

# Christmas Around the World



# Australia



- The temperature in Australia on Christmas Day is usually high 70's.
- Because it is so hot, traditional dinners have been replaced with family gatherings in backyards and picnics in parks and on the beach.
- A typical Christmas menu could include seafood, glazed ham, cold chicken, duck or turkey, cold deli meats, pasta, salads, desserts of all types, fruit salad, ice cream, plus Christmas treats such as mince pies.
- Although it is so hot, some Australian people still have Christmas trees and lights, go carol singing, and send Christmas cards.

# China



- Some people in China celebrate by lighting their houses with paper lanterns.
- Christmas trees are called “trees of light” and are decorated with paper chains, paper flowers, and paper lanterns.
- Lots of people in China do not celebrate Christmas. The main winter festival is called Chinese New Year which takes place in January. Chinese people worship their ancestors during Chinese New Year.

# Denmark



- The Christmas feast in Denmark is celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve.
- There is a special rice pudding dessert in which a single almond is hidden. Whoever finds the almond will have good luck for a whole year.
- There is a bringer of gifts name Julemanden.
- Julemanden arrives in a sleigh drawn by reindeer and a sack over his back.
- Julemanden has lots of elf helpers named Juul Nisser who are said to live in attics.

# France



- Some French homes at Christmas time have nativity displays with clay figures called santons. Craftsmen make the santons all throughout the year to sell at annual Christmas fairs.
- Some French households like both a nativity scene or a festive wreath as well as a Christmas tree.
- The French make a traditional log shaped cake called a bûche de Noël (Christmas log).

# France



- Christmas dinner varies in different parts of France. Some favorites are goose, turkey, and oysters.
- French children receive gifts from Père Noël who travels with his stern friend, Père Fouettard. He reminds Père Noël how each child has behaved in the past year.

# Germany



- According to legend, on Christmas Eve in Germany, rivers turn to wine, animals speak to each other, tree blossoms bear fruit, mountains open up to reveal precious gems, and church bells can be heard ringing in the bottom of the sea. Only the pure of heart can witness the Christmas magic.
- While children are distracted the Christmas tree is brought out and decorated on Christmas Eve. The presents are put underneath. Plates are laid out for each member of the family with fruit, nuts, chocolate, and cookies. Carols are then sung, sparklers are lit, the Christmas story is read, and then the gifts are opened.

# India



- Some people in India decorate mango and banana trees at Christmas time.
- Decorations are colorful and bright.
- In some parts of India, small clay oil-burning lamps are used as Christmas decorations. They are placed on the edges of roofs and on the tops of walls.
- Churches are lit with poinsettias (red Christmas flowers) and candles for the Christmas Evening service.

# Japan



- Christmas was introduced to Japan by Christian missionaries and for many years only those who were of Christian faith celebrated it.
- Today, lots of people in Japan love the Christmas season. It is widely celebrated even though only 1% of people believe in Christ.
- Shops in Japan have wonderful displays and decorations to advertise gifts to buy.

# Japan



- Some Japanese people have adopted Christmas traditions such as exchanging gifts, Christmas trees, Christmas dinners, and mistletoe.
- A Buddhist monk named Hotei-oshō acts like Santa Claus. He brings presents to each house for children. Some think he has eyes in the back of his head so that children behave when he is nearby.

# Mexico



- Several weeks before Christmas, there are huge markets set up in towns and cities in Mexico which offer crafts, food, and flowers for the Christmas season. Some people travel for days to get to these markets.
- The poinsettia is a red flower native to Mexico that is used widely in Mexico as a Christmas decoration. It has been connected with Christmas since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

# Mexico



- The main Christmas celebration in Mexico is called Las Posadas. People re-enact Joseph and Mary's search for somewhere to stay in Bethlehem. They go house to house, getting refused until they finally reach a house where an altar and nativity scene have been set up.
- Once they have reached the right house a traditional prayer is spoken and the party begins. Food and drinks are served, and children then take turns trying to break open the piñata.

# Netherlands



- In the Netherlands, Santa Claus is known as Sinterklaas.
- Sinterklaas sails from Spain on his feast day, December 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Some children fill their shoes with hay and sugar for Sinterklaas's horse and awake to find them filled with nuts and candy.

# Netherlands



- Sinterklaas appears in person in children's homes asking the children about their behavior in the past year.
- The people of Twente in East Holland hold a special Christmas ceremony where special horns are blown to chase away evil spirits and to announce the birth of Christ.



# Merry Christmas

Sheng Dan Kuai Le

Feliz Navidad

Fröhliche Weihnachten

Joyeux Noel

Vrolijk Kerstfeest

Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva is Novim Godom

Shinnen omedeto

