

Christmas Around the World

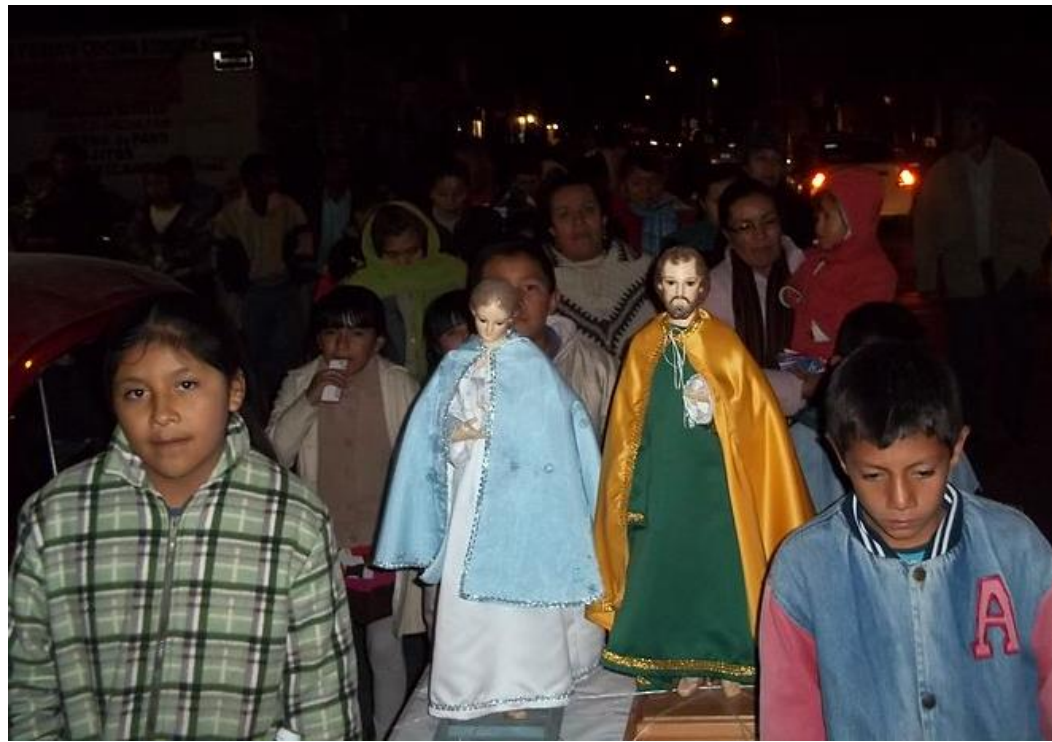
世界各地的聖誕節



Christmas is a time of joy and celebration. Many countries have unique customs and traditions that help make this a happy season.

聖誕節是一個歡樂和慶祝的時期。許多國家都有其獨特的習俗和傳統，使它成為一個歡樂的節日。

In Mexico, starting nine days before Christmas Day, children go through their neighborhoods reenacting Joseph and Mary's search for lodgings. Two children carrying figures of Joseph and Mary lead a procession to a particular house singing Christmas carols as they go. They knock on the door and ask for a room. At first they are refused, but then they are allowed in. A feast and celebration follow. Blindfolded children enjoy using a stick to try to break the piñata, a large brightly decorated paper figure hung from the ceiling and containing candy or small gifts.



在墨西哥，聖誕節九天前開始，孩子們扮演成約瑟和馬利亞，到左鄰右里尋找住宿之處。兩個孩子拿著約瑟和馬利亞的塑像，帶領遊行隊伍到某棟房子，一路上唱著聖誕頌歌。他們會敲門，請問是否有一個可以住宿的房間。起初他們被拒絕，但隨後他們被允許進入。之後，是一頓盛宴和慶祝活動。蒙住眼睛的孩子們喜歡用棍子來打破「皮納塔」(piñata)，那是一個裝飾鮮豔的紙製大動物，掛在天花板上，裡面裝著糖果或小禮物。

In Scotland, on the night after Christmas, boxes of food are wrapped and given to the poor.

在蘇格蘭，聖誕節後第二天晚上，人們包裝好一盒盒的食物，然後分送給窮人。



In Ireland, a candle is lit and put in the window on Christmas Eve to welcome any weary travelers.

在愛爾蘭，人們在平安夜點燃蠟燭並放在窗戶上，歡迎任何疲憊的旅客。

In Russia, some Orthodox Christians fast during a period before Christmas. Then, at the sight of the first star in the sky on Christmas Eve, a 12-course supper begins.

