

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2W3QR9WXdA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqjF7DbbBXg>



## HOW TO HAVE A BRITISH CHRISTMAS?

-1- Before you watch a video 'How to Have a British Christmas?' make sure that you know the words below. Do the matching. Then, translate the words into your mother tongue.

Word or Phrase	Definition	Translation
1. mince pie	a) a small sausage in a narrow casing	
2. high camp	b) a small British fruit-based mincemeat sweet pie traditionally served during the Christmas season	
3. cracker	c) regarding something as appealing or humorous because of its ridiculousness to the viewer	
4. mandatory	d) annoyed and irritable	
5. grumpy	e) pie made of pecans and sugar and corn syrup and butter and eggs	
6. chipolata	f) having lost all moisture	
7. to pass out	g) a traditional British Christmas toy or decoration which is, in fact, a small explosive device primarily designed to produce a loud noise	
8. pecan pie	h) communication by means of gesture and facial expression	
9. pantomime	i) to faint; to lose consciousness	
10. withered	j) obligatory	



-2- Now watch the video twice and fill in the table below about some of the major differences between British and American Christmases. Tick whether there is or there is no such a tradition in Britain and America and describe it. There is also a "Not mentioned" option.

Tradition	Britain	America
Letters to Father Christmas	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Hanging stockings	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Christmas crackers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Christmas hats	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Christmas dinner	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Christmas dessert	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
The Royal Christmas Message	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Boxing day	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Pantomime	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>
Taking down the Christmas tree	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/> / Not mentioned <input type="checkbox"/>



-3- Do you have the same traditions in your country?  
How do people usually celebrate Christmas in your country?



## KEYS

-1-

1-b, 2-c, 3-g, 4-j, 5-d, 6-a, 7-i, 8-e, 9-h, 10-f

-2-

Tradition	Britain	America
Letters to Father Christmas	Yes	Yes
Hanging stockings	Yes	Yes
Christmas crackers	Yes	Not mentioned
Christmas hats	Yes	Not mentioned
Christmas dinner	Yes	Yes
Christmas dessert	Yes	Yes
The Royal Christmas Message	Yes	Not mentioned
Boxing day	Yes	Not mentioned
Pantomime	Yes	Not mentioned
Taking down the Christmas tree	Yes	Now

## Transcript

### HOW TO HAVE A BRITISH CHRISTMAS ?

Burning letters to Father Christmas, setting off explosives at the dinner table, these may seem crazy to you but they're perfectly normal behaviour at a British Christmas or as we sometimes call it "Crimbo".

Here are 10 Christmas traditions that never made it to America.

#### Letters to Father Christmas

In America, kids write letters to Santa and put them in the mail box but in England, we toss them straight in the fire ! We're not trying to make children cry ; burning the letters sends them directly to the North Pole where Santa can read your Christmas wishes in the smoke. Yes, it may seem a little weird but it does save on postage.

#### Hanging stockings

American children traditionally hang stockings around the fireplace for Santa to fill with presents but in the UK, we hang stockings around the bed ; being surrounded by presents is a great way to wake up on Christmas morning and a great way to let Father Christmas, a total stranger who's been watching you all year, get really close to your sleeping body. Sweet dreams!

Also, instead of leaving out milk and cookies for Father Christmas, we leave him brandy and a mince pie because he is a grown-up.

#### Christmas crackers

A cracker may not seem like the most festive thing to serve on Christmas dinner but these are not the type of crackers that you put cheese on.

A Christmas cracker is a brightly decorated cardboard tube filled with fun prizes. When grabbed and pulled apart, a tiny explosive inside makes a loud cracking noise, hence the name! Inside the cracker is usually a cheesy plastic prize, a paper crown and a terrible joke: "Why are ghosts so bad at lying ? Because you can see right through them". I'm so sorry.

#### Christmas hats

Inside the Christmas cracker are colourful paper hats that it is absolutely mandatory to wear! In fact, 90% of Christmas arguments stem from trying to make your grumpiest relative put their paper crown on; the other 10% comes from playing monopoly because there are some Christmas traditions that we share, unfortunately...

#### Christmas dinner

A British Christmas dinner is just as big a feast as an American one.

The main dish is usually roast turkey often surrounded by bacon wrapped chipolatas which are mini pork sausages. Bacon wrapped miniature pork sausages, now that's a tradition that you Americans should get behind.

We serve the turkey with roast potatoes and veggies, traditionally Brussel Sprouts which are gross but it's tradition, so we eat them anyway. We have gravy to smother everything in and something called bread sauce which is not a sauce to put on bread but a sauce that's thickened with bread which looks a little lumpy but tastes delicious.

Then we eat until we can't move and watch telly until we pass out. Sound familiar?

### **Christmas pudding**

Americans love to have their pumpkin and pecan pies for Christmas dessert but in the UK, we have Christmas pudding. This is a very dense boiled cake flavoured with dried fruit and spice ; it's then soaked in alcohol, aged for several months, boiled again, soaked in alcohol again and then set on fire. Come to a British Christmas, we soak everything in alcohol and then light it on fire.

### **The Royal Christmas Message**

That's right, every Christmas day, Her Majesty The Queen gives a holiday speech reflecting on the events of the past year.

We all sit around pretending to pay attention but secretly carrying on with whatever it was we were doing before ; think of it as the state of the union but with much more gold.

### **Boxing day**

Boxing day is the day after Christmas day. Its origins are debatable. Some say that it's a day when workers would receive a box of gifts from their bosses. Others say that it's a day when people would box up gifts for the poor...but the main thing that happens on Boxing Day nowadays is shopping. It's kind of like our Black Friday only nobody gets trampled to death.

### **Pantomime**

Every year around the Christmas hols pretty much every theatre in the country puts on a pantomime.

These are plays for kids based on fairy tales such as Cinderella and Aladdin involving a lot of *high camp*, cross dressing and audience interaction. They're normally starring jaded celebrities, so if the idea of seeing David Hasslehoff in a dress excites you, you should definitely check one out

### **Taking down the Christmas tree**

Brits believe the Christmas tree and the decorations should be taken down within twelve days of Christmas, otherwise you'll have bad luck for the rest of the year. This is maybe a tradition that Americans should consider adopting ; I've certainly seen people keep their old brown dry withered Christmas trees until almost the fourth of July.

Those are some of the major differences between British and American Christmases.