

The Schultüte, or school cone, is a longstanding first day of school tradition dating back to the early 1800s. First recorded in the states of Sachsen and Thüringen, parents would bring decorated cones filled with candies and other goodies to the teacher who would then present them to the first grade children on the first day of school. Children were told that every teacher had a “Schultütenbaum” (school cone tree) growing in the garden and when the fruit was ripe, it was time for school to begin.

The tradition began in the larger cities of Jena, Dresden and Leipzig, but quickly spread to rural areas and across Germany and Austria. The cones can be almost as big as a kindergartner and contain sweets, toys, school supplies and even new clothes . . . anything to make the anxiously awaited first day of school a little sweeter.