Holiday Traditions Around the World

Christmas traditions

Russian Traditions. In Russia, Christmas is celebrated on January 7 so as to be in compliance with the Russian calendar. It is not celebrated on December 25. One of the unique ceremonies of Christmas that the Russians do is called Kolyadki. This ceremony includes wishing of wealth and happiness for everyone. During the ceremony, a snow lady is made with a carrot nose, eyes of prunes, and teeth of green beans. She is usually accompanied by people bearing stars who sing and dance in a ring on the snow.

German Traditions. In Germany, according to legend, German rivers turn to wine, animals speak to each other, tree blossoms bear fruit, and mountains open up to reveal precious gems on Christmas Eve. Germans actually begin celebrating Christmas on December 6. This is St. Nicholas Day. On the eve of December 6, children place a shoe by the fireplace. During the night, St. Nicholas hops from house to house carrying “a book of sins” which records the misdeed of the children. If they have been good, he fills the shoe or boot with candy. If they have been bad, their shoe is filled with twigs.

You probably didn’t know this, but the Christmas tree as we know it originated in Germany. German and English immigrants brought the Christmas tree idea to American. Fruits, nuts, flowers, and lighted candles adorned the first Christmas trees, but only the strongest trees could support the weight without drooping; thus, German glassblowers began producing lightweight glass balls to replace the heavier, natural decorations. Hence, Christmas ornaments were created. However, in Germany, the young children are not allowed to see the Christmas tree until Christmas Eve. The tree is decorated on Christmas Eve and presents are then placed underneath. The Germans usually eat a roasted goose on Christmas day.

Danish Traditions. In Denmark, Santa arrives in a sleigh. However, children believe that Santa’s elves live in the attics of their homes. They also leave rice pudding and milk out for Santa which is similar to how American children leave cookies and milk for Santa. Christmas cards were actually a Victorian creation. They began as a type of stationery and were used as greetings to children’s parents as proof of their progress in the art of writing.

New year’s day

Iran. In Iran, New Year’s day (New Rooz) always begins on the first day of Spring. New Rooz actually means “New Day.” The actual day varies, but usually they celebrate New Year’s around March 20. Usually a few weeks before the New Year’s celebration, Iranians thoroughly clean and rearrange their homes. They make new clothes, bake pastries, and germinate seeds as signs of renewal. Children usually get new bills or coins from relatives, but what is most widely exchanged is hugs and kisses for renewing relationships.

Valentine’s day

Valentine’s day is celebrated in many countries of the world; however, they may not celebrate it on February 14. For instance, Brazil celebrates Valentine’s day in June.

St. Patrick’s Day

Irish Traditions. This is actually an Irish holiday honoring Saint Patrick. Saint Patrick, however, was not actually Irish. Historians feel that he was born in Scotland around 373 AD. Legend has it that Saint Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland and that they all went into the sea and drowned. Some people think that this was a story that was made up alluding to the fact that he drove paganism out of Ireland since the snake was a revered pagan symbol.

The first American celebration of St. Patrick’s day was in Boston in 1737. There are over 100 U.S. cities that now hold St. Patrick day’s parades. What is considered to be good luck on St. Patrick’s day? Finding a four-leaf clover, wearing green, or kissing the blarney stone.

Easter traditions

Traditions of Russia. The Easter holiday is also celebrated in Russia. They have a special round-shaped sweet bread which they call Easter cakes. These cakes are sold during the Easter season. They also paint Easter eggs in bright colors. The red egg is considered to be a symbol of Easter. They give these brightly colored eggs to friends and family as an Easter greeting. They also celebrate a holiday called the Red Hill holiday. This holiday is the first Sunday to follow Easter. This day is considered the best for wedding ceremonies.

Unique traditions for each country

Russia also celebrates a holiday called Troitsa. On Troitsa, the houses are usually decorated with fresh green branches. They put young ladies clothing on young birch trees, and then songs and dances around the birch trees take place.

In England, they celebrate Boxing Day. This is celebrated the first weekday after Christmas. During this holiday, small wrapped boxes with foods, sweets, or coins are given to anyone that comes to your home on that day.

On October 3 in Germany is a national holiday equivalent to our fourth of July. It is called the day of German union. Schools and public buildings are closed.

In Brazil, they celebrate Carnival. This is a week long holiday that includes costumes and parties. It is their biggest celebration of the yea