

# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Visiting family and giving presents are some of the things we love about the festive season in the UK and Ireland. But how do people celebrate in other parts of the world?

## ITALY

Children in Italy have their Crimbo presents delivered by a witch! But don't worry — La Befana is a kindly witch dressed in a long black coat who flies from house to house on a broomstick. At night on 5 January, Befana slides down the chimneys to fill the stockings of well-behaved children with gifts. Naughty kids just get a lump of coal!



## Festive fact

Christmas starts early in Germany — kids leave a boot or shoe outside the door on 5 December to be filled with sweets!

## RUSSIA

In this huge country, a Christmas tree is known as a 'yolka', and there is a Santa Claus figure known as Ded Moroz — Grandfather Frost! The magical man carries a crystal staff and wears a long embroidered coat of red or blue. Instead of elf assistants, he's helped out by his lovely granddaughter, Snegurochka the Snow Maiden. The cool duo give out gifts to Russian kids during New Year parties.



## Festive fact

Mince pies are filled with fruit these days. But in Victorian times, the Christmas treats were made with beef and spices!

## Festive fact

In Catalonia, Spain, a hollow branch known as the pooping log is stuffed with nuts, fruits and sweets on the lead up to Christmas. Then on Christmas Eve the family hit it with sticks until it 'poops' out the treats. Gross! And weird!

## INDIA

Although most people in India aren't Christian, large parts of the country do celebrate Christmas. Mango or banana trees are decorated, presents are given to family members and money is donated to the poor. Streets are lit up at night with oil lamps and star-shaped lanterns.



## Festive fact

In Iceland, kids receive their pressies (or rotten potatoes — ugh!) from 13 Yule Lads! They have funny names, including Spoon Licker, Meat Hook and Door Sniffer!

## AUSTRALIA

Sunshine and 35°C temperatures? That doesn't sound like Christmas to us! But while it's winter here in the Northern Hemisphere (the northern half of the Earth) in December, in the Southern Hemisphere (south of the Equator) it's summer time. People have barbecues on Christmas Day in Australia — some even hit the beach! Bet Santa gets a bit sweaty in all his togs!



## Festive fact

Polish people eat beetroot soup known as borscht and oily fish called herring for their traditional Christmas meal — slurp!

## UKRAINE

For good luck, Christmas trees in the Ukraine are decorated with sparkly fake spider webs! This tradition was inspired by a legend about a woman who was too poor to decorate her tree. She was very sad about this, but then awoke on Christmas morning to find that a spider had covered her tree with beautiful shiny webs during the night!



## GHANA

In this West African country, families may tuck in to a meal of rice with chicken or goat on Christmas Day. Most Ghanaian meals are served with a helping of fufu — a porridge-like yam paste, and a bowl of okra soup (a type of green veg). Some people exchange gifts and decorate mango, guava or cashew trees. There are also processions with dancing in the streets, and many kids wear fancy dress. Cool!



## Festive fact

After Christmas, families in Amsterdam, Holland, drag their old pine trees to a park and have a huge bonfire!

## How to say Happy Christmas in...

- Spanish — Feliz Navidad
- Mandarin — Sheng Tan Kuai Loh
- Swedish — God Jul
- German — Frohe Weihnachten
- Dutch — Gelukkig kerstfeest
- Filipino — Maligayang Pasko

## Go GREEN this Christmas!

Here are some ideas to keep you as green as a Christmas tree this year!

- Instead of using wasteful wrapping paper, save brightly coloured pages of magazines and newspapers to wrap your gifts in!
- Take your unwanted toys to a charity shop before Christmas. It'll make room for any new pressies — and raise money for good causes!
- Get a goat this Christmas! Head to [oxfam.org.uk](http://oxfam.org.uk) and ask your family to buy a farm animal for a family living in poverty. This life-changing gift will provide them with milk and cheese.
- To save money, try making your own presents! Ask an adult to help you bake truffles, cook up chutneys or create some cool crafts.
- Off for a spot of Crimbo shopping? Remember to take bags with you so you don't have to use plastic ones!