



# Christmas Around the World

 **beanstack originals**



# Christmas Around the World

Discover different ways to celebrate this winter holiday.



Did you know that there are people who celebrate Christmas in almost every country around the world? In fact, more than two billion people across the globe take part in the holiday. These people have many different Christmas traditions, or ways of behaving. Read on to learn some of the ways people celebrate Christmas around the world.

## Calling Santa Claus

Quick—who is known for flying in a sleigh and delivering presents at Christmas? If you said Santa Claus, you’d be right! But there are other right answers, too. That’s because Santa Claus answers to many different names. In some places, he wears different colors. And in others, he rides in different types of transportation. That’s because Santa Claus fits the culture and customs of different places all over the world.

In most of the United States, where people call him Santa Claus, people think of Santa in a red suit with white fur. He

drives a sleigh pulled by nine flying reindeer. But when Santa visits New Orleans in Louisiana, he does things a bit differently. There, he rides a small boat ... pulled by alligators! And people call him “Papa

### FUN FACT

**The first song ever played in space was “Jingle Bells.”**



## Christmas Around the World



Santa Claus (Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet) arriving in the Netherlands.

Noël.” In parts of Europe, on the other hand, people call Santa “Father Christmas.” When he visits, he wears a dark green suit lined with fur.

### Christmas Guests

Christmas is a magical time. It is known for magical stories, like those about Santa’s nine reindeer. Not only can these reindeer fly, they also know the way to every child’s home. They pull Santa in a sleigh to bring presents on Christmas. Many people like to leave carrots out for the reindeer, so they can have a snack when they visit. However, in different parts of the world, there are also different magical guests who arrive during Christmastime.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

**During Christmas in Italy, people are also visited by a kind witch known as La Befana. She leaves behind candy!**

In Iceland, kids expect visits from the 13 Yule Lads. The Yule Lads are the 13 sons of a magical troll named Grýla. Each of the 13 nights leading up to Christmas, one of the Yule Lads visits. Each Yule Lad likes to play pranks. These pranks are

reflected in their silly names, like Spoon Licker, Door Slammer, and Candle Stealer. However, each Yule Lad also leaves a gift for nice children—but naughty children get rotten potatoes!



## Christmas Around the World



Gävle straw goat.

### Cool Traditions

Just like people have different names for Santa, they also have different ways of celebrating Christmas. People in many places leave out stockings or shoes. Then, Santa leaves small treats or presents in these. In one town in Sweden, people also celebrate with the Yule Goat.

At the beginning of December in Gävle, Sweden, people build a large goat out of straw. How large? It is 40 feet (12.2 m) high—about as tall as a four-story building! The goat is built to honor Yule, an ancient festival. Yule celebrated the winter solstice, or the longest night of the year. Yule later became a part of many Christmas celebrations. However, the Yule Goat's story is a bit more unusual: each year, pranksters try to burn it down! This has become a long-standing tradition in Gävle.