

A festive Christmas scene featuring a decorated tree, wrapped gifts, and a rocking horse. The background is a warm, bokeh-filled Christmas tree with red, green, and white ornaments. In the foreground, there are several wrapped gifts: one in gold paper with a red ribbon, one in green paper with a red ribbon, and one in red paper with a large red bow. A small white rocking horse is also visible. The overall atmosphere is cozy and celebratory.

Christmas
in the UK

VS

Christmas
in the USA



A festive night street scene with Christmas lights and a large angel light display. The background shows a city street at night, illuminated by warm lights and decorated with strings of lights and snowflake ornaments. A large, glowing angel figure made of lights is the central focus, with its wings spread wide. The text 'CHRISTMAS IN THE UK/USA TRADITIONS' is overlaid in a large, yellow, serif font at the top of the image.

CHRISTMAS IN THE UK/USA TRADITIONS

In the UK families often celebrate Christmas together, so they can watch each other open their presents! Most families have a Christmas Tree in their house. The decorating of the tree is usually a family occasion, with everyone helping. Most villages, towns and cities are decorated with Christmas lights over Christmas. Thousands of people go to watch the big 'switch on' around the beginning of November. Like a lot of countries, Nativity Plays and Carol Services are also very popular at Christmas time. Children believe that Santa Claus leaves presents in stockings or pillow-cases. These are normally hung up by the fire or by the children's beds on Christmas Eve. Children sometimes leave out mince pies and brandy for Santa Claus to eat and drink when he visits them. Children write letters to Santa Claus listing their requests, but sometimes instead of putting them in the post, the letters are tossed into the fireplace. The draught carries the letters up the chimney and Santa Claus reads the smoke.

CHRISTMAS IN THE UK, FOOD



In the UK, it's normally roast turkey, roast vegetables and 'all the trimmings' which means vegetables like carrots & peas, stuffing and sometimes bacon and sausages. It's often served with cranberry sauce and bread sauce. Traditionally, and before turkey was available, roast beef or goose was the main Christmas meal. One vegetable that is often at Christmas in the UK are Brussels sprouts. Dessert is often Christmas Pudding and lots of chocolates.

CHRISTMAS IN WALES



In parts of South Wales, there is the tradition of the 'Mari Lwyd' wassailing horse. The horse isn't a real one, but is a horse's skull that is decorated. The horse and its followers go from house to house, playing music and singing. In some villages in North Wales there's a very old a special type of carol singing called Plygain singing which happens in Welsh chapels. The word Plygain comes from a term meaning "the cock crowing". All the carols are based on Bible stories and are unaccompanied. Some are very old carols which have been passed down within one family for generations. People and groups take it in turn to go to the front of the chapel and sing their carol.





CHRISTMAS IN SCOTLAND



Topsy Laird

The ban of Christmas in Scotland started in 1640, when Christmas was illegal in the UK. In 1686 England removed the ban, but the Scottish Church didn't want to celebrate Christmas. In 1958 the holiday became a public holiday, and in 1974 Christmas became a national holiday. In Scotland there's a variation of Trifle called 'Topsy Laird'.

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CHRISTMAS IN THE USA

Some Americans use pop-corn threaded on string to help decorate their Christmas Tree. Making gingerbread houses is also popular to make and eat at Christmas! Eggnog is a 'traditional' Christmas drink in the USA. Many Americans, especially Christians go to Church to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Americans also send out Christmas Cards, like Carol singing and there's the unusual custom of the Christmas Pickle!



People in the USA like to decorate the outsides of their houses. Towns and cities often decorate the streets with lights to celebrate Christmas.

Perhaps the most famous Christmas street lights in the USA are at the Rockefeller Center in New York where there is a huge Christmas Tree with a public ice skating rink in front of it over Christmas and the New Year. In the Southwest USA there are some special customs. These include 'luminarias' or 'farolitos' which are paper sacks partly filled with sand and then have a candle put in them. They are lit on Christmas Eve and are put the edges of paths. They represent 'lighting the way' for somewhere for Mary and Joseph to stay.





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