

United Kingdom



Father Christmas / Santa

Children leave stockings out on Christmas Eve for Father Christmas to come and fill with presents.



Christmas Crackers

Traditionally people pull crackers at the dinner table on Christmas Day. The cracker makes a loud 'crack' sound normally contains a paper hat, a joke and a small gift.

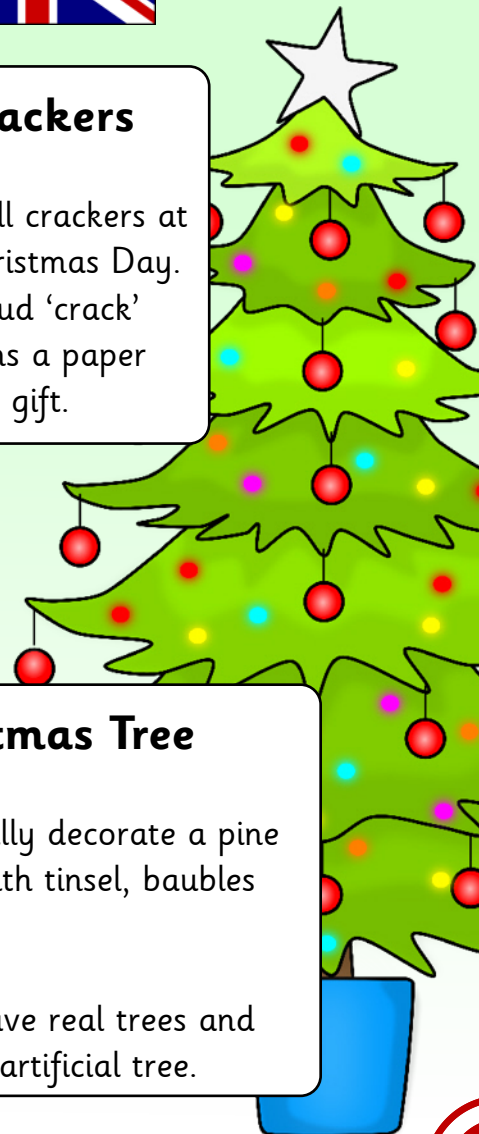


Bauble

Christmas Tree

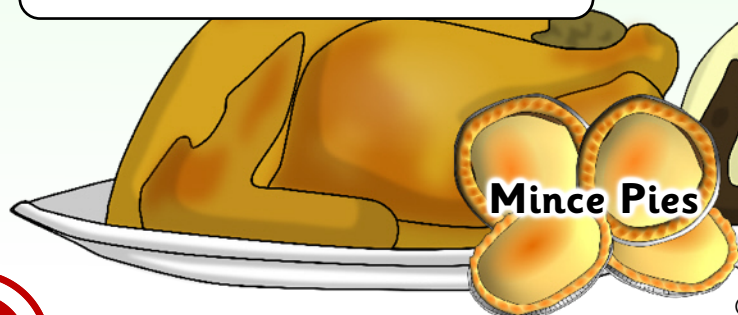
The family usually decorate a pine tree at home with tinsel, baubles and lights.

Some people have real trees and others have an artificial tree.



Roast Turkey

The whole family enjoy a large dinner together on Christmas Day. It is traditional to cook roast turkey, roast vegetables and sometimes bacon and sausages.



Christmas Pudding

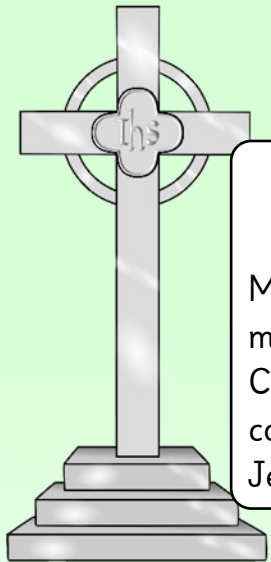
Cracker

Mince Pies

Spain



¡Feliz Navidad!



La Misa Del Gallo

Many people go to a midnight mass called 'The Mass of the Cockerel' because it is said a cockerel crowed the night that Jesus was born.



