

Reading Comprehension



Christmas Celebrations Around the World

Christmas is a time of joy, giving, and spending time with loved ones. While it is widely celebrated on December 25th, different cultures have unique traditions and customs that make this holiday special in their own way. Let's explore how Christmas is celebrated in a few different parts of the world.

1. United States

In the United States, Christmas is a major holiday filled with various traditions. Many people decorate their homes with Christmas lights, ornaments, and a tree. Families gather on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to exchange gifts, sing carols, and enjoy a festive meal. Popular dishes include roast turkey, ham, and pies. Santa Claus, known as the bringer of gifts, is a central figure in American Christmas celebrations. Children hang stockings by the fireplace, hoping Santa will fill them with presents.

2. Mexico

In Mexico, Christmas celebrations begin on December 16th with "Las Posadas," a series of processions that reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. These processions take place every night until Christmas Eve, and they often include singing, prayer, and a festive meal. On Christmas Eve, known as "Nochebuena," families attend a midnight Mass called "Misa de Gallo" and then enjoy a feast with traditional foods like tamales and bacalao. In some areas, children break a piñata filled with sweets and toys. Instead of Santa Claus, Mexican children often receive gifts on January 6th, known as "Día de los Reyes," which celebrates the arrival of the Three Wise Men.

3. Germany

Germany is famous for its Christmas markets, or "Weihnachtsmärkte," which open in late November and continue until Christmas Eve. These markets are filled with festive stalls selling handmade crafts, ornaments, and delicious treats like gingerbread and sausages. A traditional German Christmas Eve meal often includes roast goose or duck, red cabbage, and dumplings. Another popular tradition is the Advent calendar, where children open a door each day in December to find a small gift or chocolate. In Germany, presents are exchanged on Christmas Eve, and many families light candles on an Advent wreath as they count down to Christmas.

4. Japan

Christmas in Japan is not a traditional religious holiday but is celebrated more as a time of spreading happiness and romance. It is common for couples to go on special dates on Christmas Eve, much like Valentine's Day in other countries. Many Japanese people enjoy eating fried chicken on Christmas, a custom that started with a successful marketing campaign by a fast-food chain in the

1970s. Another popular treat is a Christmas cake, usually a sponge cake with whipped cream and strawberries. Christmas is seen as a day for joy and togetherness, rather than a religious observance.

5. Australia

In Australia, Christmas falls in the summer, so celebrations often take place outdoors. Many Australians go to the beach on Christmas Day or have a barbecue with family and friends. Traditional Christmas foods like roast turkey and plum pudding are still popular, but they are often served cold to suit the hot weather. "Carols by Candlelight," where people gather to sing Christmas songs by candlelight, is a beloved tradition. Santa Claus, known as "Father Christmas," is depicted wearing lighter clothing to match the warm climate.

Conclusion

Though Christmas is celebrated in many parts of the world, each culture adds its own special touch to the holiday. Whether it's a big family meal, a visit to a Christmas market, or a romantic date, the spirit of Christmas—love, joy, and generosity—remains universal.

Exercise 1: Answer the following questions based on the article.

1. When do Christmas celebrations begin in Mexico?
2. What are some traditional foods served during Christmas in the United States?
3. What is the significance of the Advent calendar in Germany?
4. How is Christmas commonly celebrated in Japan?
5. Why do Australians often celebrate Christmas outdoors?

Exercise 2: Decide if the following statements are true or false according to the article.

1. In Mexico, Christmas celebrations end on December 16th.
2. In Japan, Christmas is seen more as a time for romance than a religious holiday.
3. Santa Claus is a central figure in Christmas celebrations in Germany.
4. Australians celebrate Christmas during winter, with traditional warm meals.
5. In the United States, children hang stockings by the fireplace for Santa Claus to fill with gifts.

Exercise 3: Match each country with its corresponding Christmas tradition.

Country

1. United States
2. Mexico
3. Germany
4. Japan
5. Australia

Tradition

- a. Couples go on special dates on Christmas Eve.
- b. Families often have barbecues or go to the beach on Christmas Day.
- c. Children open a door on an Advent calendar each day in December.
- d. "Las Posadas" processions reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter.
- e. Santa Claus fills stockings hung by the fireplace with gifts.

Exercise 4: Use the words from the box to complete the sentences.

traditions procession feast romance markets

1. In Mexico, "Las Posadas" is a nightly _____ that reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter.
2. Christmas _____ in Germany are famous for their festive stalls and handmade crafts.
3. In Japan, Christmas is more about _____ than a religious celebration.
4. In the United States, families often have a large _____ on Christmas Day.
5. Australians have unique Christmas _____ like "Carols by Candlelight" and beach gatherings.