

How Do We Celebrate Christmas?

Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December in lots of different countries around the world. How do people celebrate Christmas in the UK?

Traditions

On Christmas Eve, many people leave a treat out for Father Christmas and his reindeer. Some leave carrots or sugar lumps for the reindeer, whilst mince pies and drinks are left for Father Christmas.



Christmas stockings are also left out on Christmas Eve, ready for Father Christmas to put presents inside.

Dazzling Decorations

Houses are decorated with lots of beautiful lights. Christmas trees are brought into people's houses and have baubles and tinsel on them. Some people also decorate their houses with paper chains. These colourful chains are put on the tree or hung around the house.

Christmas colours:

There are lots of bright colours used at Christmas time, but these are the most common:

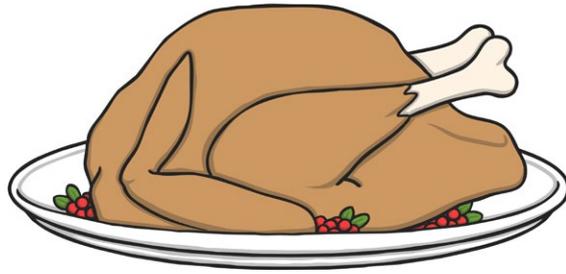
- **Green** – to represent life
- **Red** – to represent Jesus' blood, love and joy
- **Gold** – to represent giving gifts

Festive Food

People enjoy eating yummy food at Christmas time. Christmas puddings have been eaten for many years. They have spices and

dried fruits inside.

Christmas dinner is made in different ways in different homes. Some people have turkey, others have goose or chicken. Nut roast is often eaten by people who do not eat meat. Brussels sprouts are small, green and round, and very healthy.



How Do We Celebrate Christmas? Questions

1. Which day of the year is Christmas Day?

2. Name two treats that might be left out for the reindeer on Christmas Eve.

3. Name two things that may be put onto a Christmas tree.

4. What does the colour gold represent at Christmas time?

5. Which two ingredients are put inside a Christmas pudding?

6. What is your favourite food to eat at Christmas time?

Saint Nicholas

Who was Saint Nicholas?

Saint Nicholas was a very kind person who enjoyed giving gifts to other people. Saint Nicholas grew up sharing toys with his friends that his parents had bought him. When he was old enough he worked in the church, sharing gifts and messages from God. Stories about Saint Nicholas travelled around the world. People were amazed by his kindness.

Names for Saint Nicholas around the world

- Santa Claus in the USA.
- Père Noël in France.
- Kanakaloka in Hawaii.
- Father Christmas in the UK.

Saint Nicholas normally gave his gifts at night whilst people were asleep so that it would surprise them in the morning. He didn't want them to say thank you to him, he just wanted to help them and make them happy.

It is believed that Saint Nicholas now lives in the North Pole with his reindeer and elves. He has a workshop where he makes toys and presents for children all around the world. On Christmas Eve, he sets off in his sleigh to deliver all of the gifts. He is helped on his way by his nine magical reindeer; Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and Rudolph.

Did you know?

- On Christmas Eve, Saint Nicholas delivers presents to 90 million children.
- Rudolph was added to the reindeer team one Christmas Eve during a bad snowstorm. Rudolph, with his glowing red nose, lit the way to make sure that all of the presents were delivered in time.
- His sleigh travels at around 671 million miles per hour!



Saint Nicholas Questions

1. Where did Saint Nicholas work?

2. What is Saint Nicholas called in Hawaii?

3. When does Saint Nicholas normally give presents?

4. Name three of Saint Nicholas' reindeer.

5. How fast does his sleigh travel?

6. How did Rudolph help Saint Nicholas?

Advent



What Is Advent?

Advent is the start of the Christian year, when Christians prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

When Is Advent?

Advent is the four weeks before Christmas, from the nearest Sunday to November 30th, to midnight on Christmas Eve.



