "hen" nights for \_\_\_\_\_ and her female companions, are big revenue earners for Bratislava.

A \_\_\_\_\_ again this Christmas is Bratislava's outdoor plastic ice rink. The fake "Winter Wonderland" ice rink in the downtown area \_\_\_\_\_ of the city mayor. However, the plastic ice cuts no ice with the locals. Lifelong enthusiasts of the old ice rink have stayed away en masse. Sadly the frozen ice rink is now \_\_\_\_\_ peoples' minds.



## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**Christmas**' and '**market**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text or subject in question.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| • Central Europe     | • traditional foods |
| • Ryanair            | • ice               |
| • Continental Europe | • downtown          |
| • doctors            | • bumper            |
| • plastic            | • candles           |
| • sliced bread       | • en mass           |

## DISCUSSION

### **STUDENT A's QUESTIONS** (Do not show these to student B)

1. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
2. Have you ever visited a Christmas market?
3. Do you like Christmas?
4. What is your opinion of Christmas?
5. What makes a Christmas market so special?
6. Do you like markets?
7. Have you ever tried any of the local foods sold at a market?
8. Do you like to party in the lead up to Christmas or any other festive time?
9. Are you a last minute Christmas shopper?
10. What is the best bit of Christmas for you?

### **STUDENT B's QUESTIONS** (Do not show these to student A)

1. Did you like reading this article?
2. What do you think about what you read?
3. Did you know where Bratislava was before this lesson?
4. What do you think is the difference between Christmas in Slovakia and Christmas elsewhere?
5. Have you been to anything similar to a stag or hen night in your country?
6. What do you put on top of the Christmas tree?
7. Have you ever been ice-skating?
8. What sports or games are played in your country over holiday times?
9. Are you happy with the decisions made by your local government?
10. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

## HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet. Find out information about Bratislava. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. ICE RINK: NEWS ARTICLE:** You are a reporter for *The Slovak Spectator* – the expat English language newspaper in Bratislava. Write a feature on the city's plastic ice rink. Interview (imagine) some locals. Find out their opinions on it. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which entry was best and why?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to *The Slovak Spectator* in Bratislava. Tell them about your visit to Bratislava's Christmas market. Ask three questions about it. Show your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your classmates will write a reply.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. Christmas       | Xmas                |
| b. bustles         | buzzes              |
| c. partygoers      | revelers            |
| d. festive         | Christmassy         |
| e. flock           | congregate          |
| f. in              | trendy              |
| g. revenue earners | money makers        |
| h. downside        | drawback            |
| i. cuts no ice     | makes no impression |
| j. enthusiasts     | fans                |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. This year's                                 | annual Christmas market           |
| b. The first week saw bumper                   | crowds attend                     |
| c. bustles with people jostling to             | buy the various Christmas goodies |
| d. eager to enjoy the festive                  | spirit that Xmas brings           |
| e. Tourists from the UK flock                  | to Slovakia's capital             |
| f. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the | new, cheap 'in' place to visit    |
| g. the bride-to-be                             | and her female companions         |
| h. big revenue                                 | earners for Bratislava            |
| i. a cost                                      | cutting exercise                  |
| j. the plastic ice cuts                        | no ice with the locals            |

### GAP FILL:

#### Bratislava Christmas market sees bumper crowds

This year's **annual** Christmas market in Bratislava, Slovakia, has opened. The first week saw bumper crowds **attend**. The historical old town square bustles with people jostling to buy the various Christmas **goodies** on sale. These range from woollen hats and scarves to **decorative** candles and Bratislava T-shirts.

At night, the place **heaves** with partygoers all **eager** to enjoy the festive **spirit** that Xmas brings. Decorative stalls sell hot red or white wine and traditional foods like pork and chicken burgers. There is also the more unusual black poppy pancakes or goose fat and raw onion that is **spread** on sliced bread.

Tourists from the UK **flock** to Slovakia's capital using cheap airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair. Central Europe is increasingly becoming the new, cheap 'in' place to visit. It attracts many **partygoers** from England, who come to participate in single-sex, pre-wedding parties. These celebrations, "stag" nights for the groom and his male friends; "hen" nights for the bride-to-be and her female **companions**, are big revenue earners for Bratislava.

A **downside** for locals again this Christmas is Bratislava's outdoor plastic ice rink. The **fake** "Winter Wonderland" ice rink in the downtown area is a cost cutting exercise of the city mayor. However, the plastic ice cuts no ice with the locals. **Lifelong** enthusiasts of the old ice rink have stayed away en masse. Sadly the frozen ice rink is now **melting** away from peoples' minds.