

## Christmas Celebrations Around the World

It is interesting to see how different countries celebrate Christmas. We asked some of our friends and this is what they told us about their Christmas celebrations:

**Belgium** On Christmas Eve, it starts with a drink and “nibbles<sup>1)</sup>”, followed by a “starter” course such as seafood, and then stuffed turkey. The dessert is a kind of cake made with cream. Father Christmas is called “Saint Nicholas” and he brings presents to children on December 6th, “St. Nicholas Day, ” a long time before Christmas.

**Brazil** Father Christmas is called Papai Noel. Many Christmas customs are similar to those in the USA or UK. For those who have enough money, a special Christmas meal will be chicken, turkey, ham, rice, salad, pork, fresh and dried fruits, often with beer. Poorer people will just have chicken and rice.

**Finland** Finnish people believe that Father Christmas (Santa Claus) lives in the north part of Finland called Korvatunturi, north of the Arctic Circle. People from all over the world send letters to Santa Claus in Finland. There is an even big tourist theme park called “Christmas Land” in the north of Finland, near to where they say that Father Christmas lives. Everyone cleans their houses ready for the three holy days of Christmas — Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day<sup>2)</sup>. Christmas Eve is very special, when people eat rice porridge<sup>3)</sup> and plum<sup>4)</sup> fruit juice in the morning. They will then decorate a spruce<sup>5)</sup> tree in the home. Many families will visit cemeteries and graveyards to place a candle onto the burial graves of family members. Cemeteries are very beautiful at Christmas-time.

**France** In France, everyone has a Christmas tree, sometimes decorated in the old way with red ribbons and real white wax candles. Fir<sup>6)</sup> trees in the garden are often decorated too, with lights on all night. Father Christmas is called Père Noel. The Christmas meal is an important family gathering with good meat and the best wine. Not everyone sends Christmas cards.

**Germany** Germans love to decorate their house at Christmas. Many houses will have little wooden frames holding electric candles in their windows, and coloured pictures of paper or plastic which look beautiful from the outside at night. Father Christmas brings presents in the late afternoon of Christmas Eve (December 24th), after people have been to a church meeting. The presents are then found under the Christmas tree. One person in the family will ring a bell and call everyone to come to the room. On Christmas Day, fish (carp<sup>7)</sup>) or goose will be cooked.

**Latvia** Latvians believe that Father Christmas brings presents on each of the 12 days of Christmas starting on Christmas Eve. Usually the presents are put under the family Christmas tree. The special Latvian Christmas Day meal is cooked brown peas with bacon (pork) sauce, small pies, cabbage and sausage.

**Portugal** People pretend that Father Christmas brings presents to children on Christmas Eve. The presents are left under the Christmas tree or in shoes by the fireplace. A special Christmas meal of salted dry cod—fish<sup>8)</sup> with boiled potatoes is eaten at midnight on Christmas Eve.

**Russia** In the days of the Soviet Union, Christmas was not celebrated very

much. New Year was the important time—when “Father Frost” brought presents to children. Now Christmas can be openly celebrated—either on December 25th; or more often on January 7th. This unusual date is because the Russian Orthodox church uses the old “Julian” calendar<sup>9</sup> for religious celebration days. Special Christmas food includes cakes, pies and “meat dumplings.”

**Sweden** The most important day is Christmas Eve. A special Christmas meal is eaten on Christmas Eve—ham (pork), herring<sup>10</sup> fish, and brown beans—and this is the time when families give presents to each other. Many people attend a church meeting early on Christmas Day.

