

Christmas in England

December 25

An annual festival in commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ



Two hundred years ago British Christmas was totally different from Christmas we know today

It was based on old pagan traditions and was mainly for adults. It was full of mischief and alcohol.



When Queen Victoria and her German husband Prince Albert became the rulers of the British Empire

the British started celebrating what we know as 'traditional' British Christmas. Victoria and Albert decided to invent a new-style celebration that would support the values and morals they wanted their people to follow.



However, they kept some pagan traditions

e.g. They decorated their homes with garlands and greenery.



Christmas trees

were decorated with candles,
toffees and gingerbreads.



Christmas candles

People believed that their light helped him to forget the darkness of winter.



The baubles

appeared after 1870 (they believe that baubles protected them from the evil eye).



Christmas tree



Most families decorate their houses with brightly-coloured paper. They usually have a Christmas tree in the corner of the room. Early green trees were symbols of life.



Christmas trees replaced a more British custom of the Kissing Bough

It was an enormous garland of green leaves and tree branches which was hung in the center of the main room.



Victoria and Albert started more Christmas customs presents giving



Christmas cards giving



The very first Christmas card

Christmas cards

The first Christmas card was made in 1842 by an English painter John Calcott Horsley who sent that card to one hundred of his friends.



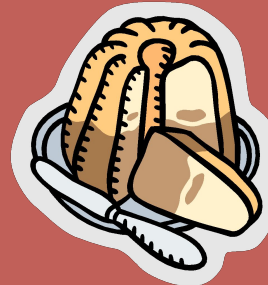
Christmas cards

are arranged on mantelpieces, shelves, tables and sometimes attached to ribbon and hung round the walls.



The way Christmas dishes are now served in Britain changed

It became fashionable to dine a la Russe (Russian style) – to serve separate dishes instead of having all the dishes on the table at once.

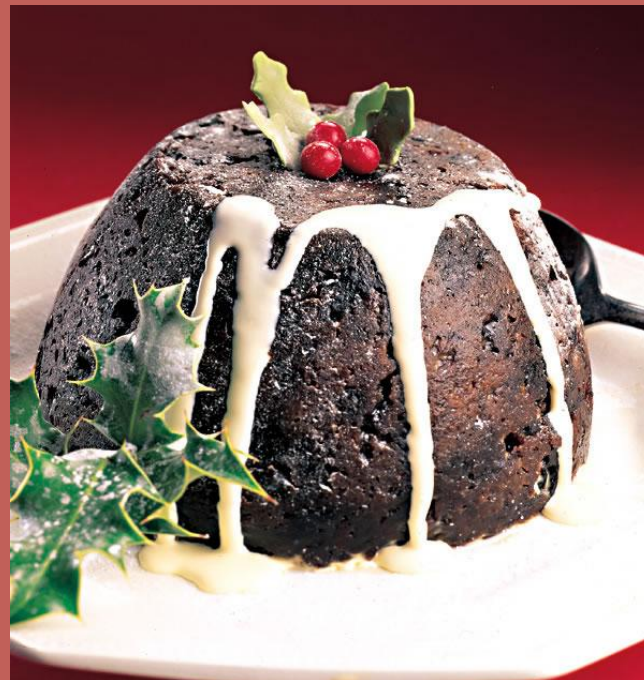


Before the 17th century the main Christmas dish was the plum pudding.

It was served with the meat course and was eaten with a spoon.

With time people added other ingredients:

- mutton (баранина)
- raisins (изюм)
- wine
- ginger (имбирь)
- cloves (гвоздика)



The Victorians made popular Christmas pudding



During the rule of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)



eating Christmas pudding was illegal in Britain. Cromwell thought that the dish was so rich that it was sinful to eat it. He banned it!

Anyone caught eating it could be fined or sent to jail.