Roscón

A cake traditionally eaten at Epiphany.



'The Magic Kings'

Los Reyes Magos

In Spain, the largest Christmas celebrations don't happen until January 6th. This is when they celebrate 'The Magic Kings'. This marks Epiphany when the kings brought gifts to the baby Jesus. Children receive some presents on Christmas Day, but most gifts are opened on Epiphany. The family gather for a large dinner too.

Christmas Eve Dinner

Most families have the main meal the evening before Christmas. It traditionally includes turkey stuffed with mushrooms, but in the north of Spain it is common to eat seafood.



Belén Nativity Scene

Nativity Scene

It is very common for people to make ornate and detailed Nativity scenes in their homes, called 'Belénes'. Most churches also have large and impressive Belénes.

Argentina



**iFeliz
Navidad!**



Advent

Many people in Argentina are Catholic and celebrate Advent which marks the 4 Sundays and weeks before Christmas.



Christmas Decorations

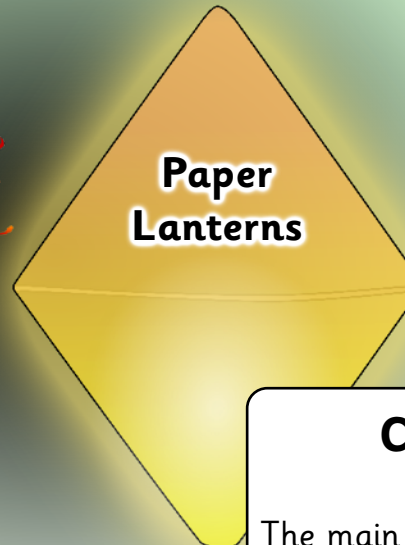
House are decorated with lights and wreaths coloured green, gold, red and white flowers. Red and white garlands are also hung on the doors of houses. Christmas trees are also very popular.



Fireworks



Paper Lanterns



Barbecue



Christmas Eve

The main celebrations happen on Christmas Eve when the family gather for a large meal together. The weather is usually warm so people will often eat outside, sometimes with a barbecue. At midnight fireworks are traditionally set off along with 'globos' which are paper lanterns that float into the sky when lit.

Nativity Scene



Germany

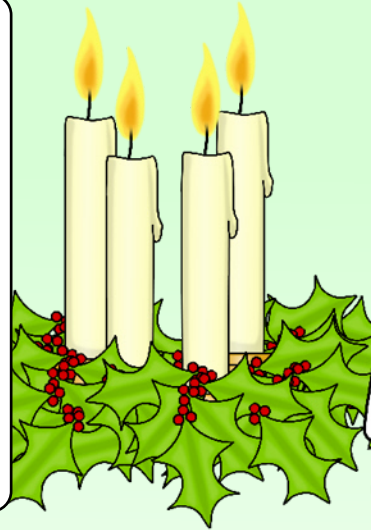


**Frohe
Weihnachten!**



Advent

At home it is common to have cardboard advent calendars or a wreath made from fir tree branches with 24 boxes or bags containing small gifts hanging from it. Another type is called an 'Advent Kranz' which has candles for the 4 Sundays leading up to Christmas.

