

# Christmas around the World!

## Asia:

### Japan:



Christmas has only been celebrated in Japan for the last few decades. Christmas is still not seen as a religious holiday or celebration as there aren't many Christians in Japan. Now several customs that came to Japan from the USA like giving and receiving presents are popular.

Christmas Eve is often celebrated more than Christmas Day. Christmas Eve is more of a romantic day, couples normally spend time together and exchange presents and have a romantic meal in a restaurant

In Japanese Merry Christmas is "Merikurisumasu"

### Sri Lanka:



Although Sri Lanka is a mostly Buddhist country with a small percentage of Christians, Christmas is celebrated as a public holiday by everyone. Most Christians in Sri Lanka are Catholics.

For Christians in Sri Lanka, the Christmas season starts on 1st December when people let off fire crackers at dawn.

In this island nation, hot **curries** are what most Sri Lankans eat throughout the year. But Christmas is different. That's when roast turkey with stuffing and fruit-laden steamed puddings hit the table.

## Australia:

### Australia:



In Australia, Christmas happens during the beginning of the summer holidays!

As it is the middle of Summer in Australia during Christmas time, the words to the Carols about snow and the cold winter are sometimes changed to something unique in Australia! There are also some original Australian Carols such as "Aussie Jingle Bells"



**"Oh! Jingle bells, jingle bells,  
jingle all the way,  
Christmas in Australia on a  
scorching summers day,  
Hey!"**

**-Aussie Jingle Bells**

## Foods around the World for Christmas:

- \* *Tamales and Champurrado are a must in México.*
- \* *Arroz con gandules is a Puerto Rican dish served in Christmas Eve!*
- \* *In Australia people often barbecue prawns and lobster.*
- \* *In Japan people eat Fried Chicken for Christmas day!*

**"In Germany, Poland, and Ukraine, finding a spider or a spider's web on a Christmas tree is believed to be a harbinger of good luck."**



## Africa:

### Ethiopia:



In Ethiopia (and especially the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) most celebrate Christmas on January 7th, not December 25th.

The Christmas celebration in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is called Ganna or Genna. Most people go to Church on Christmas day.

For Ganna, people get dressed in all white. Most people wear a traditional garment called a Netela.

Traditional Christmas foods in Ethiopia include 'wat' which is a thick and spicy stew that contains meat, vegetables and sometimes eggs (sounds yummy!).



**Christmas Food in Ethiopia**

## Europe:

### Italy:



In Italy like many Catholic countries the Nativity Scene holds a special place in the Christmas celebration. Every Italian household spends a lot of time recreating this special moment, where they celebrate the birth of Christ.

One special thing about Neapolitan Nativity scenes, is that they always have extra 'every day' people and objects (such as houses, waterfalls, food, animals and even figures of famous people or a pizza restaurant, How cool!).

On Christmas Eve, it's common that no meat is eaten. Often a light seafood meal is eaten and then people go to the Midnight Mass service.

**Naples is also the home to the largest Nativity scene in the world, which has over 600 objects on it! Wow! Imagine how long it takes**



### Spain:



Most people in Spain go to Midnight Mass or 'La Misa Del Gallo' (The Mass of the Rooster). It is called this because a rooster is supposed to have crowed the night that Jesus was born in the Spanish tradition.

Most families eat their Christmas meal on Christmas Eve before the Church service. The traditional Spanish Christmas dinner is a 'Pavo Trufado de Navidad' which is Turkey stuffed with truffles (No worries is the mushrooms, not the chocolate ones!)

After the midnight service, one old tradition is for people to walk through the streets carrying torches, playing guitars and beating on tambourines and drums and signing while there are fireworks in the distance!



**Pavo Trufado**



*The most famous Christmas street lights in the USA are at the Rockefeller Center in New York*

## North America:

### United States:



The United States of America has many different traditions and ways that people celebrate Christmas, because of its multi-cultural nature. Many customs are like the ones in the UK, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland and Mexico.

The traditional meal for Western European families is often turkey or ham with cranberry sauce. Families from Eastern European origins prefer turkey with trimmings, some kielbasa (a Polish sausage), cabbage dishes, and soups are also some examples of dishes Americans may enjoy during Christmas time.

