



## Advent Calendar

Some form of the Advent Calendar has been used for more than 150 years and becomes increasingly popular every year. From traditional calendar to calendars that feature popular collectibles and themes, there is a calendar for everyone.

The origin of the calendar, like so many of our Christmas traditions, started in Germany in the 19th century. Different methods of counting down the days to the celebration of Christmas were used.

Drawing a chalk line to mark off the days, later lighting a candle every night or putting up small religious pictures marked each day until Christmas. The first printed calendar was produced by Gerhard Lang in Germany. When he was a child, his mother attached little candies to a piece of cardboard and each day Gerhard would take one off. His first (printed) calendar consisted of miniature colored pictures that would be attached to a piece of cardboard each day in December. Later Advent calendars were made with little doors to open on each day. The child might find a small piece of candy, a Christmas picture, a religious picture or a bible verse.

The German calendars were sold until World War II, at which time production was stopped due to the war shortages. After the war, the production of calendars resumed in 1946 by Richard Selmer. Selmer credits President Eisenhower with helping the tradition grow in the United States during his term of office. A newspaper article at the time showed the Eisenhower grandchildren with The Little Town Advent calendar.

The first Advent calendars were based on 24 days with Christmas Eve as the last night to either put up a picture or take a candy. Today, the traditional German calendars still show 24 days, but in the United States, it's not uncommon to also find ones with 25 days -- the last opening to occur on Christmas Day.

