



# 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 24<sup>th</sup> December. Every day they open one of the 24 small windows in it and find a small reward, usually a piece of chocolate.

Naughty  
cones  
mitre  
wreath  
staff  
crescents

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**.

Nativity Scenes  
tinsel  
mulled  
bunch  
discounts  
indispensable  
scented  
Baubles  
wards off

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.

salad  
scales  
tablecloth  
fast  
run out  
schnitzel  
consists of  
sunset  
wallet  
salmon  
bath

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 (24<sup>th</sup> 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 \_\_\_\_\_.





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 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 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.



### 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**.

<u>tinkle</u>
<u>unwrap</u>
<u>abstract</u>
<u>put up</u>
<u>predicting</u>
<u>lives</u>
<u>broadcast</u>
<u>carols</u>



<u>points</u>
<u>star</u>
<u>candle</u>
<u>cross</u>
<u>distant</u>
<u>omen</u>
<u>stay</u>
<u>half</u>
<u>superstition</u>
<u>resolutions</u>
<u>sinks</u>
<u>melted</u>
<u>junk</u>
<u>spectacular</u>
<u>poured</u>



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) \_\_\_\_\_

