

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS AROUND EUROPE

GERMANY

The Christmas tree tradition was born in Germany

5th of December:

Santa Claus arrives to the country in a train full of presents.

Santa Claus and his assistant Knecht Ruprecht come into the houses to see if the children are being good or bad. If they are good, Santa Claus gives them good things and if they are bad, Knecht Ruprecht punishes.

24th of December:

The typical food is lamb, duck, fish, sausages and potato or noodle salad. After the dinner they put the presents under the Christmas Tree. It's a habit that all the family gets a dish full of sweets and fruits. This day, the whole family sing Christmas songs, for example Heilige Nacht, Stille Nacht (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuyroRHlcBE>). The people go to mass at midnight.

25th and 26th of December:

These two days people visit the family and eat the same food of 24th of December.

Food:

The typical food is eaten with warm wine (glühwein).

The Christstollen is the Christmas bread.

New year's eve:

They receive the year with firecrackers and fireworks to take away the bad spirits. Also, they leave the dishes with the rest of food to have pantry the year coming.

Custom:

They make an advent wreath made of green pine branches and four candles. Every Sunday of the month of December, they turn on one of them.

They make markets and sell Christmas items.

BELGIUM

Saint Nicholas (4th of December)

Saint Nicholas arrive from Spain with his assistant Zwarte Piets to see if the children are good or bad. Two days after that, they give the presents to the children.

24th of December

They eat a bread called "cougnolle". Also, they eat stuffed turkey with a dessert called "la bûche de Noel". After lunch, the family go to ice skating.

After lunch, the family put the presents under the tree or in the socks. At midnight, all the family go to the mass.

New Year's Eve

The lunch of this day is celebrate with the family. The food is called "choucroutte", it's made to wish money for the next day. The dinner is celebrated with friends.

The three wise men

It isn't a festive day, but they eat a special cake called "savoy".

BULGARIA

25th and 26th of December

Christmas is celebrated in two days. They spend all the they cooking 7 seven types of food (without meat and dairy).

New year's eve

The number of dishes have to be odd, normally 9, 7 or 11. The family doesn't stand up during all night, because they look forward to the coming of their dead relatives to eat their food.

DENMARK

On 1st of December, in the Town Hall Square, at 5 o'clock, they turn on the lights of the Christmas Tree.

24th of December

When the dinner finishes, the lights of the family Christmas Tree are turned on. All the family dance around the tree and sing carols. Later, they open the presents and drink coffee with sweets.

New year's eve

They celebrate this night with friends. The New Year starts with fireworks and they eat fish.

5th of January

They turn on 3 candles, and when they explode, it's when Christmas finishes.

Costums:

Goblin's name is Nisser they wear a pointed hat.

Food:

The most common meals are sweet and stuffed and they eat vecerex, is a dessert done with rice, whipped cream and almond with plums sals.

SLOVENIA

6th of December

They celebrate St. Nicholas, in this day Santa Claus tell to the children that if they get along, they will bring the more gifts.

24th (night) of December or 25th (morning)

Santa comes and gives a lot of presents.

End of the year

In Ljubljana they celebrate the end of the year doing a parade of Dedek Mraz what does it mean "frozen Grandfather".

Food:

It's typical eat "Potika" it is a walnut's cake and savor the traditional Sacherdote cake. They do biscuits. It's typical to eat lamb, duck, fish, white sausage and Kirsh (moonshine of cherry)

Costums:

The children decorate the fireplace and they put the letters in a winged figure that looks like an angel. They see the News year's Eve concert in Viena. Christkind is a mythological character and it brings presents at Christmas.

ESTONIA

24th of December

They go to the sauna, they prepare the dinner and later, they go to church.

They also make food for the dead relatives. All the children put a slipper on the window and the elves give them candy or another sweet. The children have to sing or recite a poem before receiving their presents.

FINLAND

They have advent calendar. Santa's house is in the center Arctic Pole. In this house they receive letters from all the children. Santa gives presents on his sledge with nine reindeer, everyone has an attribute. The holidays start at the end of November and finishes in the sixth of December.

24th of december

They have rice or oats for breakfast . On the tree they put "himmeli", a piece of wood.

25th of December

They go to the church and later, go to dance with the family.

GREECE

Starts at 24 of December and finishes at 8th of January.

24th of December

The people stay at home and sleep.

25th of December

They get up early to go to the church and celebrate the birth of Jesus. The family have breakfast together.

They don't have Christmas Tree.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus arrives to the country with sleigh and carries a lot of presents. He leaves the gifts under the tree.

HUNGARY

24th of December

The family has dinner and later they leave the presents under the Christmas Tree. They sing carols and enjoy opening the gifts.

25th of December

The family stays at home and have breakfast together. Also, they give more presents.

