

Every country different

Global yuletide customs

Mistletoe, Santa Claus, letters to Santa, Christmas customs galore—where did they all begin?

The customs of Christmas come from many lands and many eras. They evolve from pagan ceremonies into Christian rituals. And they stretch from West to East, from North to South, as each country contributes something special and traditional to the celebrations of the holiday.

When seasonal gaiety rings out in Canada, the merriment is echoed in Mexico. When North or South Americans gather for Christmas festivities, the people of Sweden are doing the same—and so are the peoples of Holland and France and Italy and Spain and countless other European countries.

In the far East, Christian communities spread the customs of Christmas, which mingle with the year-end ceremonies observed by those of other faiths.

That the legend and lore of Christmas knows no boundaries is illustrated in the following round-up of Yuletide customs, based on information provided by the editors of the Encyclopedia International.

From the north of England comes the happy custom of the kissing bough. A large hoop, twined with greens, is decorated with apples and candles. And in the center there's mistletoe—signal for exchanging kisses.

Custom of writing letters to Santa Claus may have begun in Austria, where, long ago, it was an Advent tradition for

children to write letters containing lists of what they'd like to receive on St. Nicholas' Day.

From Italy comes a most poetic addition to Christmas lore. For three weeks during the Christmas season, children traditionally go from place to place reciting Christmas poems. They expect coins in return, to buy holiday goodies.

In Sweden an ancient custom that is still observed in some Swedish households today is that of "dipping bread into the pot." Each person dips a piece of bread into pork and sausage drippings and eats it for good luck.

A procession which blends pagan and Christmas customs is part of the legend and lore of the holiday in Ruppin, Germany. A rider on a white horse, symbolizing the horse of the pagan god Wotan, leads the parade. He is followed by Father Christmas, who is decked with ribbons and carries candy and fruit.

A Swiss custom that dates back to the Middle Ages is to start the New Year free of debts. December 6th, the feast of St. Nicholas of Myra, the first Santa Claus, is the day set to meet all monetary obligations such as rents and mortgages.

Holland custom For St. Nicholas season, it's traditional in Holland to make flat cakes called *Klassjes*. Once exclusively made in the form of the bishop, St. Nicholas, *Klassjes* now take any form of bird, beast or fish.



The true meaning of Christmas stems from the message, that heralded His birth. . . "Peace on Earth, Good Will to All Men". We wish a generous share of spiritual happiness for you. And we take this opportunity to thank you for your friendly good will.

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Kinal and Staff
ACTON HOME HARDWARE

A DOZEN WAYS TO SAY "Merry Christmas!"

Czech	Vesele Vanoce
Dutch	Prettige Kerstdagen
Finnish	Hauskaa Joulua
French	Joyeux Noel
German	Froehliche Weihnachten
Greek	Kala Christogene
Italian	Buon Natale
Portuguese	Feliz Natal
Russian	S Rojdestvom Kristovym
Spanish	Feliz Navidad
Swedish	God Jul
Welsh	Nadolig LLawen

Carolling, mass are tradition

In the mountain regions of Western Australia, entire villages join in carol singing on Christmas Eve. Beginning with the family living farthest from the village church, torch-bearing carollers form a procession. At each house along the way greetings of "Froehliche Weihnachten" are exchanged, and the inhabitants fall in line. Eventually, the whole population is part of the parade as it arrives at the church steps in time for Midnight Mass.

Christmas Eve carol-singing and Midnight Mass are also a part of the British holiday tradition. The custom of hanging up mistletoe dates back to the Druids, who used the plant in the religious rites.

Burning the Yule log is another custom borrowed by the British from the Vikings.

As many as one million medical services are provided yearly for Canadians suffering from asthma says the Halton Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association, the Christmas Seal organization.

Conestoga hits record

A record 5,358 students are currently enrolled in evening courses at Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology's seven centres.

The enrolment, as of the end of October, eclipsed the previous high of 3,472 students recorded at the same time a year ago.

College officials said new courses being offered this year in the continuing education program are also at an all-time high.

As an example of the increasing popularity of the college's evening education program, officials pointed out that just two years ago there was a total of only 1,977 students taking these courses.

One stumbling block facing the college in its plans to expand the program is the limited amount of suitable space available in the area.

The college plans to rent more space in order to establish new courses for the program.

Right now, the college rents facilities in a four-county region—Wellington, Huron, Waterloo and Perth—within its jurisdiction.

These facilities, many of them make-shift at best, consist of church halls, golf club houses and in one case, a garage.

College officials maintain the "overwhelming success" of parttime courses are due in most instances to improved planning development and promotion.

The officials also attribute the program's success to "giving the public the kind of educational experiences they identify with and desire."

Know What "Wassail" Means?

This ancient word, familiar to us from song and story, comes from the Anglo-Saxon words "Wes hal" — which means "be whole," or in more modern terms, "Good Health." It was used as a toast, before lifting one's glass — and by extension came to mean a drinking song.

Tuberculosis is not wiped out in Canada . . . there were 3,009 new active cases and 570 reactivated cases in Canada

ONE VERSION

When a 10-year-old boy came home from Sunday school, his mother asked him what he had learned that day. "Well, said the boy, "our teacher told us about how God sent Moses behind the enemy lines to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians. He brought them to the Red Sea, and then Moses ordered the engineers to build a pontoon bridge. After they all crossed over, they looked back and saw the Egyptian tanks coming. Quick as a flash, Moses grabbed his walkie-talkie and asked the air force to send bombers to blow up the bridge and save the Israelites."

"Bobby!" exclaimed his mother. "Is that really the way the teacher told the story?" "Well, not exactly," Bobby admitted. "But if I told it her way, you'd never believe it!"

GREETINGS

This Christmas, let the bright rays of love, peace and understanding enter our hearts and shine there always.

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May the peace and serenity of this holiday season fill you with hearthside warmth. For your kind patronage, our thanks.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

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