British Christmas is a family celebration



family

The symbols of Christmas:

- Food & drink
- Parties
- Television and the Queen's Speech
- Shopping in the dark, fairy lit streets
- Midnight Mass & Carol Services
- Children's activities
- A Walk after Dinner
- Sending out cards
- Playing Games
- Carol-singing
- Decorating



Christmas is celebrated during three days:

- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day



Boxing Day



The first weekday after Christmas is a public holiday. This day is called Boxing Day because people open the presents that were put in boxes.



On Christmas Eve

children hang their stockings over the fire-place.

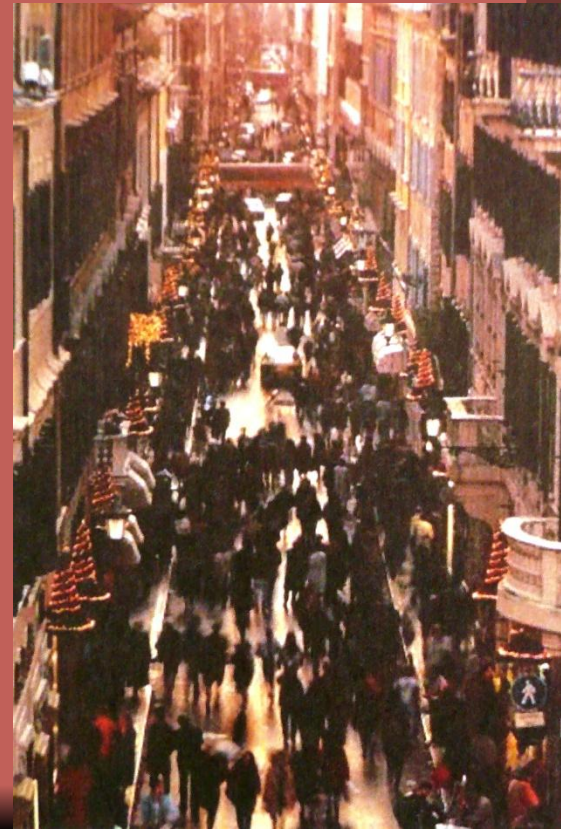


They are told that Santa Claus arrives at night from the North Pole and fills each stocking with presents.

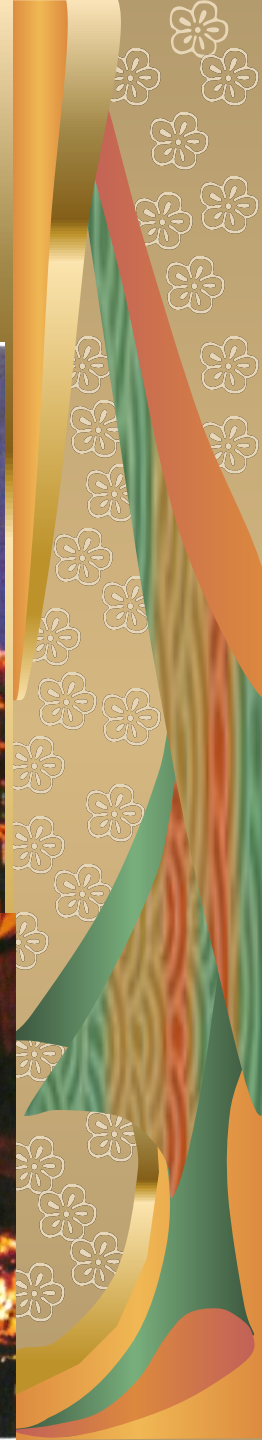


On Christmas Eve everything is rush and bustle.

Offices and public buildings close at
one o'clock, but the shops stay open
till darkness.



Most big cities are decorated with colourful lights across the streets and enormous Christmas trees.



Christmas food

Lunch is the most important point on Christmas Day. The traditional lunch consists of a roast turkey with vegetables, goose, Christmas pudding, the roast beef, nuts and oranges .



In the houses
there is a great air of expectation

The children are decorating house and
the tree with tinsel, various baubles
and coloured lights.





Merry Christmas