



CHRISTMAS

Christmas



- Christmas is the main public holiday in Britain and the US. This Christian holy day is held on December 25th (in Russia on January 7th) in honour of the birth of Christ.
- On Christmas Eve some people go to a special church service called Midnight Mass or Christmas Eve. Service at 12 o'clock at night. Others may, have a drink with their friends.
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Christmas dinner



- The most important meal is Christmas dinner.
- At the start of the meal, British people often pull a cracker, which contains a small toy, a paper hat, and a joke.
- The typical meal nowadays consists of turkey with potatoes and other vegetables such as carrots and sprouts.



Christmas pudding



- In Britain this is followed by Christmas pudding — a sweet pudding containing a lot of dried fruit and often covered with burning brandy.
- Other traditional foods in Britain include Christmas cake — a cake containing a lot of dried fruit and usually having a covering of icing (hard sugar) made to be eaten at Christmas, and mince pies.
- Americans bake special biscuits called Christmas cookies which they eat over the Christmas season (the time when people prepare for and celebrate Christmas, from mid-December to the end of the year).

Santa Claus

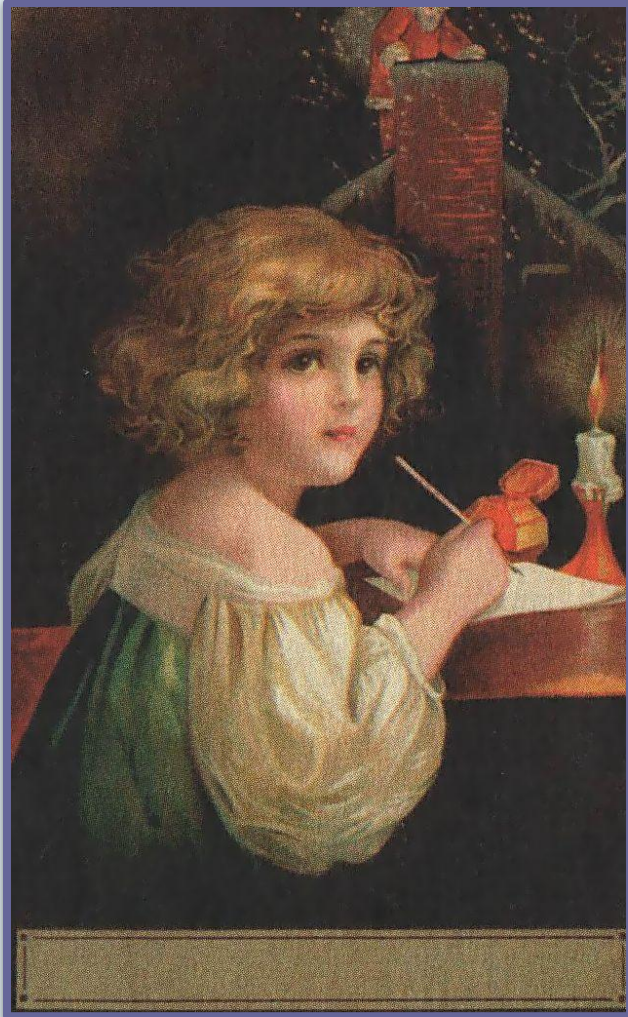


- Santa Claus is thought to live at the North Pole where he spends most of the year in his workshop making toys for children with the help of elves often called "brownies" in America.
- People think of him as a happy man, who says, "Ho, ho, ho."



- Santa Claus, also called Santa, Father Christmas (in Britain), or Kriss Kringle (in America) is an imaginary old man in red clothes and with a long white beard.
- He is supposed to fly about the sky in a sleigh, pulled by reindeer.

Presents



- Young children are told that Santa Claus will bring them presents if they are good.
- Children sometimes write a letter to Santa Claus telling him what presents they would like for Christmas.



- There is a tradition that children should put a long sock called a Christmas stocking at the end of their bed or by the chimney or hang it by the fireplace so that Santa Claus will fill it with presents.
- A tangerine or a nut are often put into the stockings.
- Santa Claus is supposed to visit each house on Christmas Eve by climbing down the chimney.

Shopping before Christmas



- Because people give each other presents, in the days and weeks before Christmas the shops become very busy.
- Newspapers and television, etc. say how many shopping days there are left and people often spend a lot of money. But many people feel that Christmas has become too much of business and so has lost its meaning.



Christmas tree

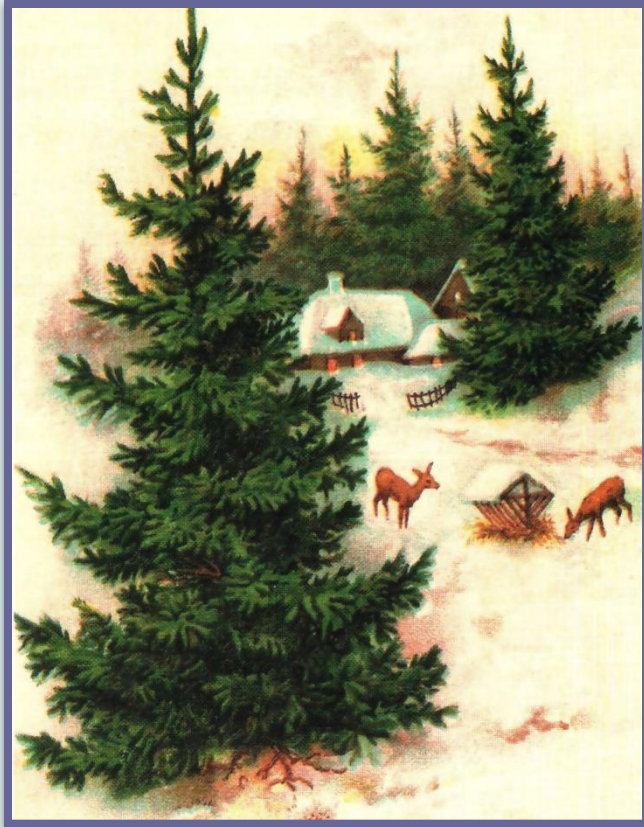


- Christmas Day is a public holiday.
- Families usually spend the day opening their presents which are often piled around the Christmas tree decorated with tinsel, baubles, fairy lights, etc.

Christmas cards



- People also buy and send Christmas cards to their friends usually containing the message "Merry Christmas". The cards often show pictures of "the nativity (the birth of Christ), Santa Claus, a Christmas tree, robins" or scenes of old-fashioned Christmases.



- Twelve days after Christmas is the time when people are supposed to take down their decorations and remove their Christmas trees.