



Christmas around the World

Serbia



Serbians traditionally fast during Advent and do not eat meat, eggs or dairy products during this time. Christmas Eve meals consist of dried fruit compote, meat free soup, Serbian Lenten bread, a bean dish, fish, vegetable casserole and nuts with fruit.

Cesnica or Christmas bread is served either during Christmas dinner or the next morning at breakfast time, depending on what region of Serbia you are from. The česnica is rotated three times counterclockwise, before being shared amongst family members. It contains a coin that is said to bring good luck to the person who finds it.



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Greece



Greek people anxiously look forward to eating a Christmas meal with family and friends. Devout people restrict their diet of meat and dairy for forty days before Christmas and traditionally Sesame Baklava is eaten on Christmas Eve. Christmas day foods include: Egg-Lemon Chicken and Rice soup (avgolemono) to start, stuffed cabbage leaves, a special bread called Christopsomo, pork, turkey and Christmas cookies (melomakarona and kourambiethes).



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Russia



Russians traditionally fast during Advent and do not eat meat or dairy products during this time. Christmas Eve marks the end of the fast and it is broken when the first star is spotted in the sky with sochivo porridge (a sweet dish of grains soaked in water served with fruit and honey). After sochivo porridge many courses are consumed including: soup, sauerkraut, pickled foods, vegetable and legume stews, grains and dumplings, fruit compote and Christmas cookies.



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United Kingdom



In the United Kingdom, the Christmas Day lunch is greatly anticipated. Roast meat such as turkey, duck or goose is usually served alongside roast vegetables and side plates of brussel sprouts. Dessert could be Christmas cake or pudding with custard and perhaps later on a fruit mince pie with a hot chocolate.



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United States



Different parts of the United States have different traditions and the weather can affect what people eat on Christmas Day too. A roast meat is usually served but some people don't serve turkey as turkey is traditionally served on Thanksgiving Day. Vegetables are usually served such as mashed potato, candied yams (sweet potato), green beans and a salad. Dessert is usually a pie such as pumpkin pie, apple pie or coconut pie.



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Australia



With the warmer weather at Christmas time, some Australians like to have a more relaxed Christmas lunch. Seafood such as prawns and lobster are popular along with cold meats such as hams and chicken with salads. Some people have a barbeque. Desserts can include traditional treats such as plum pudding and Christmas cake but people also like to have lighter desserts such as pavlova and trifle.



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Mexico



Mexican people traditionally have their main Christmas meal on Christmas Eve. Families gather and celebrate the occasion together. Meals are started with an entrée of Mexican Christmas Eve Salad and Tamales are a favourite food reserved for Christmas. Turkey is a native animal and is eaten as the main meat alongside dry salted cod fish and shrimp cakes with romeritos. Dessert may be a sweet bread called Rosca de Reyes.



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Japan



Celebrating Christmas is a relatively new experience in Japan and, as a result, it is not a holiday. It is very popular for people to enjoy fried chicken with loved ones and eat a Japanese Christmas cake made out of sponge cake and covered with strawberries.



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Philippines



Christmas is a very special time for Filipino people. Families gather together on Christmas Eve and enjoy a meal together at midnight. Pork is often the centerpiece of the meal and Christmas ham is popular as well. Balls of Edam cheese (queso de bola) are shared and several pasta dishes are served. Dessert is a quick fruit salad.



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South Africa



Christmas is during summer in South Africa so many people enjoy the outdoors during this time. The Christmas meal features traditional English food as well as some South African dishes. Roast meats such as turkey and beef are served along with suckling pig with yellow rice and vegetables. Mince pies and Christmas pudding are often eaten for dessert as well as the South African dish, malva pudding. Some people have a barbeque to celebrate Christmas.



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Germany



Germany is known for its many Christmas traditions. Many families gather for a light meal of fish, potato fritters and sauerkraut on Christmas Eve and then on Christmas Day enjoy a much more lavish dinner together. Goose, turkey and duck are popular meats served with a bread dumpling called serviettenknodal. Braised red cabbage and stewed kale are some of the vegetables served. Dessert is not a major focus of a German Christmas dinner however spicy German Christmas cookies or stollen may be served after the main course.