

How different European countries celebrate Christmas



MERRY CHRISTMAS





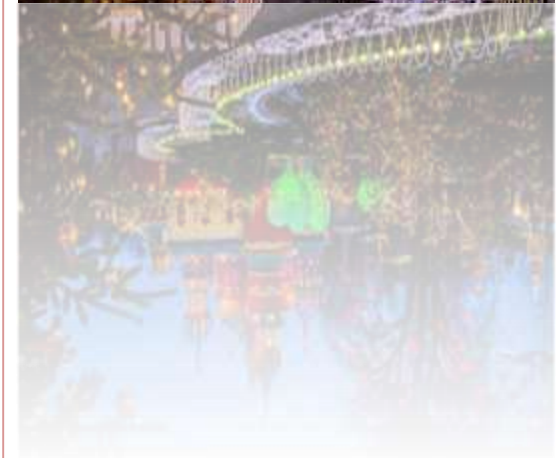
GREECE

- In Greece ,Christmas is celebrated with a mix of religious traditions , cultural as well as festivals.
- The holiday season usually spans from December 25th till January 6th.
- Christmas in Greece is deeply rooted in Orthodox Christian traditions. On Christmas Eve people celebrate the birth of Christ.
- On Christmas Eve children go door-to-door singing kalanta, often accompanied by triangles. In exchange they usually receive sweets, coins or small gifts.
- Christmas meals are central to the celebration , with dishes such as roast lamb or pork, egg-lemon soup etc.
- Also the main sweets are : Melomakarona(honey-dipped cookies with nuts) Kourabiedes(butter cookies dusted with powdered sugar) and Christopsomo (Christ bread which is a sweet bread decorated with many religious symbols).
- Lastly, on new year's day, greeks honor Saint Basil ,their version of Santa Claus . Families cut the vasilopita (a special cake with a coin inside it).



DENMARK

- In Denmark families light one candle on an advent wreath every Sunday leading to Christmas
- People there have Advent calendars popular ,including versions with chocolates or small gifts.
- Homes there are adorned with lights ,candles and stars.Also Christmas trees are decorated with ornaments,candles and Danish Flags.
- Danish cities host traditional Christmas Markets featuring crafts,gifts and seasonal treats like mulled wine and pancake balls.
- The Swedish tradition ,called Lucia Day(December 13th) is also celebrated in Denmark when girls dress with white robes and carry candles which symbolize the arrival of light .
- Nisser are elf-like creatures. Childern leave out porridge for the nisse to keep them happy and avoid pranks.
- The main celebration happens on the evening of December 24th which usually starts with tradition meals including: roast pork, risalamande,a creamy rise pudding with almonds and cherry sauce.After that , families usually sing Christmas carols and dance around the Christmas tree before opening the presents





BELGIUM

- ❖ On December 6th is the saint Nicholas Day . Saint Nicholas usually brings gifts and treats. Children on night of December 5th place their shoes by the fireplace with hay or carrots for St . Nicholas horse.
- ❖ Many families on Christmas Eve attend a midnight mass after dinner, especially in Catholic families.
- ❖ Christmas dinner includes for starter: seafood like smoked salmon. In the main course they eat roast turkey, goose and for dessert they eat the yule log cake or other pastries
- ❖ Their season also includes the Epiphany when it is celebrated with a 'Three kings cake'.



GERMANY

- In Germany people usually have advent calendars which they use to count down to Christmas
- They also have the St.Nicholas Day
- Germany is famous from its Christmas markets such as those in Nuremberg , Dresden and Cologne.
- Most families put up their tree on Christmas Eve decorated especially with candles.
- On Christmas Eve,its the most important day for them. Families gather for a festive evening meal,followed by the exchange of gifts.
- December 25th and 26th are quieter days which are spend usually with relatives .
- Their main dish is roast goose,duck and they have for dessert a fruitcake ,gingerbread and christmas cookies



FINLAND

- As in the other countries, calendars are famous in Finland too.
- Santa Claus there is believed to live in Rovaniemi, in Finnish Lapland.
- Families often receive a visit from Joulupukki on Christmas Eve, who personally delivers presents to children and usually asks 'Are there any well-behaved children here?'
- A unique Finnish tradition is the Christmas sauna enjoyed on Christmas Eve. Families visit sauna to relax and cleanse themselves, which symbolises peace.
- On Christmas day people usually rest enjoying winter activities as well as there's the boxing day which is spent visiting friends or neighbours.
- There activities include visiting forests, seeing reindeer and usually everything that has to do with snow



ICELAND

- Iceland has a unique tradition of 13 yule lads, troll-like figures who visit children during 13 nights before Christmas. Each night a yule lad leaves small gifts (potatoes for misbehaved children) in shies left on windowsills.
- Iceland Christmas meals include: smoked lamb, a wild bird or game meats, thin crispy bread decorated with patterns and a drink called Jolaol made by mixing malt and orange soda. Lastly, Christmas cookies and homemade chocolates are also on the menu.
- On Christmas Eve (December 24th) at 6:00 PM, church bells ring signaling the start of Christmas. Families sit down for a festive dinner, followed by exchanging gifts.
- A beloved Icelandic tradition is giving books as gifts on Christmas Eve. Many families spend their evening reading their new books often accompanied by hot chocolate or tea.
- Lastly, the Icelandic folklore includes the yule cat, a giant, mythical feline said to eat those who don't receive new clothes before Christmas. This encourages families to gift new clothing during the holiday season.

