



Spielwarenmesse milestones 1949–2026: an overview

- 1949** Four visionary entrepreneurs, Carl Ehmann (Märklin), Ernst Theodor Horn (Chief Executive Officer of the German Toy Industry Association), Arno Drottboom (Director of VEDES) and Hans Mangold (GAMA) decide to come together and stage a trade fair for toys in Nuremberg.
- 1950** The first German Toy Fair takes place from 12 to 18 March 1950 with 351 exhibitors and 4,300 buyers – 600 of them from abroad. The fair is opened by the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, Ludwig Erhard, and takes place in and around the Wieseler Haus in Nuremberg. After this successful premiere, the Fair Committee and 46 other companies form a limited liability co-operative. The Managing Board Members are Ernst Theodor Horn and Fritz Drescher.
- 1951** The rocking horse replaces the Nuremberg city tower as the emblem for the fair and is subsequently retained by the Spielwarenmesse in varying forms.
- 1956** Fritz Drescher becomes the sole Managing Director of Spielwarenmesse eG.
- 1957** The number of attendees at the Spielwarenmesse breaks the 10,000 barrier with 11,500 visitors, 4,000 of them from abroad.
- 1958** The Nuremberg Spielwarenmesse opens up to exhibitors worldwide and the name is changed from the German Toy Fair to the International Spielwarenmesse Nürnberg. With the invitation of international exhibitors, foreign companies become a force for growth, with 60 of the 830 exhibitors at the 1958 fair coming from abroad. The following year, this figure is to be doubled and it has been rising steadily ever since. One-third of the 12,000 visitors are guests from abroad.
- 1973** The International Toy Fair moves into the newly constructed exhibition centre in Nuremberg-Langwasser, which was built in record time. With an overall exhibition space of 52,000 m², this provides enough area to offer a consistent product group structure for the first time.
- 1974** On 1 April 1974, Dr Benno Korbmacher – Chief Executive Officer of the German Toy Industry Association – takes over as Managing Director of Spielwarenmesse eG. He negotiates with Messehallen GmbH, a forerunner of today's NürnbergMesse GmbH, for further expansion of the exhibition centre. Simultaneously, he succeeds in further raising the global standing of the fair.
- 1977** Visitor numbers reach over 30,000 for the first time. 1,567 toy manufacturers – including 644 international companies – exhibit at the fair.



- 1984** 14 December 1984 sees the opening of the multipurpose Frankenhalle, providing the Spielwarenmesse with an extra 10,000 m² of exhibition space.
- 1991** The international character of the Spielwarenmesse continues to be strengthened, and the total number of exhibitors has now reached over 2,000. Of the 2,078 companies, 938 are from abroad. Among the 51,140 visitors, 15,737 are international guests.
- 1996** Gerd Bise becomes Chair of the Executive Board.
- 1997** With the increasing marketing activity worldwide comes a need to modify the logo and the name of the event, which subsequently becomes the 'Spielwarenmesse International Toy Fair Nürnberg'.
- 1998** Hall 12.2 introduces a fresh, new type of exhibition stand to the Spielwarenmesse in 1998: the new concept of the permanent stand. Roughly 30 international businesses, some of them world-famous brands, rent stand space for the entire year.
- 1999** The Spielwarenmesse International Toy Fair Nürnberg celebrates 50 years of existence. The book '50 years of Spielwarenmesse Nürnberg. The story of a success' is published for the occasion.
- 2001** German Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder opens the 52nd Spielwarenmesse International Toy Fair Nürnberg.
- 2002** Dr. Hans-Juergen Richter takes over as interim Chair of Spielwarenmesse eG from 26 April until 1 December 2002, when Ernst Kick becomes the new Board Spokesperson at Spielwarenmesse eG. In June of the following year, Ernst Kick is appointed Chair of the Executive Board.
- 2003** German President Johannes Rau opens the 2003 Spielwarenmesse.
- 2004** The Spielwarenmesse launches its new product campaign with the introduction of the InnovationCenter to present new products and to reward the most innovative toy ideas with the ToyAward. The Industry Forum (Toy Business Forum from 2009 onwards) also celebrates a successful premiere, with presentations putting the spotlight on sharing knowledge and experiences.
- 2005** From 1 April 2005, Dr. Hans-Juergen Richter takes on responsibility for of the Legal and Membership Affairs of the Spielwarenmesse eG as an additional Board member.

For the 2005 Spielwarenmesse, the marketing initiative 'Enjoy Toy Fair City' (later to become 'ToyCity') is launched in collaboration with Spielwarenmesse eG.



2007 With the newly built Hall 4A, the gross area now available for the Spielwarenmesse is 160,000 m², allowing the fair to rearrange its hall allocations and product areas to meet visitor requirements.

2009 The Spielwarenmesse International Toy Fair celebrates its 60th anniversary. German Federal Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel opens the fair.

For the first time, a shared stand is provided for Chinese exhibitors offering high quality 'Made in China' toys.

2013 The word 'Spielwarenmesse' is henceforth protected by the German Patent and Trade Mark Office. In the future, the event will be called the 'Spielwarenmesse'; the previous addition to the name - 'International Toy Fair Nürnberg' - is dropped.

2018 A new record is set at the 2018 fair, with 2,902 exhibitors from 68 countries.

2021 In view of the continuing coronavirus situation, the Spielwarenmesse is cancelled. In its place, 'Spielwarenmesse BrandNew' presents a digital preview of products.

Florian Hess, Jens Pflüger and Christian Ulrich (Spokesperson) take over as the new trio.

2022 Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, the Spielwarenmesse is again cancelled. To present their products and optimise networking opportunities, exhibitors, retailers and media representatives gather online on the new Spielwarenmesse Digital business platform.

2025 A new hall arrangement awaits those attending the 74th Spielwarenmesse. The architecturally spectacular Hall 3C at the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre is used for the first time. In addition, the presentation area Toy Business Forum celebrates 20 years with a new concept and design.

Spielwarenmesse eG marks its 75th anniversary as a company in 2025.

2026 Spielwarenmesse takes place in Nuremberg for the 75th time.

Image material is available at www.spielwarenmesse.de/media.

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Spielwarenmesse®

The world's leading event for the sector – that's the Spielwarenmesse®. At this B2B event, key players as well as startups present their innovations and trends to retailers from all over the globe, live in Nuremberg. Alongside the extensive range of products, participants also gain a wealth of inspiration for day-to-day business together with valuable knowledge and useful guidance on the market, at what is for them the most significant industry gathering. The event is complemented by year-round coverage of themes, analyses and insights from the multifunctional platform Spielwarenmesse Digital and the e-journal 'Spirit of Play'. Since 2013, the term Spielwarenmesse® has been a protected word mark in Germany.

Fair date: Spielwarenmesse®, Tuesday to Saturday, 27 – 31 Jan 2026