***ADDITIONAL INFROMATION ON AUGSBURG, GERMANY***

**MAGICAL CHRISTMAS MARKETS:**

**I know we just celebrated Christmas but tell me about the German experience at Christmas. I have always been fascinated by the beautiful Christmas markets.**

For the Christmas markets, stalls are typically set up on the market square. The stalls are all decorated with fir green and Christmas ornaments. You can buy hand poured candles, hats, mittens and gloves, Christmas ornaments and nativity scenes, books, essential oils, handmade soaps, handmade jewelry, pottery and of course food. Lots of food. Grilled sausages (Bratwürste), crepes, all kinds of candy, e.g. roasted almonds (gebrannte Mandeln) and gingerbread, chestnuts, and mulled wine and punch (a warm drink made out of fruit juice (apple, orange, elderberry) and spices like cinnamon, clove, and cardamom).

It's best at the Christmas market when it's dark outside and all the little lights are on. Then you are surrounded by a cozy darkness and the booths shine with a Christmas glow. There is a delicious smell of spices, sausages and sweet treats everywhere. Sometimes musicians play Christmas carols and if you get cold there is a warm punch.

**Tell me a little more about some of the traditional foods you serve during Christmas?**

First of all there are Christmas cookies. Typically we start baking in November so we can enjoy them during December, especially on the four sundays of Advent. There are tons of different recipes. Most famous are Zimtsterne (cinnamon stars; https://baketotheroots.de/zimtsterne/),Kokosmakronen (coconut macaroons; https://baketotheroots.de/coconut-macaroons/), Springerle (in south Germany; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZBZ-MNoHFE; we eat them of course uncoloured) and Ausstecherle (simple Christmas cookies; https://baketotheroots.de/bunte-ausstecherle/).

The “-le” found as an ending to some of these cookie names is a belittling and a typical sign of the swabian dialect spoken in south-western Germany – currently referred to as “the Länd” (https://www.thelaend.de/en/).

**GERMAN SWEETS TO BAKE:** But there are also treats like baked apples (https://baketotheroots.de/baked-apples-with-marzipan-and-pecans/) and roasted almonds (https://www.internationaldessertsblog.com/german-gebrannte-mandeln-cinnamon-sugared-almonds/) and for Christmas eve dinner we have roast goose (too much for a family of four) or roast duck with potato dumplings and red cabbage (https://eatsmarter.com/recipes/roast-duck-with-red-cabbage-and-dumplings).

**BRIDGE INFORMATION:** The old town of Augsburg is criss-crossed by many canals. That is our little Venice. Actually Augsburg has more bridges than Venice (https://wassersystem-augsburg.de/en/history#flows).