



## Unusual Christmas Quiz - Questions and Answers

### Questions

**1. In the Mexican city of Oaxaca, there is already a big celebration on 23 December. And that is that the Spanish have introduced a very special plant for Christmas. This plant is then used to carve elaborate church figures such as Mary, Joseph, the Magi and, of course, the baby Jesus. Which plant do you think it is?**

- a) potato
- b) tobacco
- c) tomato
- d) radish

**2. Christmas season is nowhere in the world as long as in the Philippines, where 90% of the population are Catholics and take the Feast of the Conception of Christ very seriously - including daily morning masses at 3:00 AM from mid-December! How long is the traditional Christmas season in the Philippines?**

- a) Over 4 months: from September to mid-January.
- b) 3 months: October, November, December
- c) 2 months: from the 1st of Advent until the end of January
- d) 6 weeks: from 1 December to mid-January

**3. In Estonia, children get lots of sweets during Advent - from little gnomes! Another tradition requires that all brooms in the house must be well cleaned before Christmas. What could be the reason?**

- a) In case the Christmas tree gets stuck in the chimney, people politely want to push it through with a clean broom.
- b) There are Christmas witches around who want to steal children's presents, but luckily they can only fly on dirty brooms and get away.
- c) A dirty broom turns into a mischievous gnarled root man at Christmas.
- d) The Christmas elves sleep on the brooms, they want to make a clean bed for them.



**4. In Venezuela, a special tradition has become established, especially in the capital Caracas, for which car traffic is even stopped until 8:00 AM on 25 December. Whole families then set off for morning mass, but how?**

- a) They dance exuberantly like at carnival
- b) They ride to mass on roller skates
- c) They ride in huge horse-drawn carriages that can carry many people
- d) They cycle

**5. In Ukraine, the Christmas tree is adorned with a very unusual decoration. Which one?**

- a) all crocheted baby shoes
- b) Garlands made of dried mushrooms, rose hips and wooden apples
- c) A spider's web
- d) small dried fish

**6. The Catalans have a particularly idiosyncratic Christmas custom: the Tió de Nadal, a wooden log on two legs with a colourful face painted on it and covered with a blanket stands in Catalan living rooms from 8 December to Christmas Eve. What happens to it?**

- a) During this time, the log is "fed" with fruit, nuts and sweets, which are slipped under the cloth. On Christmas Eve, the children beat the log with pieces and sing a song in which the line "Shit, Tió" appears several times verbatim, so that the log shits out its treasures again.
- b) The log is considered a prefiguration of the Christ Child. On Christmas night, the parents exchange it for the baby Jesus through the manger and the children are told that the Tió de Nadal has turned into it.
- c) The Tió de Nadal is said to absorb all evil spirits in the run-up to Christmas and is ceremoniously burnt in the fireplace on Christmas Eve.
- d) The Tió de Nadal represents the spirit of Christmas and on Christmas Eve the father of the family splits it with an axe so that it can spread everywhere. Every member of the family and every visitor during the Christmas season receives a splinter.

**7. In Iceland, according to legend, Jólakötturinn, the big black Jul cat, goes around during the Christmas days. Who targets this beast?**

- a) naughty children
- b) unmarried women
- c) stingy old people
- d) men who have neglected to get new clothes for Christmas



**8. In the USA, Santa Claus drives his reindeer sleigh and climbs into the house through the chimney with his bulging gift bag. So that the reindeer are also rewarded, many American families place pieces of sugar for them on the doorstep. And there is also something whimsical hanging on the Christmas tree. What is it?**

- a) USA flags
- b) A donut
- c) A photo of the current American president
- d) A glass cucumber

**9. In Russia, they celebrate Christmas on 7 January. From 6 to 18 January, a crazy custom has taken hold at Christmas in recent years. Which one?**

- a) Single women call strange men, whoever picks up is the future husband.
- b) Single men challenge women to a drinking contest. If she wins, he gets to kiss her.
- c) Single women hang a pretty garter on the front door. If a man takes it off and rings the doorbell, he gets a date with her after 2 days.
- d) Engaged couples get baby things from their friends.

**10. Although less than 1% of Japanese are Christians, almost everyone celebrates Christmas. Thanks to a very successful advertising campaign, one of the most popular Christmas foods in Japan is...?**

- a) Pizza from Pizza Hut
- b) A "Party Barrel" from Kentucky Fried Chicken
- c) A burger menu from McDonalds
- d) A Subway baguette

**11. In Australia there is an Oktoberfest and many customs that look very familiar. How do Australians celebrate Christmas?**

- a) With a Barbie (Barbeque) in a bikini and swimming trunks on the beach.
- b) With a cake fight with a cake made of meringue with fruits and cream.
- c) After the Christmas Parade, there is a gigantic Christmas fireworks display in Sydney and Melbourne
- d) The Santa Clauses of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra compete against each other in a surfing contest.

**12. In the UK, Christmas pudding is traditionally cooked at Christmas. There is one particular custom, which is?**

- a) The Christmas pudding is cooked in complete darkness and only revealed on Christmas Day.



- b) Each family member must stir clockwise once and may make a wish in their mind, which will then come true.
- c) Only products that have been given as gifts can be used in the Christmas pudding.
- d) The sweet pudding is not eaten as a dessert, but as a starter before the main course.

**13. Ethiopian Christians do not celebrate Christmas until 7 January. After a 43-day fasting period, Christmas in Ethiopia is celebrated with a large feast. What else belongs to the Ethiopian Christmas celebration?**

- a) The men and boys play ganna, a hockey-like game with sticks and a small ball.
- b) All the furniture in the house is moved and left like that until next Christmas.
- c) They tell jokes to each other in turn.
- d) People build towers out of the pita bread Injera, as high as possible.

