



CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Christmas traditions differ from country to country. For example, some countries celebrate it outdoors whilst others do just the opposite.

Here at the *IMT Times* we're curious about festive fun across the globe.



In **Spain**, the Christmas season begins on December 8 with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Evergreens decorate the churches and outdoor markets throughout the Christmas season. Streets are always vivid thanks to the vibrant holiday music and lights. Children visit neighborhood homes to request sweets, toys, or small instruments.

England is cold, wet, and foggy at Christmastime. In the days before the holiday, families are all on the go with preparations for Noel. They make or buy presents, bake cookies, chocolates and hang stockings over the fireplace. On Christmas Eve (the night before Christmas), everyone gathers around the tree as someone tells a classic English holiday story, "A Christmas Carol." Children write letters with their wishes to Father Christmas and toss them into the fire so their wishes can go up the chimney. After children go to sleep, they believe Father Christmas visits the house to deliver their presents.

Every family cleans house thoroughly to show their readiness for Christmas in **Finland**. Fir trees are lavishly decorated outdoors. Fruits, especially apples, are used to decorate the tree. A sheaf of grain is placed at the treetop for the birds, and nobody tucks into Christmas dinner before the birds have eaten theirs. Children do not hang up stockings, but Santa Claus comes with his elves to

distribute gifts while they sleep. People do not wish each other a “Merry Christmas,” but instead they say, “Merry Yule!”

Although only one percent of Japanese people believe in Christ, Christmas is broadly celebrated in **Japan**. People decorate their homes and shops with evergreens and give each other gifts. Instead of Santa Clause or Father Christmas, they await a Buddhist monk called Hote-i Osho who brings presents to the house for children. For Japanese Christians, Christmas is a day designated for visiting old and especially sick relatives—as the holiday’s namesake would have wanted them to do.

Christmas Mubarak! Gëzuar Krishtlindjen! Shnorhavor Amanor yev Surb Tznund! Sheng Dan Kuai Le! Rõõmsaid Jõulupühi! Hyvää Joulua! Joyeux Noël! Buon Natale! Meri Kurisumasu! Linksmü Kalëdu! Selamat Hari Natal! Meri Kirihimete! Feliz Navidad! Mutlu Yıllar! Veseloho Vam Rizdva! Merry Christmas!