



ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



VICHO GRANCHAROV SECONDARY SCHOOL  
GORNA ORYAKHOVITSA  
BULGARIA

## LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME A COMENIUS PROJECT - MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS



POLAND



ROMANIA



TURKEY



SWEDEN



ITALY



SPAIN



CZECH  
REPUBLIC

TEACHING INNOVATIVELY  
(WITH FOCUS ON ICT) AND ITS IMPACT ON  
THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

01.08.2011 - 31.07.2013



**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## Christmas in Romania

Christmas in Romania is unique. Ancient times customs are piously kept at the countryside. There are more than 2000 year-old customs. And it isn't only the Christmas Day. It's a long row of holidays about. Each one with its own meaning, customs, stories and superstitions.

Christmas is popularly known as 'Craciun' in Romania. The Christmas season is observed with joyous celebrations by the citizens of Romania. Young adults are now experiencing the Yuletide traditions they previously heard their parents and grandparents discuss.

Christmas in Romania falls on December 25 and is generally considered one of the most important religious holidays. A very important Christmas custom practiced in Romanian villages is 'Ignatius', the sacrifice of a pig in every house in the honor of Saint Ignatius. A pig is specially chosen for this purpose and fed to make it grow fat, often around 300 pounds.

But the real celebrations begin with the decoration of the Christmas tree on "Ajunul Craciunului" (Christmas Eve). Fir trees happen to be the main Christmas trees. Gift exchanges take place in Romania in the evening of Christmas Eve, contrary to the American way of opening gifts on Christmas morning. Romanian children believe that 'Mos Craciun' (the Romanian equivalent of Santa Claus) is the one who delivers them their presents. Unlike in the U.S., the Romanian children do not leave milk and cookies out for 'Mos Craciun'. A common and popular gift is knot-shaped bread, which, in Romania, symbolizes an abundant harvest.

The singing of carols is a very important part of Romanian Christmas festivities. Throughout the Christmas season, little Romanian children (especially those in the villages) visit every house in the locality singing carols such as Steaua ('The Star'), Trei Pastori ('The Three Shepherds') and Mos Craciun ('Santa Claus') and reciting poems and legends tied to the festival. On the first day of Christmas, many carolers walk through the streets of the towns and villages, holding a star made of cardboard and paper on which are depicted various scenes from the Bible. The leader of the group carries a large wooden star called "Steaua", which is wrapped up with metal foil and adorned with bells and coloured ribbons. An image of the Nativity is pasted on the center of the star, and the entire handcraft is attached to the end of a broom or stout pole. The singing is taken up first by young children, then the adolescents and lastly the adults, who join in often after midnight). In return for such performances, carolers receive apples, nuts, traditional cakes ('cozonaci') and sometimes even money from each

house. Romanian folklores abound with Christmas carols which lend a religious mood to the festival. Churches specially organize concerts to celebrate the occasion.



In Romanian families, all the women cook for three days leading up to 'Craciun'. Christmas dinner in Romania is a rich, multi-course meal. On the top of the menu comes various kinds of pork sausages, along with plum brandy and home made pickles. 'Sarmale', an indispensable item for the festive dinner, comes next. This dish consists of pickled cabbage leaves stuffed with a combination of pork and beef, along with rice, pepper, thyme and other spices. Other dishes to follow are roasted pork and turkey with red wine. The wine is consumed to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The last item is 'cozonaci', a cake filled with nuts and raisins. All the members of the extended family enjoy the feast together.





**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## Christmas in Poland

For Poles, Christmas Eve is a time of family gathering and reconciliation. It's also a night of magic: Animals are said to talk in a human voice and people have the power to tell the future. The belief was born with our ancestors who claimed that Dec. 24 was a day to mark the beginning of a new era. It was bolstered by sayings such as, "As goes Christmas Eve, goes the year." Hoping for a good 12 months, everyone was polite and generous to one another and forgave past grievances.

Today, few treat the old traditions seriously, but some survive as family fun. "Maidens" interested in their marital future and older people, who try to predict next year's weather based on the sky's aura between Christmas Eve and Twelfth Night (Jan. 6), sometimes cling to past superstitions.