How Do People Celebrate Advent?

People spend time with family and friends, and go to church to pray or sing. They might use Advent calendars or Advent wreaths, and sometimes they light Advent candles.

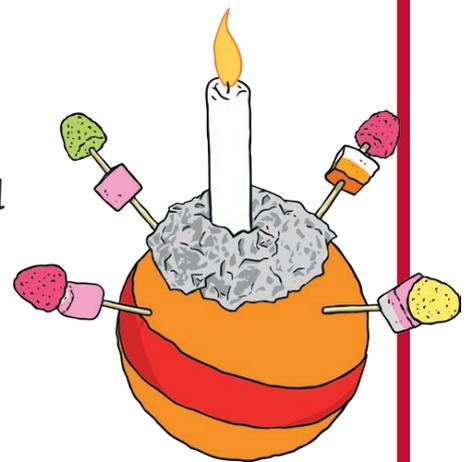
Fun Facts

Each part of the Advent wreath means something special:

- the circle of branches - God does not change
- the four candles - light of God
- the fifth centre candle (lit on Christmas Day) – the birth of Jesus

Each part of the Christingle means something special:

- a candle - Jesus, light of the world
- cocktail sticks - the four seasons
- an orange - the world
- a red ribbon - Jesus died
- sweets or dried fruit - all of God's creations



Questions

1. Which religious year is Advent the start of?

2. Which celebration does Advent come before?

3. What is lit on the Advent wreath on Christmas Day?

4. What does the Christingle orange mean?

5. How could people celebrate Advent?

6. Are you celebrating Advent?

Reindeer

What Do Reindeer Look Like?

Reindeer and caribou are similar animals but reindeer are smaller. Reindeer can be different colours. They can be kept as pets. Males and females grow antlers.



What Do They Eat?

Reindeer eat leaves, grass, lichens and sometimes mushrooms and fish.

Where Do They Live?

Many wild reindeer live in Norway, Finland, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. They like to hide in forests in the winter.

Fun Facts

- They are very good swimmers.
- They have a great sense of smell.
- They have special noses to warm the cold air they breathe.
- Males are called bulls.
- Females are called cows.
- Babies are called calves.



Reindeer

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Song

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer,
Had a very shiny nose.
And if you ever saw it,
You would even say it glows.
All of the other reindeer,
Used to laugh and call him names.
They never let poor Rudolph,
Join in any reindeer games.
Then one foggy Christmas Eve,
Santa came to say:
“Rudolph with your nose so bright,
Won't you guide my sleigh tonight?”
Then all the reindeer loved him,
As they shouted out with glee.
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer,
You'll go down in history!



Reindeer Questions

1. What are similar to a reindeer?

2. What might a reindeer eat?

3. Name somewhere in the world you might find wild reindeer.

4. What did Rudolph have in the song?

5. What is one thing that reindeer are good at?

Christmas Trees

Decorating at Christmas

Christmas trees are usually decorated ready for Christmas Day. Many people use baubles, lights, tinsel, angels and stars on their trees, and might have a colour theme. Christmas presents are usually put under the tree.



Different Types of Trees

Christmas trees come in different shapes and sizes. Many people choose real trees to decorate because they can have a woodland smell. Others choose fake trees because they make less mess. There are pink, black, musical and even spinning trees!

Where Else Do You Find Christmas Trees?

Many villages, towns and cities have a bigger Christmas tree with lights, for people to enjoy outside.



Christmassy Facts!

1. The famous London Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square is a gift from Norway each year.
2. The world's largest floating Christmas tree is in Brazil.
3. Prince Albert started the Christmas tree tradition in England.

Questions

1. Name a Christmas tree decoration we use now.

2. Which special tree does Brazil have?

3. Who started the Christmas tree tradition in England?

4. Name a type of fake Christmas tree.

5. Where can you find bigger Christmas trees outside?