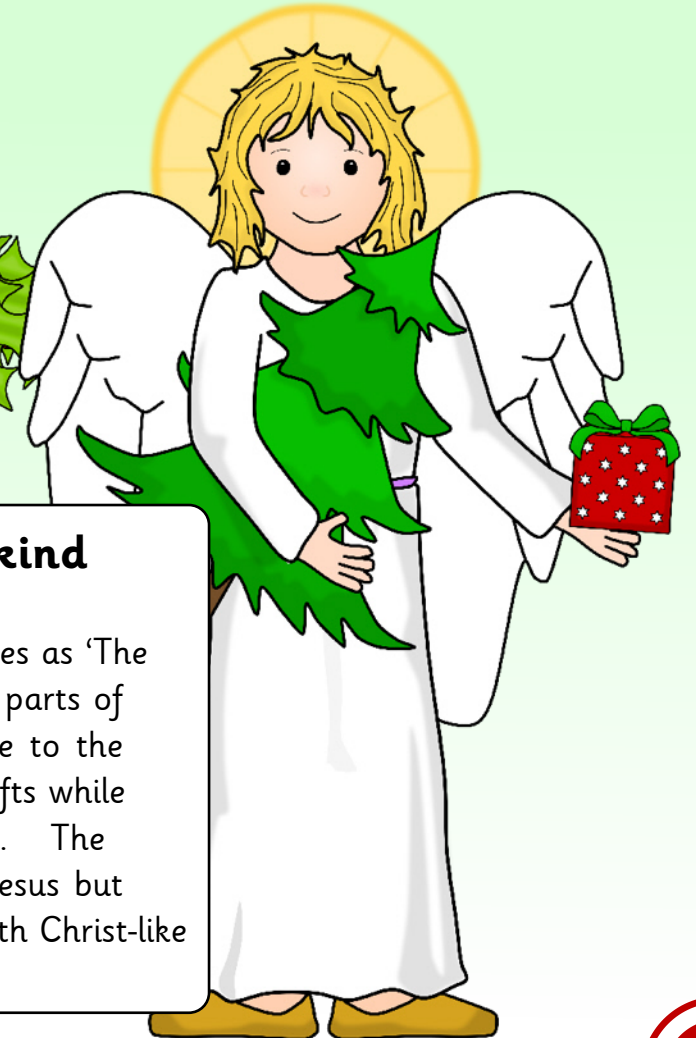


Christmas Tree

Decorated fir trees are a very old tradition in Germany. Christmas trees were first used in the Middle Ages.

Das Christkind

Das Christkind translates as 'The Christ Child'. In some parts of Germany children write to the Christkind to ask for gifts while others write to Santa. The Christkind isn't baby Jesus but usually a young girl with Christ-like qualities.



The Netherlands

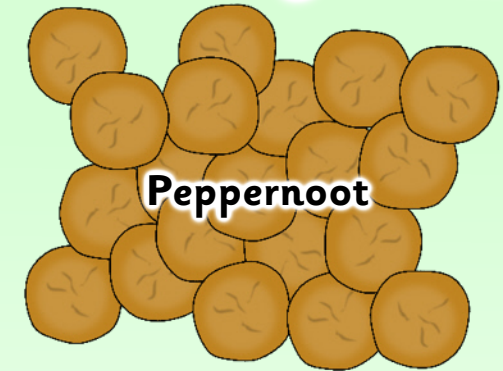


**Vrolijk
Kerstfeest!**



Saint Nicholas' Eve

On 5th December people often hold parties to celebrate the coming of Sinterklaas. Treasure hunt games are held where children follow clues to find small gifts left by Sinterklaas.



Peppernoot



'Letter Blanket' Biscuits

Sinterklaas

For most children in The Netherlands, the most important day is on 5th December when 'Sinterklaas' (Saint Nicholas) brings their presents. The English name 'Santa Claus' comes from Sinterklaas.

Dutch tradition says that Sinterklaas lives in Madrid, Spain and travels with his servants called 'Zwarte Pieten' ('Black Peters') on a steam boat to bring the presents if they have been good all year.

Saint Nicholas' Day

St. Nicholas Day is on 6th December and is Sinterklaas' birthday. Traditionally, Sinterklaas leaves on his steam boat to return to Spain for another year.



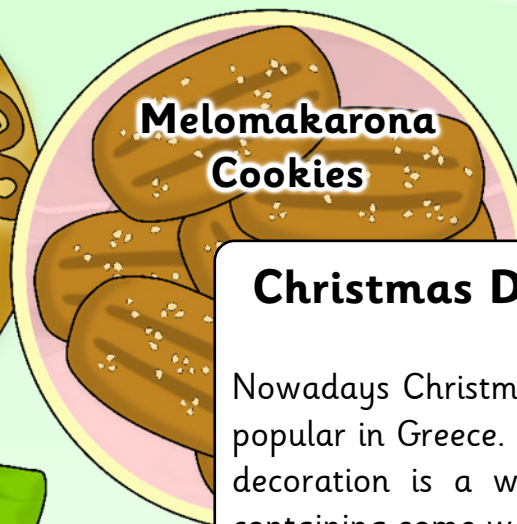
Greece



Kala Christougenna!