Polish rural residents are among the few who still keep up the old Christmas Eve customs. In eastern Poland it is still believed that girls who grind poppy seed on Christmas Eve can hope for a quick marriage. After dinner, they leave the house, and the direction of the first dog bark points to where their future husband will come from. Another fortune-telling trick is eavesdropping on the neighbors. If in a casual conversation, the girl hears the word "Go" it means she will get married in the coming year. A loud "Sit" announces long-lasting maidenhood.

When going to Christmas Eve midnight mass, girls would blindfold each other and touch fence pickets. A straight and smooth picket would portend a resourceful husband, while a crooked and rough one was an indication of a clumsy and awkward spouse. If a maiden wanted to learn about her future fiancé's profession, she would go to a river, dip her hand in the water and pull out the first thing she touched. Wood meant a carpenter, iron-a blacksmith, leather-a shoemaker, etc. Before going to bed, she'd wash her face with water without drying it. She would hang the towel on the footboard of her bed. The boy who passed her the towel in her dream was to become her husband.

Weather-forecasting superstitions were also popular. It was believed that if Christmas sees no snow, Easter certainly will-or more artfully, "If the Christmas tree sinks in water, the egg rolls on ice." Other sayings include, "A sunny Christmas Eve brings fair

weather all year round"; "Stars that shine bright on Christmas Eve will make hens lay plenty of eggs"; "A shine on the birth of our Savior will be seen all throughout January."

From the small hours on Dec. 24, women were found cleaning and sweeping the entire house. An ancient belief had it that forces of evil would dwell in all things left dirty on that day. If the first person to enter a house on Christmas Eve was a woman, it was a bad omen, meaning that only heifers would be born in the farm in the coming year. It was a good sign when a man was the first to cross the threshold of the house.

At the Christmas Eve supper, each dish had to be sampled, and a traditional meal would consist of 12 dishes. The more you ate, the more pleasure would await you in the future. The more daring diners would pull out blades of straw from underneath the table cloth. A green one foretold marriage; a withered one-waiting; a yellow one-spinsterhood; a very short one-an early grave.

In pre-electricity times, after the last supper dish (which was kutia, a mix of soaked wheat, raisins, nuts, honey and spices) candles were blown out and the direction of the smoke was observed. If it moved toward the window-the harvest would be good, toward the door-a family member would die, toward the stove-a marriage.

Until recently, harvest fortune-telling was very popular in the countryside. After supper, the host would go out to the garden, carrying dried fruit. He would throw it on the trees, shouting "Apples, pears, plums, cherries, and all the leaves in the neighbor's yard." He would take a handful of straw and twist it into a rope. Grabbing an ax with other hand, he would approach a tree and threaten it by saying, "I'll cut you down!" His wife would cry, "Don't cut it, it will bear fruit!" Then she would tie the straw rope around the tree. This bizarre little pantomime apparently brought a good harvest.

Today, few people are familiar with Christmas Eve fortune telling, especially urban dwellers. Yet some old traditions can still be found among village people who tend to lead a more old-fashioned lifestyle, closely connected to nature and its cycles of death and rebirth.







**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## Christmas in Bulgaria

**Christmas time in Bulgaria** is the time when most ancient customs and traditions come into play. Though, there are people, who don't follow too many rituals, some are totally dedicated to performing them. It is a time that pays a tribute to Jesus Christ's birth. There also is a modern touch to the celebrations through Christmas trees and Christmas carols. Twelve unique dishes are a part of Christmas day celebrations that unite families and generate the essence of togetherness among them. Each dish is marked to symbolize prosperity for each month of the year. Families dine on straw that is covered with a table cloth once the dishes are prepared. Garlic is an inevitable ingredient used to prepare dishes as it is believed to keep away evil spirits. Read on to know more about how Christmas as a festival is celebrated in the country of Bulgaria; you might just want to pay the country a visit this December.

**Bulgarian Christmas Eve DinnerChristmas Eve Celebrations** Prior to Christmas day celebrations, Bulgarians observe a 40 day fast, until the eve of Christmas. The fast begins on November 15th of every year. During the fast, people stay away from animal products, yoghurt, cheese, butter, eggs and milk. Christmas Eve is as important as Christmas day during which an extravagant vegan meal is prepared for the entire family. Christmas season starts off from 20th of December and extends up to the 26th of the month. It is commonly believed in Bulgaria that Mary gave birth to Christ on Christmas Eve, but announced the birth on Christmas day. This is exactly why mothers of a new born announce the birth of their babies only a day after they are born.