In the USA making gingerbread houses is also a popular tradition people make them and display them prior to enjoying them on Christmas Eve! Eggnog is also a traditional Christmas drink, along with warm apple cider, YUM!

Many Americans, especially Christians will go to Church to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. Many churches have special Christmas Carol services and events where the story of Christmas is told.

People in America like to decorate the outsides of their houses with lights and sometimes even statues of Santa Claus, Snowmen and Reindeer.

Some cookies and glass of milk are often left out as a snack for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve!



**Gingerbread House**



### Mexico:

In Mexico Christmas starts early normally from December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions. Posada means "Inn or Lodging" in Spanish. These posadas celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay. Children are given candles and a board, with the clay figures of Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph, to process round the streets with. They go to the houses of friends and neighbors and sing a song at each home. The song they sing is about Joseph and Mary asking for a room in the house, but the children are told that there is no room in the house and that they must go away just like the Bible story says. Eventually they are told there is room and are welcomed in! After that everyone celebrates and brakes a Piñata full of candy!

Christmas Eve is known as 'Noche Buena' and is a family day. Popular dishes for the main Christmas meal include Pozole (a thick soup made with hominy, chicken and/or pork and chilis, roast turkey, roast pork, tamales, bacalao (salt cod), romeritos (a green vegetable that's cooked in a mole sauce with potatoes and shrimps) and there are normally salads served as side dishes such as Ensalada "Nochebuena" (Christmas Eve salad). For dessert buñuelos are very popular, they are fried pastries sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and/or a hot sugar syrup.

At midnight, many people go to a Midnight Mass service, known as the 'Misa de Gallo' (which means Mass of the Rooster as people are up early like Roosters!). There are lots of fireworks to celebrate Christmas Day, kids open their presents after Church and get to play with their new toys!



## South America:



### Argentina:

In Argentina the weather is warm during Christmas. Preparations for Christmas begin early in December. Many people in Argentina are Catholic and they also celebrate Advent.

The Nativity scene or 'pesebre' is also an important Christmas decoration in Argentina. The pesebre is put near to the Christmas tree along with the presents.

The main Christmas meal is eaten during the evening of Christmas Eve or "Noche Buena". Some popular dishes include roasted turkey, roasted pork (in northern Argentina, some people will have goat), 'vitel toné' (slices of veal served with a creamy anchovy and tuna sauce), stuffed tomatoes, salads and lots of different sandwiches like 'pan de atun' (special tuna sandwiches).

At midnight there are a lot of lots of fireworks. People also like to 'toast' the start of Christmas day. Some people like to go to midnight services, but other prefer to stay at home and let off fireworks and then open their presents under the tree.



**Christmas Dinner in Argentina**

**Did you know that "Jingle Bells" was the first song played in space?**

Guinness World Record

### Peru:



Because Peru is in the southern hemisphere, Christmas takes place during the summer! So they don't have any snow or cold, that is kind of sweet, right?! In the run up to Christmas, there are special events called 'chocolatadas' (which loosely translates to hot chocolate meets) people meet to see each other and drink hot chocolate. Chocolatadas started as a way of sharing some food and gifts with people who were less fortunate at Christmas. Some churches and community groups still have chocolatadas to help the less fortunate.

Nativity scenes are called 'nacimientos' and/or 'pesebre', like many Catholics they are a staple decoration during Christmas time. Traditionally the figure of the baby Jesus isn't put into the scene until Christmas day, like many other Catholic countries they believe that on Christmas Day Jesus Christ was born.

In Peru, the main Christmas celebrations are held on Christmas Eve which is called 'Noche Buena', which means 'the good night'. Many people will go to a special church service called the Misa de Gallo (Rooster Mass). After the mass the main meal is normally eaten. This is called the 'Cena de Navidad'. The main food at the meal might be roast turkey, chicken or pork with salads and other dishes like tamales. Some regions of Peru have their own Christmas favorite foods, like fish if you live near the sea. The traditional dessert is panetón. After midnight there's lots of toasting the start of Christmas day with champagne and/or hot chocolate and then people like to go into the streets to wish their neighbors, friends and family a Merry Christmas and there are often lots of fireworks to celebrate Christmas.