Christopsomo
'Christ's Bread'
or 'Christmas Bread'



Melomakarona
Cookies

Carol Singing

On Christmas Eve children often go out singing 'kalanda' (carols) in the streets. They play drums and triangles as they sing. They might also carry a model boat decorated with nuts and painted gold. Carrying a boat is a very old custom in the Greek Islands.



Christmas Decorations

Nowadays Christmas Trees are popular in Greece. But an older decoration is a wooden bowl containing some water. A piece of wire is suspended across with a sprig of basil wrapped around a wooden cross hanging from it. The water helps keep the basil fresh. Each day someone dips the cross and basil into some holy water and uses it to sprinkle water in each room of the house. This is to keep certain bad spirits away during Christmas.

Australia



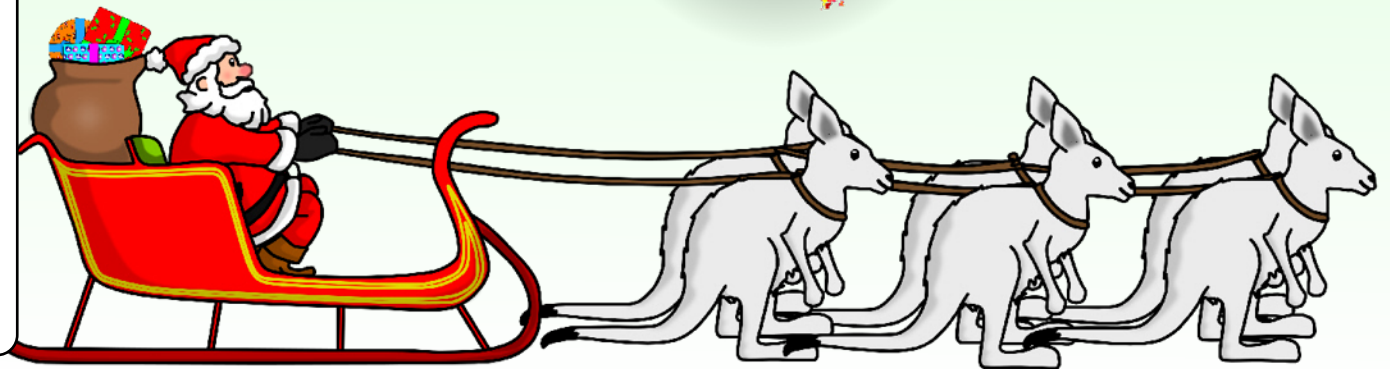
At the Beach

In Australia Christmas comes at the beginning of summer. It is common for people to go to the beach for a barbecue on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.



Christmas Decorations

Small statues of sleighs pulled by white kangaroos are popular as well as Australian animals wearing 'Santa' hats and baubles and wooden ornaments featuring Australian wildlife.



Advent Wreath

It's traditional to have an Advent wreath with four candles, made of straw or evergreen twigs. The wreath symbolizes eternity and the four candles symbolize the different parts of history and life:

- 1st Candle (purple): creation - hope;
- 2nd Candle (purple): embodiment - peace;
- 3rd Candle (pink): redemption - joy;
- 4th Candle (purple): ending - love.

Saint Catherine's Day

In Croatia, 25th December is St. Catherine's Day and this is when the main Christmas celebrations begin.

Croatia



Krampus

Saint Lucia's Day

St. Lucia's Day is marked on 13th December. On this day people often sow wheat onto small plates. The grassy sprouts that grow ('Christmas Wheat') are put underneath the Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve.

Sretan Božić!

Saint Nicholas' Day

On 6th December St. Nicholas' Day is celebrated. The evening before children leave out their shoes or boots for Saint Nicholas to bring them chocolates and leave them in their shoes/boots if they have been good. If they have been naughty then Krampus will come and leave golden twigs to remind them to be good.

