



Christmas in the Czech Republic



The **Advent period** begins four Sundays before Christmas Eve. During this time, a _____ is made of several evergreen branches **fastened** together, decorated with ribbons, pine _____, and four candles. Children get Advent calendars to count the days to 24th December. Every day they open one of the 24 small windows in it and find a small reward, usually a piece of chocolate.

The baking may start at the beginning of the Advent. Some favourites are the sweet and aromatic vanilla _____, "wasp nests", marmalade sweets known as Linzer, **gingerbread** sweets decorated with sugar **icing** and Vánočka, sweet white **dough** with **almonds** and **raisins**.

The charming tradition of St. Nicholas falls on the eve of St. Nicholas Day, 5th December. If you find yourself walking the streets on that evening, you may **run into** a group of strange characters: St. Nicholas, the Angel and the Devil. All wear costumes. St. Nicholas looks a bit like Santa Claus, he is tall with a long white beard, dressed in long red robe, _____ on his head, with a golden bishops' _____. All three characters walk the streets and visit people's homes, asking children if they have been good all year. Most kids say yes and sing a song or recite a poem. They are then rewarded with sweets. _____ kids would be put in the Devil's sack and taken to hell, or would only get a potato or a lump of coal. Children also receive St. Nicholas presents from their parents and **relatives**. The gifts can be put into a **stocking** and hidden somewhere in the child's room.

Outside people may visit Christmas markets. One of the **staples** at Christmas markets is Trdelník, a **pastry** with caramelized sugar, **cinnamon** and **chopped** nuts. **Furthermore**, you may have **punch** or _____ wine – a warm red wine, traditionally made with spices. **Moreover**, the decorated wooden huts at Christmas markets sell traditional handicrafts which are the perfect Christmas gifts: **jewellery**, wooden toys, ceramics, _____ candles, ornaments, hats, gloves and scarves. People also admire the typical _____ (**depiction** of the birthplace of Jesus) created in varying sizes and from various materials. Most people try to make use of the pre-Christmas _____ and special offers and shop for gifts.

Every home is decorated as beautifully as possible. Above the table there should be a _____ of mistletoe hanging. It is believed that it brings good fortune and even _____ evil spirits. And, of course, if people kiss under it, the love will stay with them in the coming year. The **Christmas tree** is _____ to the Czech Christmas decorations. _____, _____, and string lights are used to **adorn** these trees. Most Christmas trees are set up several days before Christmas Eve.

The main Christmas celebrations are on Christmas Eve (24th December). Some people _____ on this day in the hope that they will see 'the golden piglet', which is meant to be a sign of good luck! The Czech traditional Christmas dinner is served after _____. The meal often _____ fish soup or pea soup, and carp fried in **breadcrumbs**, which is usually served with potato _____. However, some Czechs do not like the taste of carp and replace it with chicken _____ or another type of fish, such as _____. No one should ever get up from the Christmas table before dinner is finished. Doing so brings bad luck and death in the family. The most curious fact about the Christmas dinner is that the carp is bought alive and kept alive in the _____ until ready for cooking on the day of Christmas Eve! Fish _____ should be placed under the _____ to bring **wealth** to the house. Carrying a fish scale in a _____ all year round will ensure that money will not _____.

Naughty

cones

mitre

wreath

staff

crescents

Nativity Scenes

tinsel

mulled

bunch

discounts

indispensable

scented

Baubles

wards off



salad

scales

tablecloth

fast

run out

schnitzel

consists of

sunset

wallet

salmon

bath



In the Czech Republic it is not the Santa Claus who brings the presents for the children at Christmas, but the Baby Jesus. Baby Jesus is a rather _____ figure with no particular physical image, and no one knows where he _____. Just like Santa though, he receives wish-list letters from Czech children a few weeks before Christmas. On Christmas Eve, children leave the room where the Christmas tree has been _____ until they hear the _____ of a bell (rung by parents) indicating that Baby Jesus has come with gifts. After dinner, everyone around the table may sing Christmas _____. Finally, it is time to gather around the tree and to _____ the gifts.

Some people attend the midnight mass at a local church. The Czech Christmas would never be complete without classic fairy tales which are _____ on TV during the holidays. Czech Christmas stretches over 25th and 26th December and, which are also referred to as the First and Second Christmas Holidays, or the Christmas Feast and St. Stephen's Day.

The foretelling of the future and _____ the well-being of the family in the coming year is connected with many popular Christmas customs, some of which are still practised today.



tinkle
unwrap
abstract
put up
predicting
lives
broadcast
carols



The Throwing of the Shoe

There is a _____ that says if you throw a shoe over your shoulder on Christmas Eve, if the toe _____ towards the door, you will be married soon.

The Floating of Walnut Shells

Little boats are made out of empty walnut shells and each family member places a little burning _____ into a shell. Everyone's shells are then floated on a bowl of water. If the shell _____, it brings bad luck to its owner. The shells that stick together are the relatives who will _____ together, and if a shell drifts away, that family member will grow _____.

The Cutting of the Apple

After Christmas dinner, every person present at the table cuts an apple in _____. If the core is shaped as a _____, it means happiness and health. A _____, on the other hand, is a bad _____ and means illness or death.

The Pouring of Lead

A piece of lead is _____ over fire and then _____ into a container of water. The resulting shape will tell the pourer's destiny.



The New Year is celebrated in the Czech Republic similar to traditions we see around the world – with friends, and relatives, and at parties, pubs, concerts, restaurants, and people are partying, drinking, and dancing. The New Year is greeted with champagne, cheers, and _____ firework shows near city squares. On New Year's Day, the Czechs typically eat lentils, believing that a lentil dish will ensure money for the upcoming year. Some people make New Year's _____, most of which concern changing one's bad habits, such as quitting smoking or eating less _____ food.

Christmas trees, whether in Czech homes or public spots, are taken down usually before **January 6th, the Feast of the Three Kings.**



points
star
candle
cross
distant
omen
stay
half
superstition
resolutions
sinks
melted
junk
spectacular
poured

**Listen and write down
the words you hear:**

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11) _____

12) _____

13) _____

14) _____

15) _____

16) _____

17) _____

18) _____