**14. In Guatemala, on the evening of 7 December, many fires are seen burning in front of family houses, in the streets and in squares? What is this all about?**

- a) The fires are to celebrate the arrival of the Christmas angels.
- b) Families burn old clothes and junk in the fires to free themselves from their past at Christmas.
- c) The fires are small pyres on which devil dolls are burnt.
- d) It is believed that from these fires the voices of deceased ancestors can be heard coming to earth at Christmas time.

**15. A particularly morbid custom at Christmas time comes from Wales: there, a procession is still held in some villages today, which goes back to Celtic rites. Which figure is at the centre of it?**

- a) A man dressed as a hunchbacked giant parades through the village and punishes naughty children.
- b) A witch with a pumpkin face collects money for charitable purposes.
- c) A figure wrapped in a white cloth with a horse's skull for a head goes from house to house asking for food and drink.
- d) A man dressed in black pulls an empty coffin behind him on a cart as a memorial to the deceased of the year.



## Answers

**1. In the Mexican city of Oaxaca, there is already a big celebration on 23 December. And that is that the Spanish have introduced a very special plant for Christmas. This plant is then used to make elaborate church figures such as Mary, Joseph, the Magi and, of course, Jesus. Which plant is it?**

d) It is the radish festival. The radishes in much bigger in Mexican gardens than they are here, so they make good carvings.

**2. Nowhere in the world is the Christmas season as long as in the Philippines, where 90% of the population are Catholics and take the feast of the Immaculate Conception very seriously including daily morning masses at 3:00 AM from mid-December! How long does the Christmas season traditionally last in the Philippines?**

a) The Filipino Christmas season actually lasts longer than a third of the year! When the summer holidays are just about to end here, Manila is The Christmas season traditionally ends with the Santo Niño festival on the third Sunday in January.

**3. In Estonia, children get a lot of sweets during Advent - from little gnomes! Another tradition requires that before Christmas all the brooms in the house must be well cleaned before Christmas. What could be the reason?**

b) It is actually the nasty, gift-stealing Christmas witches from whom one wants to protect oneself.

**4. In Venezuela, especially in the capital Caracas, a special tradition has become tradition, for which car traffic is stopped until 8:00 AM on 25 December. Whole families then set off for morning mass but how?**

b) In fact, masses of people go to Christmas Mass.

**5. In the Ukraine, the Christmas tree is decorated with a very unusual decoration. Which one?**

c) It is actually a spider's web. The custom of decorating the Christmas tree with a spider's web goes back to a legend according to which a poor widow could not afford a Christmas tree decoration. The next morning she found the Christmas tree entwined with a spider's web, and the sun caught it and made it glitter like gold and silver.



**6. The Catalans have a particularly idiosyncratic Christmas custom: the Tió de Nadal, a wooden log on two legs with a colourful face painted on it and covered with a blanket, can be found in Catalan living rooms from 8 December. What happens to it?**

a) In Catalonia, the log shits out the sweets to the delight of the children. Incredibly, there is even a figure in the nativity scenes that defecates in the stable.

**7. In Iceland, according to legend, there is Jólakötturinn, the big black cat of Jul goes around during the Christmas days. Who is this beast after?**

d) Male shoppers are the Yule cat's favourite food!

**8. In the USA, Santa Claus drives his reindeer sleigh and climbs up with his bulging gift bag full of presents down the chimney into the house. So that the reindeer are also rewarded, many American families place pieces of sugar in front of the door. And there is also something whimsical hanging on the Christmas tree. What is it?**

d) It's a glass cucumber. The child who discovers it first on the tree, gets an extra present as a reward.

**9. In Russia, Christmas is celebrated on 7 January. From 6 to 18 January a crazy custom has taken hold at Christmas in recent years. Which one?**

a) From 6 January, single women spend 12 days typing randomly phone numbers and try to find a husband at any price. Because whoever loses weight is supposed to be the future husband...

**10. Although less than 1% of Japanese are Christians, almost everyone celebrates Christmas.**

**Thanks to a very successful advertising campaign, one of the most popular Christmas foods in Japan is ...?**

b) In the mid-70s, KFC launched a Japan-wide advertising campaign promoting the special "Kurisumasu ni wa Kentakkii" party barrel as the non plus ultra Christmas treat. The campaign was a resounding success and established KFC as the "traditional" Christmas food in Japan.

**11. In Australia there is an Oktoberfest and many customs that look very familiar. How do Australians celebrate Christmas?**

a) Aussies often celebrate Christmas at the Barbie on the beach.



**12. In Great Britain, Christmas pudding is traditionally cooked. There is a special custom for this, which one?**

b) Every time the pudding is stirred, a wish is supposed to come true.

**13. The Ethiopian Christians do not celebrate Christmas until 7 January. After a 43-day fasting period, Christmas is celebrated in Ethiopia with a large feast. What else is part of the Ethiopian Christmas celebration?**

a) The men and boys play ganna, a hockey-like game with sticks and a small ball. The game is even called Christmas in Ethiopian.

**14. In Guatemala, on the evening of 7 December, you can see many fires burning in front of family houses, in the streets and in squares on the evening of 7 December? What is this all about?**

c) The tradition of the quema del diablo, the burning of the devil, goes back to the 18th century: on the eve of the Immaculate Conception, all evil should be destroyed.

**15. A particularly morbid custom at Christmas time comes from Wales: there, a procession is still held that goes back to Celtic rites. Which figure is at the centre of it?**

c) Mari Lwyd is the name of the scary-looking figure with the skull of a horse. But in fact it is supposed to bring good luck to the inhabitants of the village!

**Well then, Merry Christmas!**