Badnjak

Yule log traditionally brought in and lit on Christmas Eve.



Poinsettia

Known as the 'Christmas Flower' because it flowers during the winter in Mexico.

Mexico



¡Feliz Navidad!

Posadas

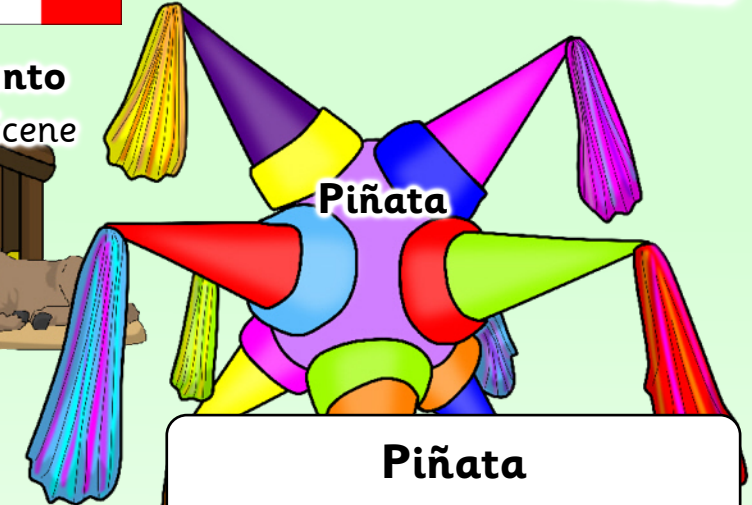
From 16th December to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions or Posadas. Posada means 'inn' or 'lodging' in Spanish. There are nine different Posadas. These symbolise when Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay in Bethlehem. People decorate the outside of their houses with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns.

The children process through the town calling at neighbours and friends houses to sing a song. The children are told there is no room in the house and turned away until the final house when they are invited in for a party.

Nacimiento Nativity Scene



Piñata



Piñata

It is common to play piñata at Posada parties. A piñata is a decorated clay or papier-mâché container filled with sweets and hung from a tree branch or the ceiling. The children are blindfolded and take turns to hit the piñata with a stick until it splits open and the sweets fall to the ground. Then all the children rush to pick up as many sweets as they can!

Los Santos Inocentes

On 28th December the 'Day of the Innocent Saints' is celebrated to mark when King Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus. The celebrations are very similar to April Fools Day where people play tricks and jokes on each other.

Czech Republic



**Vesele
Vánoce!**

Saint Nicholas' Day

On 5th December St. Nicholas (Svatý Mikuláš) arrives. He normally comes with an angel and a devil and asks if the children have been good all year. They sing a song or recite a poem to him and he gives them a basket of small presents, often containing chocolate and fruit. If someone has been naughty, the devil might them a lump of coal!



Ježíšek

It is traditional to have a large dinner on Christmas Eve and this is when Ježíšek ('Little Jesus') comes to bring the children presents. The dinner is eaten in a different room to where the Christmas tree is.

Near the end of the meal a bell is rung and the children know that Ježíšek has been and left presents under the tree. They open their presents right after the dinner.

Ghana



Christmas Eve

Christmas in Ghana is celebrated from 20th December to the first week of January, but the biggest celebrations begin on Christmas Eve. People go to church and have celebrations with drumming, singing and dancing. The children often put on a Nativity play.

Christmas Day

Many people go to church on Christmas Day dressed in their best colourful clothes. After the morning service everyone goes home to share presents.



Fufu

Food on Christmas Day

Traditional food that is eaten on Christmas Day includes stew or okra soup, porridge, rice and meats, and a yam paste called 'fufu'.

Norway



Gledelig Jul!

Julekurver

A traditional Norwegian Christmas Tree decoration are small paper baskets made in the shape of hearts. They are called called 'Julekurver'.

Nisse

Christmas Eve is the time when presents are given. The gifts are sometimes brought by Santa Claus ('Julenissen' in Norwegian) and also brought by small gnomes called 'Nisse'.



Risengrynsgrøt

Rice porridge eaten on Christmas Eve

Rice Porridge

This is eaten on Christmas Eve. If you find an almond in your helping you're traditionally given a pink or white pig made of marzipan.



