

● What is Christmas like in your house?

In my house we spend the day preparing the tree / putting up decorations / my mum gets the food ready. We wrap up gifts. Every year we visit family / my grandparents. We have a special meal of carp or a schnitzel and potato salad in the evening. After the meal, 'Ježíšek' (little Jesus) comes and leaves a present for us under the tree. At midnight we go to church / to Christmas mass.

● Can you tell me about any special Czech Christmas traditions?

We eat carp for the main meal, and we also make special Christmas bread, 'vánočka', that is plaited (BrE) / braided (AmE) and has raisins and almonds.

We bake lots of different types of Christmas biscuits (BrE) / cookies (AmE). There are many types of customs. For example, you must set a place for an extra person at the table, and after dinner everybody is supposed to cut an apple in half. If there is a star, you will have good luck. We also pour hot lead into cold water and the shape will tell us our future. If you fast / don't eat all day until the Christmas meal, you are supposed to see the 'golden pig'.

● Do you like Christmas?

I like / love / enjoy Christmas because it's fun / lovely to be with my family / I like getting presents / relaxing at home / I love eating all the food / watching fairy tales and movies. I don't like it because it's boring / I have to visit all our family / because it's so commercial / everyone gets stressed and argues.

● What do you know about a British or American Christmas?

In Great Britain / America children put out a stocking / large sock / the night before Christmas. At night, Father Christmas / Santa Claus comes and leaves gifts in the stockings / under the Christmas tree. Christmas is celebrated on December 25. They have a big meal at lunchtime / a roast turkey / roast potatoes and vegetables.

● What are the similarities / differences between an American & British Christmas?

British and American Christmases are quite similar. Both are celebrated on December 25 / both have Father Christmas / Santa, who delivers presents to the children / both have a turkey / roast dinner. There are smaller differences. British people have a special Christmas pudding and mince pies which are made from dried fruit. They also have Christmas crackers which are like small firecrackers that you pull open to find a small toy inside. In Great Britain they also celebrate Boxing Day on December 26. They visit friends and relatives.

● What do you think about an American / British Christmas compared to a Czech Christmas? Would you like to celebrate Christmas like the British or Americans, or do you prefer the Czech Christmas?

I prefer the Czech Christmas because it's more traditional / it isn't as commercial as an American / British Christmas. I like celebrating Christmas in the evening / it would be strange to celebrate Christmas during the day. I prefer little Jesus to Santa / Father Christmas / I don't think it would feel like Christmas if we didn't have carp. I think the American / British Christmas is better because they have the whole day to celebrate / I would prefer the food because I don't like fish.

● Do you think Christmas is too commercial?

Yes, Christmas is too commercial / people just want large gifts / it's all about advertising and spending money / not about being with family. No, I disagree, we like to celebrate Christmas because it's a time to be with family / show them we love them by giving them gifts.

● How do you celebrate New Year's Eve?

I normally see friends / go to a party / go to a club / go out on New Year's Eve. I visit my family for a special meal / I stay in and watch the programmes with my family / friends. At midnight we set off fireworks / watch fireworks. I'm normally asleep by midnight / it's boring.

