

# **Culture – connectedness in diversity**

## **Part one: How Christmas is celebrated**



**theme: Culture**

**2016-2017**

## **Christmas in Finland**

### **Christmas Calendar**

Christmas is one of the most important moments in Christianity. We celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus, our Saviour. Alongside this amazing happening in the stable, we have got a modern figure Santa Claus who brings joy, happiness and presents to the children. At Christmas time families gather together to relax and have good time.

# Christmas calendar

**There are 24 doors in the Christmas calendar. Every single door will tell you something about the Christmas traditions in Finland.**

## 1. Calendar

We open one door every day from the 1st of December to the 24th of December. There are different sorts on calendars, eg. toy-, lego-chocolate-, sticker- and picture calendars.

## 2. Candles

Christmas time in Finland starts with the beginning of the Advent season, the period including four Sundays before Christmas, called Advent Sundays. Every Sunday we light a new candle.

## 3. Crafts

Children and adults love to make Christmas crafts at school or at home.

## 4. Gingerbread

Everybody loves gingerbread. Find out the recipe and try make them yourself!



## 5. Elves

According to the story, Santa's little helpers elves prepare the presents in Korvatunturi, Finland where Santa lives.

## 6. Independence Day

Finland became independent state on the 6th of December 1917. Finland belonged before that to Russia. In 2017 Finland will turn 100 years old. Every year the president of Finland has a big party in his presidential residence. Finnish veterans and celebrities and people who have done something important are invited to the party. Our president Sauli Niinistö shakes everyone's hands.

## 7. Traditional Christmas pastry

This pastry is very traditional dessert that we usually eat at Christmas. It's a star shaped pastry and in the middle of it there is plum jam.

## 8. Christmas cards

People send each other cards and wish Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## 9. Mulled wine

Mulled wine is a drink of European origins. It can be made of red wine along with different mulling spices and sometimes raisins. It's usually served warm and it can be alcoholic or non-alcoholic. People drink it at Christmas time. In Finland mulled wine is usually prepared with fruit juices instead of wine.

## 10. Light decorations

It is really dark in Northern countries in winter time. People like to have light decorations inside and outside the house.

## 11. Baking

At Christmas time many people like baking.

## **12. Angels**

Angels declared to the shepherds that the "...in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you and he is Christ, the Lord." Luke 2:11.

## **13. Rice porridge**

Rice porridge is a traditional Christmas porridge and it's eaten for the breakfast or for lunch. It's often served with cinnamon or plum soup. One scalded almond can be "hidden" in the porridge pot and whoever eats it on his/her plate will "have good fortune".

## **14. Snow**

Everybody wishes to have a white Christmas.

## **15. Christmas Church**

Many people like to visit church at Christmas time.

## **16. Christmas sauna**

Warming up the sauna on Christmas Eve is a tradition in many Finnish families. People enjoy the warmth and relaxing atmosphere in the sauna.

## **17. Craft for the Christmas tree**

Making crafts is very common at Christmas time.

## **18. Christmas tree**

People decorate the tree with colorful balls and electric lights or candles. Most people prefer normal trees but sometimes plastic Christmas trees are used. In many families the Christmas tree is brought home one week before Christmas. It can be bought or taken from own forest.

## **19. Christmas presents**

In Finland Christmas gifts are opened on the 24th of December. In many families Santa comes to visit the children and he brings the presents to the kind children.

## **20. Flowers**

The most popular Christmas flowers in Finland are poinsettia, hyacinth and amaryllis.

## **21. Candle lights at graveyard**

On Christmas Eve many people visit graveyard where they place candles on the graves of deceased relatives. This is a deep-rooted tradition among many Finnish families.

## **22. Santa Claus**

On Christmas Eve Santa arrives to visit the children.

## **23. Christmas meal**

Christmas meal is a big part of the Finnish Christmas. It includes many food like carrot casserole, traditional Finnish rutabaga casserole, potato casserole, ham, turkey, many different fish like gravlax and smoked salmon, Christmas pies and gingerbread cookies.

## **24. Baby Jesus in his manger**

"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger." Luke 2:16. The birth of Christ is the reason why we celebrate Christmas.