**The Extravagant Feast** Bulgarian customs state that the Christmas feast should have more than seven meals or nine, and that it should be an odd number. This is because there are seven Gods in Bulgaria while nine is the number that symbolizes the nine months of pregnancy. The dishes made on Christmas Eve bring out unique flavors. These dishes contain beans, cabbage, round leaf and involve dried fruits (oshav) and nuts. Children, pregnant women and the old are exempted from the fast. The Christmas meal is a meal which marks the end of the fast and soon after meat is presented on the table, it's time to eat.

Banitzia, a traditional dish, is served with cheese, poultry, pork, etc. It makes for a joyful completion to the fast. Small pretzels are prepared during the festival for young men (koledars) who visit places and sing for the health and prosperity of the house.

**Hristmas Traditions In Bulgaria** Bulgarians follow the ethics of the Eastern Orthodox Church according to which the forty day fasting period and the much adored Christmas Eve meal are prominent. The exchange of Christmas gifts has become an important

aspect in Bulgaria, especially for children. This was not too common in the past. This is done on Christmas morning and the western myth of Santa Claus prevails among Bulgarian children. During the 20th century came the advent of the Christmas tree. The Christmas tree usually stays in a house until New Year Eve or sometimes even after. Another tradition that is observed even to the present day is inserting a silver coin in a loaf of bread. An elderly person cuts the loaf and distributes it equally among members of the family. The person who finds the coin is believed to have good fortune for the rest of the year. Future predictions are usually made while everyone is seated around the table for the feast. People are keen to know to more about their fates and in some homes it is done by breaking open a walnut. If it turns out to be good and delicious, the person is believed to be lucky, while the one with empty walnut has nothing but bad fortune awaiting him/her.





**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## CHRISTMAS IN SWEDEN



The biggest and longest holiday of the year is the magical Christmas of Sweden. The excitement begins the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of the first Advent candle. Each Sunday prior to Christmas, another candle is lit with growing anticipation.

Feasting and celebrating begin on December 13 with Lucia Day, which legend says is the longest night of the year and a time when man and beast need extra nourishment. A Lucia (Queen of Light) is chosen from each home, club, school, etc. She is dressed in a white gown with a crown of candles in her hair. She brings coffee, rolls, ginger biscuits, and occasionally "glogg" (a mulled wine). She is generally accompanied by a train of white-clad attendants. The girls wear glitter in their hair and the boys wear tall paper cone hats decorated with stars. While delivering their precious fare, they sing traditional Lucia carols.

St Lucia was a young Christian girl who was martyred, killed for her faith, in 304AD. The most common story told about St Lucia is that she would secretly bring food to the persecuted Christians in Rome, who lived in hiding in the catacombs under the city. She would wear candles on her head so she had both her hands free to carry things. Lucy means 'light' so this is a very appropriate name.

December 13th was also the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, in the old 'Julian' Calendar and a pagan festival of lights in Sweden was turned into St. Lucia's Day.



St. Lucia's Day is now celebrated by a girl dressing in a white dress with a red sash round her waist and a crown of candles on her head. (Normally electric candles are used for safety!) The crown is made of Lingonberry branches which are evergreen and symbolise new life in winter. Schools normally have their own St. Lucias and some town and villages also choose a girl to play St. Lucia in a procession where carols are sung.

A national Lucia is also chosen. Lucias also visit hospitals and old people's homes singing a song about St Lucia and handing out 'Pepparkakor', ginger snap biscuits.

Small children sometimes like dressing up as Lucia (with the help of their parents!). Also boys might dress up as 'Stjärngossar' (star boys) and girls might be 'tärnor' (like Lucia but without the candles).

A popular food eaten at St. Lucia's day are 'Lussekatts', St Lucia's day buns flavoured with saffron and dotted with raisins which are eaten for breakfast.

St Lucia's Day first became widely celebrated in Sweden in the late 1700s. St Lucia's Day is also celebrated in Denmark, Norway, Finland, Bosnia, and Croatia. In Denmark it is more of a children's day and in some part of Italy, children are told that St Lucy brings them presents. They leave out a sandwich for her and the donkey that helps carry the gifts!