在俄羅斯，一些東正教基督徒在聖誕節前的一段時間禁食。然後，在平安夜看到天空中的第一顆星星時，開始享用一頓12道菜的晚餐。



In Greece, children go from house to house on Christmas Eve, knocking on doors and singing songs that herald the arrival of the Christ Child.

在希臘，孩子們在平安夜會一家又一家地拜訪，敲門、唱歌，預告嬰兒基督的降臨。



In Ethiopia, members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas on January 6, following the ancient Roman calendar.

在衣索比亞，衣索比亞東正教會按照古羅馬曆法，在1月6日慶祝聖誕節。



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In southern India, Christians decorate their houses with clay lamps at night.

在印度南部，基督徒在夜間用粘土燈裝飾房子。

Americans decorate their houses with brightly colored lights. In some parts of the country they also line the streets with candles.

美國人用鮮豔的彩色燈泡裝飾房子。在國內有些地方，他們還用蠟燭裝飾街道。



In the Philippines, Christmas carols start filling the airwaves as early as September.

在菲律賓，聖誕頌歌早在九月份就開始到處播放了。



Throughout Norway, people ring in Christmas by ringing bells at 5 pm on Christmas Eve.

在挪威各地，人們在聖誕前夕下午五點敲響鐘。



In many countries, nativity scenes are displayed to remind everyone of the birth of Jesus. In Italy, the family prays as the mother puts the figure of the Christ Child (Bambino) in the manger.

在許多國家，人們擺設耶穌的誕生場景，來提醒大家耶穌的誕生。在義大利，當母親把嬰兒基督（Bambino）的塑像放進馬槽裡時，全家人一起祈禱。

And there is the Christmas tree, of course. There is considerable speculation as to how and when the evergreen became a symbol of Christmas, but many believe it can be traced to medieval Germany. The fact that the tree is always green symbolizes the eternal life that Jesus promises those who believe in Him. Just as the evergreen thrives even in winter, so Christ was triumphant over death.

當然還有聖誕樹。關於常青樹如何、以及何時成為聖誕節的象徵，人們有很多猜測。但許多人認為，它可以追溯到中世紀德國。常青樹永遠是綠色的，象徵著耶穌向信奉祂的人所承諾的永生。即使在冬天，常青樹仍茁壯成長；同樣地，基督也戰勝了死亡。



Perhaps the most widespread of all Christmas traditions—the giving of gifts to loved ones—has its roots in the gifts the wise men presented to Jesus. They had seen a sign in the heavens that signaled the Messiah’s birth, and they went to worship Him and presented His family with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gift of gold signified His royalty. The gift of frankincense signified His divinity. It was an aromatic resin from which incense and perfume fit for kings were made. Myrrh, the third gift, was another aromatic resin, from which perfume was made to embalm the dead. This signified Jesus’ humanity and that He would die for us. Jesus’ birth, suffering, death, and glory were all revealed in the wise men’s gifts.

也許所有聖誕節傳統中最普遍的傳統，就是親人之間互送禮物。這根源於耶穌誕生時三位智者送給祂的禮物。他們在天空中看到了一個徵兆，它標示彌賽亞（救世主）的誕生，於是他們去敬拜祂，並送給祂的家人黃金、乳香和沒藥作為禮物。黃金的禮物表示祂是皇族出身。乳香的禮物表示出祂的神性。乳香是一種芳香樹脂，人們將它造成香支和香水，專供國王使用。第三件禮物沒藥，也是一種芳香樹脂，人們將它造成的香水，是用來塗抹死者用的。這象徵著耶穌的人性，祂將會為我們而死。耶穌的出生、受苦、死亡和榮耀，都藉著三位智者贈送的禮物揭示出來了。



But why all these traditions? Let's travel back to the first Christmas Eve, where some shepherds are taking care of their flocks on a hillside near Bethlehem. A bright light bursts forth and angels announce the birth of Jesus in song. The shepherds are so excited that they run and tell everyone they can about what just happened. Imagine the joy that Mary and Joseph experience when they hold God's Son in their arms! That same unspeakable joy can still be felt today by all those who open their hearts to receive God's love in Jesus.

但是人們為什麼會有這些傳統呢？讓我們回到第一個平安夜，在那裡一些牧羊人正在伯利恆附近的山坡上照顧羊群。一道明亮耀眼的光突然照耀大地，天使們在歌聲中宣告耶穌的誕生。牧羊人非常興奮，跑去告訴大家他們剛剛經歷的事情。想像一下，馬利亞和約瑟在懷中正抱著上帝的兒子時，所體驗到的喜悅吧！今天，所有願意敞開心扉接受上帝藉著耶穌所給予的愛的人，仍然能夠感受到同樣難以言喻的喜悅！



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