## 世界各地的圣诞庆典

了解不同的国家怎样庆祝圣诞节是一件有趣的事情。我们请教了一些朋友。他们对自己国家的圣诞活动是这样描述的：

**比利时** 圣诞夜，欢庆活动由小饮和小吃开始，然后是“开胃”菜，如海鲜。接下来的菜是填满佐料的火鸡。甜点是一种带奶油的蛋糕。圣诞老人叫做“圣尼古拉斯”。他在12月6日这一天为孩子们带来礼物。“圣尼古拉斯节”时间远在圣诞节前。

**巴西** 圣诞老人被叫做“圣诞阿爸”。巴西很多的圣诞节习俗与美国或英国类似。对于那些有钱的人家，特别的圣诞宴有鸡、火鸡、火腿、米饭、沙拉、猪肉，以及水果和干果，通常还有啤酒。穷人只是食用鸡和米饭。

**芬兰** 芬兰人相信圣诞老人（圣克劳斯）住在芬兰北部一个叫做科尔瓦山的地方，位于北极圈北部。全世界的人们都把寄给圣诞老人的信发往芬兰。在芬兰的北部甚至有一个大型旅游主题公园被称为“圣诞地”，就位于传说中圣诞老人的居住地附近。每家每户都清扫各自的房屋以迎接圣诞节的三个圣日——圣诞夜、圣诞日和节礼日。圣诞夜是个重要的节日。人们早上喝米粥和李子汁。然后他们在家中装饰云杉树。很多家庭会前往墓地，在已故亲属的墓上献上一根蜡烛。圣诞节时墓地都显得格外漂亮。

**法国** 在法国，每人都有一棵圣诞树。有时圣诞树按传统的方式用红绸带和真正的白蜡烛装饰。庭院中的冷杉树也经常被装饰起来，通宵都亮着小彩灯。圣诞老人被叫做“圣诞阿爸”。圣诞宴是一次重要的家庭聚会，席上满是美酒佳肴。圣诞卡不是每个人都寄的。

**德国** 德国人喜欢圣诞节装饰他们的房子。很多房子的窗户上都会有用小木架支起来的灯泡蜡烛以及印在纸上或塑料上的彩色图片，晚上从屋外看上去非常漂亮。圣诞老人在圣诞夜（12月24日）傍晚人们去教堂聚会之后带来礼物。礼物放在圣诞树下。每家有一个小孩摇着铃铛叫所有人去屋里看礼物。圣诞节人们烹饪鲤鱼或者家鹅。

**拉脱维亚** 拉脱维亚人相信圣诞老人在从圣诞夜开始的12天中每天都带给人们礼物。通常礼物放在家中的圣诞树下。独特的拉脱维亚圣诞节宴有褐豆加火腿酱、小馅饼、洋白菜和香肠。

**葡萄牙** 人们假装圣诞老人在圣诞夜给孩子们带来礼物。礼物放到圣诞树下面或者壁炉旁的鞋里。圣诞夜子夜之时，人们开始享用有腌制的鳕鱼和煮土豆的特别的圣诞宴。

**俄罗斯** 苏联时期，人们不大过圣诞节。新年是一个重要的节日——这时“霜父”为孩子们带来礼物。现在圣诞节可以被公开庆祝，或者在12月25日，或者更通常在1月7日。选择后者这个不寻常的日子是因为俄罗斯东正教按照古老的儒略历确定宗教节日。典型的圣诞宴包括蛋糕、馅饼以及“肉饺”。

**瑞典** 最重要的日子是圣诞夜。特别的圣诞宴安排在圣诞夜，有猪肉火腿、鲱鱼和褐豆。

## 学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

这也是各家互赠礼物的时候。很多人在圣诞节这一天一大早便去教堂参加聚会。

### NOTE 注释：

nibble [ˈnɪbl] n. 少量食物

Boxing Day 节礼日（英国和部分英联邦国家的法定假日，再圣诞节的次日，如遇星期日则推迟一天，按习俗这天向雇员、仆人、邮递员等赠送匣装礼节）

porridge [ˈpɒrɪdʒ] n. 粥，糊

plum [plʌm] n. [植] 李子，洋李

spruce [spruːs] n. 云杉

fir [fɜː] n. [植] 冷杉，枞树，杉木

carp [kɑːp] n. 鲤鱼

cod—fish [ˈkɒdfɪʃ] n. 鳕

Julian calendar [天] 儒略历（故罗马统帅尤利乌斯·恺撒开始采用的历法）

herring [ˈherɪŋ] n. 青鱼，鲱