The Swedish Christmas tree is not brought into the home until one or two days before Christmas. It is decorated with gaily wrapped candies, glass bulbs, and often straw trinkets, with electric lights or candles.

But the height of the Christmas celebrations is December 24, Christmas Eve. No work is to be done on this day except feeding the livestock and last minute preparations for the splendid Christmas meal. This is the famous Swedish "Smorgasbord." Dishes such as ham, jellied pigs feet, "lutfisk" and rice porridge are traditional. "Lutfisk" literally translated means "lye-fish" and actually is foaked in lye to make it soft and palatable. The rice porridge is made with an abundance of cream, sugar and cinnamon and whoever finds the whole almond in their porridge is expected to be married within the year.

After the meal, the "Tomte" comes. He is the Christmas elf who lives under floorboards of the house or barn and looks after the family and livestock throughout the year. "Tomte" often brings presents and children graciously leave a dish of porridge for him during the night.

By tradition, Swedes attend church in the very early hours of Christmas morning. Occasionally, as in olden days, the trek to church is made by horse-drawn sleighs. The ride often becomes a race to the church. It is believed the winner will have the best harvest in the coming year.

The Christmas spirit and enjoyment linger until January 14--Knut's Day--the day appointed to discard the Christmas tree and devour all the edible decorations. This is quite an occasion, especially for the young who occasionally dress as "Old Knut" and play practical jokes and chant as they fling the old tree into the snow, with a promise to reunite with their beloved pine in one year.

Christmas Eve is also very important in Sweden. This is when the main meal (well really a feast!) is eaten.

This is often a 'julbord' which like a buffet, eaten in courses. The first course is made up of cold fish such as herring (served in many different ways), gravlax (salmon which has been cured in sugar, salt and dill) and smoked salmon. The fish course is normally eaten with some bread and butter.

This is followed by cold meats including turkey, roast beef and 'julskinka' (a Christmas ham). These are eaten with some cheeses, liver pate, salads and pickles. Again, these are eaten with different types of bread and butter (or mayonnaise).

Next comes the warm savoury food! There might be meatballs, 'prinskorv' (sausages), 'koldomar' (meat stuffed cabbage rolls), jellied pigs' feet, lutfisk (a dried cod served with a thick white sauce) and 'revbenspjäll' (oven-roasted pork ribs). These are served with red cabbage and 'Janssons Frestelse' (matchstick potatoes layered with cream, onion and anchovies that is baked to a golden brown. There's also 'dopp i grytan' which is bread that is dipped in the broth and juices that are left over after boiling the ham.

But that's the end of the meal! Now comes pudding!!! There's 'risgrynsgröt' (rice porridge that's eaten with 'hallonsylt' [raspberry jam] or sprinkled with some cinnamon) or a selection of sweet pastries, some more pepparkakor biscuits and some home made sweets!

If there is any risgrynsgröt left over, when it's cold it can be mixed with whipped cream and eaten with a warm fruit sauce. This is called 'Ris a la malta' and sounds rather yummy!

Wow, I think I like the sound of a Julbord! To wash all that food down you can have some 'glogg' which is sweet mulled wine and some coffee to finish off the meal!

Presents are normally exchanged on Christmas Eve. People often go to Church early on Christmas morning.

Families sometimes have goats made of straw in the house to guard the Christmas Tree! Straw is used as a decoration in homes, to remind them that Jesus was born in a manger. Christmas Tree decorations that are made of straw are also very popular.

In Sweden, presents might be brought by Santa called 'Jultomten' or by gnomes/elves called 'Nissar' or 'Tomte'. They're called 'Julenissen' or 'Nisse' in Norway.





**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# **CHRISTMAS IN IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

## **CZECH CHRISTMAS (VÁNOCE)**

### **December 24 (Christmas Eve)**

For many, December 24 (*Štědrý den*) is the most enjoyable day of Christmas holidays. Its Czech name literally means "Generous Day", probably for the wealth of food that has traditionally been served for Christmas dinner. Even poor families would make sure that their plates were full on this one day of the year.

December 24 is Adam and Eva's name day. The Christmas tree is decorated with traditional Czech Christmas ornaments in many households and preparations are made for the most festive dinner of the year. Christmas Eve is associated with many superstitions that usually relate to life, love, and destiny that awaits one in the year to come. According to one Czech Christmas custom, one is supposed to fast all day to see the "golden piglet" (*zlaté prasátko*) in the evening.

