

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap.

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN THE UK

Is this festival the same everywhere?

Christmas is traditionally a time of celebration and gift giving, (1) _____ in the UK and also in many places all over the world. But Christmas is not the (2) _____ everywhere, and there are some traditions which are common in the UK (3) _____ not in other cultures. However, many things about the way Christmas is celebrated in the UK may (4) _____ very familiar to those (5) _____ other parts of the world.

What season is this festival?

First, of course, in the northern hemisphere, Christmas is more or (6) _____ in the middle of winter, and Christmas Day is just three days after the winter solstice, the shortest day, so there is not (7) _____ daylight in the UK at this time of (8) _____ and the weather can be quite cold, with snow and ice, and Christmas is connected in people's minds (9) _____ winter traditions. Much of the imagery and many of the customs which are followed over Christmas are related (10) _____ the fact that it is the winter.

How do people decorate their houses?

Lights and colours are very important (11) _____ this season; people like to fill their houses with brightly coloured decorations and lights, (12) _____ help to make the dark winter seem brighter and warmer. It's common to bring a small tree, (13) _____ a real or artificial one, into the house, and cover it with small presents (14) _____ children, and coloured balls or figures, and this tree often becomes the centrepiece in people's living rooms over the Christmas holiday.

What gifts do people give each other?

Gift giving is very important, and (15) _____ the Christmas tree is often the place (16) _____ people put presents, wrapped in brightly coloured paper and ribbons, (17) _____ anticipation of Christmas Day, when they are all opened. Children (18) _____ forward to opening them, and Christmas is often a chance for parents and relatives to spend a lot of money (19) _____ buying things for the young ones in their families. (20) _____ famous tradition connected with gift giving is the stocking, a large sock, usually a red colour, which children hang (21) _____ in front of the fireplace in the living room. On Christmas Day the children find that this stocking is (22) _____ of gifts, and they believe that Santa Claus, riding on a sleigh pulled (23) _____ reindeer, has visited the house, entered the room (24) _____ the chimney, and filled the stocking.

What do people eat?

People tend (25) _____ eat very rich foods over the Christmas period, and eating and drinking are very important parts of the customs (26) _____ this time of year. On Christmas Day itself, families usually (27) _____ together for a large meal, the main course of (28) _____ is usually turkey served with potatoes and a variety of vegetables. This is often followed by a large, sweet pudding (29) _____ of fruit and a lot of sugar, called Christmas pudding, and in the afternoon or evening, people may eat mince pies, and drink hot mulled wine. Of (30) _____, many people eat too much on Christmas Day, and all over the holiday period, and quite often they begin the New Year by promising to (31) _____ on a diet or planning to get much (32) _____ exercise!

What music do people listen to?

The Christmas holiday period is often a whole week in (33) _____, usually starting on Christmas Eve (December 24th), (34) _____ people may finish work early and go to parties, where they will meet friends or family. Music is important (35) _____ these parties; sometimes people sing traditional carols, which tend to be older traditional songs about Christmas, or they may prefer to listen and sing along to more modern Christmas pop songs, which are now becoming a very important (36) _____ of Christmas customs.

How long does the festival last?

Christmas Day (37) _____ (December 25th) is mostly spent with the family, and people do not tend to go (38) _____ as there is not usually (39) _____ public transport and the shops are all closed. The following day is called Boxing Day, which was traditionally a day for visiting neighbours and relatives, but it is becoming increasingly common for this to be a shopping day in the UK, as many of the shops open and have sales starting on Boxing Day. Many people have the whole week (40) _____ Christmas Day and New Year as a holiday, and New Year's Day itself is also a public holiday when most shops and services in the UK are closed.