

The World's Strangest Christmas Traditions

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J623oWU4jos>



Ukraine: If you're arachnophobic, you might want to **skip** visiting Ukraine for Christmas. The tradition of decorating the Christmas tree with spiders and webs represents good luck for Ukrainians. This custom **stems** for a story about a widow and her children unable **to afford** a Christmas tree. The spiders in the house heard their **woes** and **spun** intricate webs around their **bare branched makeshift** tree and that seemed good enough to make up for not having an **evergreen**.



Iceland: Iceland **bears** a myth about a beast called the Yule Cat. If you don't receive new clothes before Christmas Eve you'll be eaten by this feline monster. It's a lesson taught to children that they must work hard to earn nice things before prestigious Holidays or else their laziness may have them sacrificed to the Yule Cat.



Guatemala: It seems the Guatemalans see Christmas as an opportunity **to rid** their homes of any possibility of satanic contact. They sweep their houses **spic and span** before Christmas, and then each town creates a giant hill of dirt. Upon the tip of the **pile**, they place a representation of the devil. Then they burn it.



Germany: On December 5th, children are to leave a shoe outside overnight and the next morning they should discover sweets inside their **footwear**. However, If they were **naughty** they'll discover not candy and chocolates but a **measly** tree branch.

Venezuela: On Christmas Eve in the capital of Caracas, children tie a string to their big toe and let the end of the string hang outside their window. On the day of the early morning mass streets are closed off until 8 a.m. for people to roller-skate their way to church. Along the way, they often **tug** on any string they see hanging out of these children's windows.

Greenland: Greenland also has unusual Christmas traditions of the culinary sort where they serve up mattak which is **raw** whale skin **paired** with the side of **blubber**. They also consume kiviak which is 500 Auk birds **stuffed** into a seal skin, and if that's not appetizing enough it's left to ferment for seven months!

Italy: 11 days after Christmas, on January 5th, a witch who appears old named La Befana flies by on her **broomstick** and delivers even more gifts and sweets to children who have been good all year. The story goes that the witch turned down the opportunity offered by the three wise men to visit the baby Jesus. Feeling guilty, she now travels the world endlessly giving presents to children for all eternity.



USA: Yup, America has created the odd tradition called The Running of The Santas. It is quite literally a **bar crawl** of hundreds of people dress up as Santa. It prepares itself like a marathon, but **boozing** is at every **pitstop**.



Japan: If you didn't already know the Japanese are huge on KFC on Christmas Eve due to seeing it in Anime or commercials. It basically all stemmed from KFC's 1974 commercial advertising that Christmas equals Kentucky and they invested major yen into such promotion.



Spain: Way to make the nativity scene super **awkward**! In Spain in Catalanian area the Catalonians **depict** the nativity scene including a figure of the caganer. A man taking a **number 2** often seen smoking a pipe simultaneously. The meaning behind it goes in many directions. Some say it is a symbol of fertility and was placed in the scene to bring luck, prosperity and joy to the coming year. Others say that it's a sign of equality that no matter who you are race, **gender** or status, that we all have needs like the caganer.

Match the vocabulary words to their meanings

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|--|------------------|
| A) to free from (something/somebody) | 1) to afford |
| B) behaving disobediently or mischievously | 2) to rid |
| C) uncooked | 3) naughty |
| D) to have the financial means for something | 4) bear |
| E) naked, exposed to view | 5) raw |
| F) immaculately clean | 6) skip |
| G) to bring and tell (a message, tales, etc.) | 7) bare |
| H) a temporary substitute for something | 8) makeshift |
| I) insufficient | 9) spic and span |
| J) to pass from one point to another
omitting what intervenes | 10) measly |

skip	a passing over or omitting
stem	to originate, derive, or be descended
to afford	bear the cost of without serious inconvenience
woe	great sorrow; grief; misery
spun pt. of spin	to make a web, (said of spiders)
bare	without the natural or customary covering
branch	woody extension growing from the trunk of a tree
makeshift	a thing that will do for a while as a substitute
evergreen	having leaves that are green all year
bear	to give, offer, or supply
to rid	to do away with; destroy
spic and span	spotlessly clean
footwear	shoes, boots, slippers
naughty	not behaving properly; mischievous or disobedient: used esp. of children
measly	contemptibly slight, worthless, or skimpy
tug	to pull at
raw	not cooked
pair	a single thing made up of two corresponding parts that are used together
blubber	the fat of the whale
stuff	to fill the inside of (something); pack
bar crawl	the act of drinking in multiple pubs or bars in a single night,
boozing	drink alcohol, especially in large quantities
pit-stop	A stop during an auto race to repair or refuel
awkward	causing embarrassment or discomfort:
depict	to represent in a drawing, painting, sculpture
number 2	to defecate: used especially by or with reference to children
gender	the fact of being a male or a female human being

Ukraine: Where did the custom of decorating Christmas trees with spider webs come from?

Iceland: What is the story of the Yule Cat supposed to teach children?

Guatemala: What is the reason Guatemalans clean their homes before Christmas?

Germany: Do all children receive candy in their shoes that are left out overnight? Why not?

Venezuela: Where are people in Caracas going early Christmas morning? Can you think of a reason children would want to be woken up early?

Greenland: Which unusual Christmas dish from Greenland would you prefer to try, Mattak or Kiviak?

Italy: What motivates La Befana to give gifts to children?

USA: What are the Santas doing when they are not running?

Japan: What do many Japanese eat on Christmas Eve?

Spain: In which scene is the *Caganer* included in during Christmas in Catalonia?