Christmas Around the World

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which plant is traditionally associated with kissing beneath it at Christmas in Britain?
   - A. Mistletoe
   - B. Lavender
   - C. Rosemary
   - D. Sunflower

   Correct answer: A. Mistletoe
   Mistletoe became associated with Christmas kissing customs in Britain.

2. In Australia's four-season calendar, Christmas falls during which season?
   - A. Spring
   - B. Winter
   - C. Summer
   - D. Autumn

   Correct answer: C. Summer
   The four-season calendar places December in summer. Tropical Australia also uses wet and dry seasons.

3. The Spanish greeting 'Feliz Navidad' means what?
   - A. Happy birthday
   - B. Merry Christmas
   - C. Good morning
   - D. Happy Easter

   Correct answer: B. Merry Christmas
   Navidad is the Spanish word for Christmas.

4. Panettone is a Christmas sweet bread associated with which country?
   - A. Greece
   - B. Sweden
   - C. Mexico
   - D. Italy

   Correct answer: D. Italy
   Panettone originated in Milan and often contains candied fruit and raisins.

5. In 'The Twelve Days of Christmas,' what is given on the first day?
   A. Two turtle doves
   B. A partridge in a pear tree
   C. Three French hens
   D. Four calling birds
   Correct answer: B. A partridge in a pear tree
   The cumulative song begins with a partridge in a pear tree.

6. Las Posadas, celebrated in Mexico and elsewhere, reenacts which search?
   A. Mary and Joseph seeking lodging
   B. The Magi seeking a ship
   C. Saint Nicholas seeking a reindeer
   D. Shepherds seeking a crown
   Correct answer: A. Mary and Joseph seeking lodging
   The nine-night tradition recalls the search for lodging before Jesus's birth.

7. In Italian folklore, La Befana traditionally brings gifts around which January holiday?
   A. All Saints' Day
   B. New Year's Eve
   C. Valentine's Day
   D. Epiphany
   Correct answer: D. Epiphany
   La Befana is associated with the eve of Epiphany, celebrated on January 6.

8. A French bûche de Noël cake is traditionally shaped like what?
   A. A star
   B. A bell
   C. A log
   D. A wreath
   Correct answer: C. A log
   The cake evokes the older custom of burning a Yule log.

9. 'Silent Night' was first performed in 1818 in which present-day country?
   A. Austria
   B. Germany
   C. Switzerland
   D. Poland
   Correct answer: A. Austria
   The carol was first performed in Oberndorf, Austria, with words by Joseph Mohr and music by Franz Gruber.

10. Saint Lucia celebrations on December 13 are especially associated with which country?

A. Thailand
B. Portugal
C. Argentina
D. Sweden

Correct answer: D. Sweden
Swedish Lucia processions feature singing and candlelight during the dark winter season.

11. Iceland's Christmas folklore features how many Yule Lads?

A. Nine
B. Seven
C. Thirteen
D. Twelve

Correct answer: C. Thirteen
The thirteen mischievous visitors arrive one by one before Christmas.

12. Why do some Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas on January 7 of the civil calendar?

A. They celebrate the solstice instead
B. Their December 25 follows the Julian calendar
C. They move Christmas to the first Sunday
D. They use the lunar new year

Correct answer: B. Their December 25 follows the Julian calendar
For these churches, Julian December 25 currently corresponds to Gregorian January 7; not all Orthodox churches follow this practice.

13. The historical Saint Nicholas was a bishop of Myra in what is now which country?

A. Russia
B. Finland
C. Ireland
D. Türkiye

Correct answer: D. Türkiye
Myra was in ancient Lycia, on the Mediterranean coast of modern Türkiye.

14. A Philippine parol is traditionally made in which shape?

A. A star
B. A bell
C. A candle
D. A snowflake

Correct answer: A. A star
The star-shaped Christmas lantern is a distinctive Filipino tradition.

15. In the original 1843 A Christmas Carol, which spirit visits Scrooge first, before the three Christmas spirits?

A. The Ghost of Christmas Present
B. The Ghost of Christmas Past
C. Jacob Marley's ghost
D. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

Correct answer: C. Jacob Marley's ghost
Marley warns Scrooge that three further spirits will visit him.