### **Christmas Dinner Customs**

Czech Christmas dinner (December 24) is connected with a great number of different customs, rules and superstitions. Very few of them are still observed today, and for good reason. It must have been quite a challenge to put the dinner together and go through with it without a mistake if all the customs were to be followed! Here are some of them:

No lights should be lit in the house before the first star comes out. After it does, dinner is served.- The table should be set for an even number of guests. An odd number brings bad luck or death.- An extra plate can be used to even out the number of guests. An extra plate should also be prepared- in case an unexpected guest or a person in need comes by the house at dinner time.- The legs of the table can be tied with a rope to protect the house from thieves and burglars in- the coming year.- No one should sit with their back to the door.- Christmas dinner should consist of nine courses including soup, bread with honey, carp, potato salad,- fruit (dried, fresh or canned), dessert (apple strudel or vánočka - Christmas bread), and other

foods.- No alcohol should be served on Christmas Eve.- No one should ever get up from the Christmas table before dinner is finished. Doing so brings bad

- luck and death in the family.
- Everyone should finish their dinner and leave nothing on the plate.
- The first person to leave the table after dinner will be the first one to die in the coming year - that
- is why everyone should get up from the table at the same time.
- Any leftovers from dinner (crumbs, fishbones, etc.) should be buried around the trees to ensure
- they will bear lots of fruit.
- All household animals should be fed after dinner so that no one goes hungry on Christmas Eve.

### **Christmas Dinner**

Dinner is served after sunset (traditionally, it should not be served until after the first star has come out) and consists of carp and potato salad, sometimes preceded by mushroom, sauerkraut or fish soup. Did you know that carp can supposedly be prepared a hundred different ways? Christmas carp is specially raised in manmade ponds and then sold from large tubs placed on the streets and town squares a few days before Christmas. You will not see this sight at any other time of the year. Some families keep their carp in the bathtub for several days as a temporary pet for their children... Dinner can be finished with dessert, such as apple strudel. A traditional Christmas bread called vánočka (similar to the Jewish challa) used to be a part of the Christmas dinner in the past but today it has largely lost its Christmas connotation and is available year-round.

### **Christmas Presents**

After dinner, everyone around the table may sing Christmas carols before moving to the Christmas tree, which is all lit up and beautiful. By then, presents have been placed under the tree. Czech children believe that Christmas gifts are brought by Baby Jesus (Ježíšek) who comes into the room through the window to leave the presents. Unlike Santa Claus, Baby Jesus is a rather abstract figure with no particular physical image attached to him, and no one knows where he lives. Just like Santa though, he receives wish-list letters from Czech children a few weeks before Christmas.



### **Midnight Mass**

Some people end Christmas Eve by attending the midnight mass (půlnoční mše) at a local church. It usually starts at midnight but some churches hold it earlier, such as at 10 p.m. There can also be a Christmas Mass for children in the afternoon.



### **December 25 – 26**

Czech Republic Christmas stretches over December 25 and 26, which are also referred to as the First and Second Christmas Holidays, or the Christmas Feast (Boží hod vánoční) and St. Stephen's Day (Sv. Štěpán). On St. Stephen's Day, children,

students, teachers, and the poor used to go around people's homes singing Christmas carols. Nowadays, families stay at home and relax or visit relatives and friends to share the special time.



**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## CHRISTMAS IN SPAIN

The first thing that the visitor will notice is that Christmas in Spain is not as huge a commercial occasion as is the case in many other western cities. Christmas lights are usually lit in the main cities in the first week of December by which time the shops are fully stocked with Christmas supplies. Nothing like the US and UK where the end of summer marks the build up to Christmas.

Christmas trees are common in the home but again they don't appear until the second half of December. Also in the home there intricate, miniature nativity scenes called Belénes which depict life in the village where Jesus was born. The Belén always include the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph as well as the Three Kings, Baltasar, Melchior and Gaspar.

December 8th - This is the public holiday of Immaculada (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) which marks the beginning of the religious Christmas celebrations. Most notable in Seville.

21st December - In a few cities including Granada the celebration of Hogueras (bonfires) takes place. This date marks the winter solstice (shortest day) and where it is celebrated involves people jumping through fires to protect themselves against illness.

