

# Christmas Around the World

## UK

In the UK, Christmas is all about spending time with family or the people closest to you. Most families have a Christmas tree and decorate it and the house. Plants like mistletoe, ivy and holly are brought into the home. Children hang stockings for Santa Claus to put presents in and opened on Christmas day. Traditionally, a large feast of turkey or goose and lots of other nice things is enjoyed.



## Italy

In Italy, children need to wait until January 6<sup>th</sup> for their presents. Traditionally, it is a witch called Befana who brings the presents. She was visiting the baby Jesus and got lost so she brings presents to every house in Italy with children in case he is there. She comes down the chimney and leaves presents for good children and coal for naughty children.



## South Korea

In South Korea, many large cities will put up lots of decorations, quite often lighting up the whole of a city centre. A popular Christmas gift in South Korea is money. Santa is known as Santa Kullosu and wears red or blue when he is there.



## Russia

In Russia, Christmas is celebrated on January 7<sup>th</sup> and is sometimes known as the winter festival. Some people will fast (not eat anything) on January 6<sup>th</sup> until the first star appears in the sky and then they will eat the traditional meal of sochivo, which is a type of porridge.



## Germany

A lot of Christmas traditions that have been adopted in other countries come from Germany. Advent calendars are very important; some may contain chocolates and others may have boxes of presents in instead. Christmas Eve is the main day when many Germans open their presents.



## France

In France, Nativity scenes are very popular. Many towns and cities would have a nativity scene for the people to come and see. Santa is called Père Noël. In Eastern France he travels with Le Pere Fouettard, who punishes the naughty children.



## U.S.A

America has people from all over the world so the traditions are very different. Each state in America has its own way of celebrating. A lot of the traditions are taken from old UK traditions like decorating the house, putting up a Christmas tree and having a large feast on Christmas Day.



## China

Christmas in China is mostly celebrated in the big cities. Large trees and decorations are put up and Santa's grottos will be put in the larger stores. In China, Santa Claus is known as 'Sheng Dan Lao Ren' which means 'Old Christmas Man'.



## Japan

In many places in Japan, Christmas is seen as a time to be kind to other people and for couples to give each other gifts rather than a religious holiday. A popular tradition in Japan is to have fried chicken for dinner instead of turkey.



## Ethiopia

Christmas is celebrated on 7<sup>th</sup> January in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It is called Ganna or Genna. Many Christians fast for up to 44 days before Christmas. During this time, they don't eat meat, fat, eggs and dairy products and they pray and try to do good things. They break their fast with the Christmas feast.