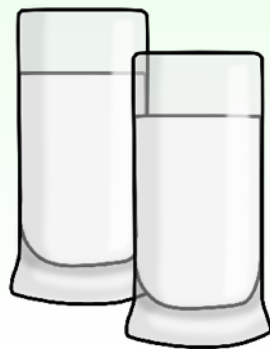
Haiti



**Joyeux Noël!
Jwaye Nowe!**

Anisette

A traditional drink at Christmas is Anisette. Children of all ages are often allowed to drink it even though it is slightly alcoholic. It is made by soaking anise leaves in rum and sweetening it with sugar.



Straw-Filled Shoes

On Christmas Eve, children place their newly cleaned shoes, filled with straw under the tree on the porch. They hope that Santa ('Tonton Nwèl') will remove the straw and put presents in and around the shoes!

Russia

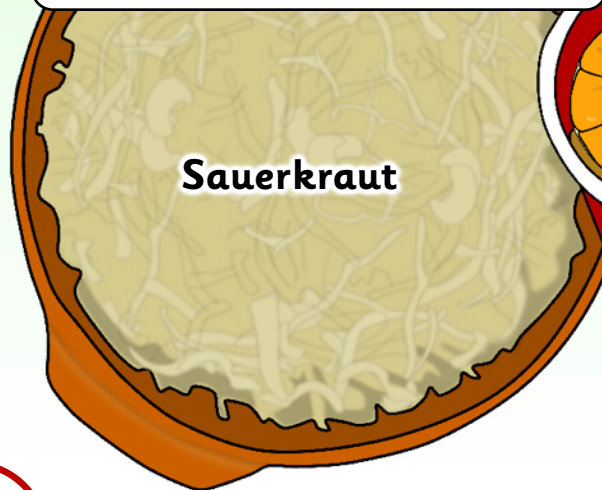


Food at Christmas

Some people fast during the day on Christmas Eve until the first star appears in the sky at night.

It is then traditional to eat 'kutia', a porridge made from wheat or rice served with honey, poppy seeds, fruit and chopped walnuts. Kutia is sometimes eaten from the same bowl to symbolise unity.

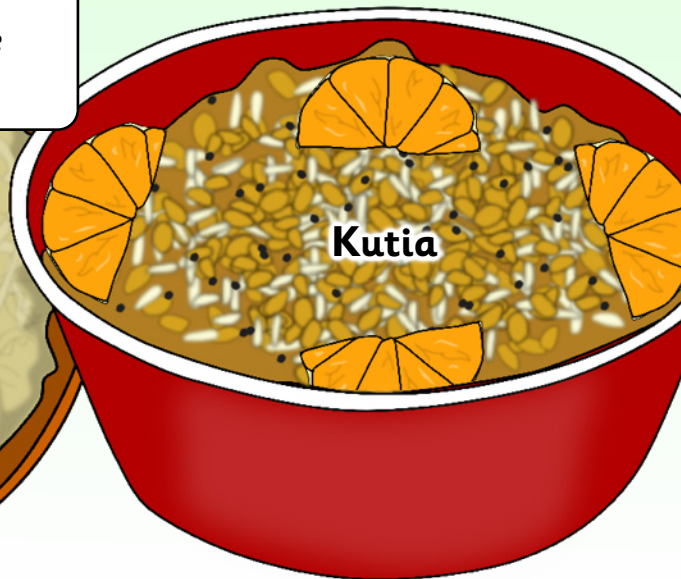
Sauerkraut is a main dish in the Christmas Eve meal.



Sauerkraut

7th January

Christmas is normally celebrated on 7th January. The date is different because the Russian Orthodox Church uses the old 'Julian' calendar for religious celebration days.



Kutia



Grandfather Frost

The New Year celebrations are very important to Russians. This is when Grandfather Frost (known in Russian as 'Ded Moroz') brings presents to children. On New Year's Eve children hold hands in a circle around the Christmas tree and call for him to come. The lights on the tree light up when he arrives with their presents.