26th of December

It's a day for rest.

5th of January

The children take away the shoes, at midnight, Mikulas fills them.

The next day, Santa comes into the schools and houses and gives to the children sweet, chocolates, more gifts...

ITALY

The families bring together to make dinner and the children receive the presents two days before, one from the Santa Claus and another from the Befana, that is a witch

24th of December

They make the typical lunch called “cenone”, where the entree is spaghetti.

End of the year

They replace the grapes for lentils (Notte di Capodanno). It is typical to wear red lingerie. In some places they throw old junks through the window to renovate the New Year.

New Year's Eve

They make the “notte di capodanno” and they eat and drink a lot. The dessert is the typical “panettone”.

5th of January

They celebrate the coming of the witch Befana, the character that gives the presents in Italy.

LATVIA

They mix pagan and religious traditions.

24th of December

After the dinner, all the family have to read a poem and they can go to take their Christmas tree in the forest, then they get the presents. Also, they roll a log around the house to scare the spirits.

In these days, the people eat a lot. One of the typical dishes is pork snout filled with barley. Other food is chicken, peas, apples and chocolate.

New year's eve

They take logs and make bonfires to take away all the problems. At night, they eat cabbage soup and smoked fish. Some of the typical food are piragi, puff pastry and Alexander torte. They drink black liquor that comes from Riga.

LUXEMBURG

The 6th of December is the Santa's Claus day and the pastry chefs make a lot of cakes.

24th of December

After midnight mass, they eat black pudding.

25th of December

The typical food of this day is turkey with paste of chestnut. The dessert is a Christmas log cake.

New year's eve

The people enjoy singing, dancing, drinking, eating...

HOLLAND

5th of December

Sinterklaas gives the presents to the children. Also, his assistant Zwarte Piet arrives from Spain. One of the typical gift is a letter made of chocolate. Before they open the presents, they have to read a poem.

22th of December

This day, at four o'clock, in the Oude Kerk church from Amsterdam the Christmas Concert is organised.

24th of December

The typical dinner is rabbit with cabbage or turkey stuffed with paste of chestnut. The next day, the family have breakfast together.

New Year's Eve

They don't eat a lot. In the afternoon, they eat the typical oliebollen.

POLAND

6th of December

On this day, the people celebrate the arrival of Saint Nicolas or Micolaja. One member of the family, dresses up and leaves presents under the cushion.

24th of December

In the morning, the people prepare the dinner. Before the dinner, they pray and read a part of the birth of Jesus. Normally, there are 12 types of food, one for each month or for each apostle. After dinner, they sing carols and at midnight they go to the mass.

They eat mushroom soup, dishes with cabbage, fish... An old food that they eat on Christmas is called "katia".

New Year's Eve

It is a day to enjoy and make jokes.

PORTUGAL

24th of December

The main serving is the turkey or the cod cooked with potatoes and eggs. The octopus is also a typical serving. The French toast or filhoses, "las formigas" and the "alteria" are traditional desserts. They eat the Bolo Rei. After dinner, they go to the midnight mass. The people burn logs when the mass finishes.

New Year's Eve

They eat 12 grapes, one for each sound of the bell, which strikes twelve. o

Lapinha

In Madeira, the people make a manger in the scales.

They make dummies, the Gulbenkian orchestra makes a concert and they call Santa Claus, Pai Natal.

UNITED KINGDOM

24th of December

They stay at home with the family, they send cards and put the Christmas Tree (under it they put the presents). For dinner, they eat turkey, after that, they eat pudding for dessert. This dessert is served with a sauce called custard. After dinner they play games or watch television.

26th of December

They celebrate the Boxing Day, they receive a reward for all the work that he has been done all the year.

New Year's Eve

They eat turkey, drink champagne and throw fireworks.

Also, they sing a lot of Christmas Carols, and there are carol singers that go from house to house singing them.

CZECH REPUBLIC

They stay at home and make cakes called cukroví. They eat potatoes salad and fish. After that, they sing carols and then go to the midnight mass. They have a Christmas Tree, an Advent Calendar and an Advent wreath.

5th of December

Saint Nicholas arrives to the country and gives the children a lot of presents.

New Year's Eve

They eat lentils or soup, if you eat chicken you will have bad luck.

ROMANIA

The people make cozonac for these holidays and sing carols. On 24th of december. the people go to the church. Dedez mraz, it's Santa Claus. He goes out with parade floats. They wear colored clothes. And they celebrate the Eslau Christmas.

SWEDEN

In Sweden Santa Lucia is very important. The people make choral ensemble and go to the houses singing Christmas Carols. People put candles to scare the spirits. The name of Santa's assistants is Jultomten and they live in Tomteland, they give presents too.

The last night of the year, they stay with the friends. They have the adventskalender.