

# Christmas around the world

(Joyeux Noël) FRANCE

Père Noël is accompanied by Père Fouettard, who brings presents only to good kids. Children put their shoes by the fire place to get gifts. People have dinner at midnight on December 24 (le Réveillon) with a cake called La Bûche de Noël.



(Frohe Weihnachten) GERMANY

Children count the days until Christmas with an **Advent calendar**. They also write letters to **St. Nicholas** asking for presents (December 6). Christmas Eve is the most important time of the Christmas season for families. Some even say it is a magical night when animals can speak. The wonderful tradition of the **sack** over the Christmas tree, which started in Germany, is the heart of the celebration.



(С рождеством!) RUSSIA

Families decorate a New Year's tree and make **Salad Olivier** (diced meat, veggies and potatoes all slathered in Mayo). **Grandfather Frost** (Дед Мороз) delivers presents to good children, aided by The **Snow Maiden** (Снегурочка).



(Merry Christmas) UK

The tradition of hanging stockings by the chimney began here because **Father Christmas** accidentally dropped some gold coins on his way down the chimney which got caught in a drying stocking. British children wait until the afternoon to open their gifts.

**Boxing Day** is celebrated the day following Christmas, when small gifts were given to servants.



(圣诞节快乐) CHINA

Christian kids decorate their houses with beautiful paper lanterns. Many Chinese children also hang stockings and wait for Santa Claus or **Dun Che Lao Ren**, which means "Christmas Old Man."



(Vrolijk Kerstfeest) BELGIUM

Belgian children believe that **Saint Nicholas** brings them their presents. They also believe he rides a horse so they leave hay and carrots and water for the horse just outside the house on December 6.



(Vrolijk kerstfeest) THE NETHERLANDS

**Sinterklaas** rides a horse. Dutch children leave their shoes out, filled with hay and sugar for his horse. In the morning they find their shoes filled with candy, nuts and gifts. When **Sinterklaas** appears to children, he takes the form of their father or a male relative.



(Glædelig Jul) DENMARK

Danish people celebrate Christmas Eve with a special rice pudding in which a single almond is hidden. Whoever finds the almond will have good luck for the coming year. **Julemanden** arrives in a sleigh drawn by reindeer and carries a sack over his back. He is assisted with his Yuletide chores by **Elves** called **Juul Nisse**, who live in attics.



(Buon Natale) ITALY

Italian people exchange gifts on January 6, when the **Wise Men** or **Magi** reached baby Jesus. Italy has **La Befana**, who brings gifts for good children and punishment for the bad ones. The nativity scene dates back to Saint Francis of Assisi.



(God Jul) SWEDEN

Most people in Scandinavian countries honour **St. Lucia** on December 13. Traditionally, the eldest daughter in each family gets up early and wakes each of her family members, dressed in a long, white gown with a red ribbon and a crown made of twigs with nine lighted candles. **Jultomten**, visits houses in the afternoon on Christmas Eve.



(Feliz Navidad) SPAIN

Spanish people celebrate **Nochebuena** (Christmas Eve), and families gather together to share a meal. Children leave their shoes filled with straw and barley for the camels of the **Wise Men** who visit them on January 6.



(Feliz Navidad) MEXICO

They celebrate Christmas for nine days with **Las Pastorelas**. People dress as Mary and Joseph walking from house to house asking if Mary may stay the night. Then, they are invited in for a party with food, songs, and a **Piñata** filled with all kinds of sweets.



(メリークリスマス) JAPAN

In Japan there is a god or priest known as **Hoteiosho**, who closely resembles our Santa Claus. He is always pictured as a kind old man carrying a huge pack. He is thought to have eyes in the back of his head. Children must be good when this all-seeing gentleman is abroad.



(Merry Christmas) AUSTRALIA

Santa's sleigh is pulled by eight white kangaroos. Christmas dinner is eaten outdoors and is followed by a visit to the beach or a game of cricket.



## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD QUIZ

- 1) In Belgium, who comes on December 6?
- 2) Christians in China call Santa Claus Dun Che Lao Ren, which means...
- 3) The first nativity scene was displayed in 1223 by St. Francis of Assisi in which country?
- 4) In Sweden, the Christmas season begins on December 13, the feast day of St. Lucia. On this day it is traditional for the eldest daughter in every family to...
- 5) In which country is a Yule log-shaped cake called a "Bûche de Noël" traditionally served?
- 6) In China, what do people traditionally use to light their homes at Christmas?
- 7) Where do Santa's elves live in Denmark?
- 8) Who delivers presents in Russia?
- 9) In The Netherlands, what transport does Saint Nicholas traditionally use?
- 10) Which country originated the tradition of hanging stockings by the fireplace?
- 11) At Christmas Mexican parents allow children to break a .....
- 12) What animals pull Santa's sleigh in Australia?
- 13) Where was developed the modern tradition of the Christmas tree?
- 14) When and where is Boxing Day celebrated?
- 15) Where is Father Christmas known as Père Noël?
- 16) When do Spanish children receive their gifts?
- 17) In what country do children receive gifts from La Befana, a kindly old witch?
- 18) Who accompanies Père Noël with a book in which each child's behavior is recorded?