

Yuletide

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year” states a well known Christmas song. Maybe it’s the sense of warmth and joy it brings you and your family, which makes it so wonderful. But, often it is the safety of your own Christmas traditions that make it so.

Secular and religious traditions

Several Christmas traditions are religious in nature, being based on the Christian story of the birth of Jesus. For example, a nativity scene, where you see a small manger with beautifully decorated figures of Joseph, Maria, baby Jesus, shepherds, the Three Kings and farm animals. Other traditions are secular. One that comes to mind is a Christmas tree.

Evergreen tree

Decorating an evergreen tree has always been a tradition in Germany. It made its way to other countries in the 1800’s. First, German immigrants introduced the tradition in America. After that, the German Prince Albert brought it to England when he married Queen Victoria. To be expected, the world’s tallest Christmas tree is in Germany. The 46m tree is the towering highlight of the Dortmund Christmas market. Other well known Christmas trees are located in Trafalgar Square in London and at the White House in Washington D.C..

Celebrating Christmas

On the whole, we all think of Christmas as December 25th. However, some people celebrate Christmas on other days in December and January. Sweden kicks off the Christmas season with a candlelight



procession and bonfire for St. Lucia on December 13th. Other countries also celebrate Christmas with a bonfire, but then on a different date.

December 24, 25 and 26

The night before Christmas, known as Christmas Eve, is traditionally a moment when people go to church. Many people in Europe prepare a large meal and share presents in the late hours of that night. On the other hand, in England and North America, presents and dinner are on the 25th. The 26th is known in England as Boxing Day. Many shops have spectacular sales on this day, drawing crowds to the shopping malls.

In common

The differences between worldwide Christmas traditions don’t outweigh the similarities. Already noted, Christmas is a holiday spent with family. It’s often a time of lights, especially during the dark winter nights. Christmas music is heard everywhere: carolling with traditional songs such as We Three Kings, and Christmas hits such as White Christmas (the all-time number 1). Many share gifts and cards at this time of year, but all spend time eating a most fabulous dinner. All in the name of tradition.

Source: www.citymetric.com; www.history.com;