**22nd December** - All over Spain people never stray far from a TV or radio as the Christmas lottery is drawn over a period of many hours. Everybody in Spain buys tickets for this lottery in the hope of winning El Gordo (the fat one) and the winning number usually means that a good number of people from the same village become a lot better off overnight. Besides the big three prizes there are thousands of smaller prizes shared by people all over Spain.

**24th December** - Christmas Eve is called Nochebuena in Spanish (Goodnight) and it is the most important family gathering of the year. In the evening people often meet early for a few drinks with friends then return home to enjoy a meal with the family. Most bars and restaurants close in the evening. Prawn starters followed by roast lamb would be a typical meal rounded off with a typically Christmas sweet called turrón which is a nougat made of toasted sweet almonds. Another typical festive sweet is called Polvorones which is made from almonds, flour and sugar. Cava, Catalan champagne, would be the chosen drink for the Christmas toast though plenty fine Spanish wines will also be consumed with the meal.

**25th December** - Children may receive a small gift on Nochebuena or this morning but the day for presents is 6th January, Epiphany, when the Three Kings bring gifts for the children. Christmas Day is a national holiday in Spain so shops are closed yet it is not a day of



great celebration but rather a calm day when people go out for a walk, drop into a bar, etc. Another large family meal at lunchtime is common though it's becoming more common to see families eating out on the afternoon of Christmas day.

**28th December** - This is the day of Santos Inocentes (Holy Innocents) and is the equivalent of April Fools' Day when people play practical jokes on one another. Often the national media will include a nonsense story in their broadcasts. In some villages youngsters of a village light bonfires and one of them acts as the mayor who orders townspeople to carry out civic tasks such as sweeping the streets. Refusal to comply results in fines which are used to pay for the celebration.

**31st December** - New Year's Eve is known as NocheVieja. It is a big celebration all over the country with street parties and special nights in hotels and clubs everywhere. Until midnight people tend to stay at home and on the stroke of midnight it is traditional to eat 12 grapes, one on each stroke of the clock to bring good luck for the new year. In Madrid and other main cities revellers congregate in the main square (Puerta del Sol in Madrid) and eat the grapes along with a celebratory bottle of cava then head out into the night until after sunrise.

**1st January** - A low key public holiday with plenty people sleeping off their excesses.

**5th January** - There are processions all over Spain this evening where sweets are thrown from the floats to all the people who come out to watch. Every town has its own variation such as in the Sierra Nevada where the Three Kings can be seen to ski down to the village.

**6th January** - This is the Feast of the Epiphany when the Three Kings arrived in Bethlehem. For Spanish children this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings) have left gifts for them in their house. Santa may leave them a token gift on 25th but the Three Kings are their favourites, especially Baltasar who rides a donkey and is the one believed to leave the gifts. During the day of 6th the Three Kings continue their good work and are seen distributing gifts to children in hospitals all over Spain.

**7th January** - The day after receiving their gifts children return to school, their parents go back to work and Christmas in Spain is all over for another year.





**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## CHRISTMAS IN ITALY

The Christmas season in Italy starts Saturnali, which is a winter solstice festival and ends with Roman new year ( from 24.11 to 06.01 ). Italy has its own Christmas traditions. On Epiphany (the 12th day of Christmas) people receive gifts, because on that day the three Wise Men gave Baby Jesus their gifts. In Italy presents are brought by La Befana, who arrives in the night to fill children's stockings. Christmas decorations are becoming more and more popular in Italy, they are often seen from the end of November. Nativity scene or creche are popular decorations in Italy, which you can see in front of almost every church. Traditionally on Christmas Eve people have meatless dinner with their family but in parts of southern Italy on Christmas Eve is served fish. Traditional bonfires are often held on Christmas Eve in the main square of town (city). On Christmas day usually Italians eat meat.

In Italy you can find and really unusual traditions. In Rome, Naples, and southern Italy you can hear bagpipes and flute players, which are part of the celebrations there. They wear traditional colorful costumes with sheepskin vests, long white stockings, and dark cloaks. In the capital city of Italy Rome you can host one of the largest Christmas markets in Italy. If you want to hear the mass given by the Pope you have to visit Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City. Another famous tourist attraction is Torino which is one of the best places for lights.



