

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN FINLAND BY 9E, KONTIOLAHTI SCHOOL

Each student has told about his or her Christmas traditions and included a favourite recipe.



Christmas traditions in my family (Laura)

There are four persons in my family; I, my little sister, mom and dad. Usually we are just together with our family, but a few years ago my godmother was with us because she lives alone.

Our Christmas is always almost the same every year. At least I like traditions but also changes. We take the Christmas tree indoors on the Eve's eve. We decorate it and then some presents start to appear under the spruce. On Christmas Eve Santa Claus brings the presents when we are in the sauna. Our Christmas sauna is at around five o'clock and after that we eat. I like many foods which belong to Christmas and my favourites are ham, carrot casserole,

chocolate and gingerbreads, especially the dough. We bake gingerbreads and ham a bit before Christmas. In the forenoon we eat rise porridge and of course there should be an almond in the porridge but because my sister is allergic we put something else to the porridge.

On the Eve morning we watch children's programmes including The Snowman. I do like those programmes because they just are so lovely. Later, after the lunch we often take a walk outside and that's nice particularly if the weather is good, and it always is.

Any radio channel you turn on, you hear just Christmas songs. I don't like too glad songs, I prefer the peaceful ones. We listen to Christmas songs and eat chocolate and everything is perfect and we can just relax.

In the evening after the supper we share and open the presents. This year I've hoped for shoes which I can use when I play for example floorball or basketball. I've also hoped for CDs and books. Last year I got a camera and it has been really good. It's nice to give a present for somebody and see how he or she likes it. This year I do the cards myself.

Here is the recipe to one of my favourite delicacy, **gingerbreads**.

Ingredients

125g unsalted butter
100g dark muscovado sugar
4 tbsp golden syrup
325g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp ground ginger
Supercook Writing Icing (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, gas mark 3. Line baking trays with baking parchment. Melt the butter, sugar and syrup in a medium saucepan, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.
2. Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger into a bowl and stir the melted ingredients into the dry ingredients to make a stiff dough.
3. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and roll to a thickness of about 5mm. Dip biscuit cutters into flour before cutting the dough. Place the shapes onto the lined baking trays and bake, in batches, for 9-10 minutes until light golden brown.
4. Remove from the oven. While still warm, and using a skewer or chopstick, make any holes that you will need to hang up the biscuits with ribbon or to make a yuletide garland. If you are decorating your Christmas cake with gingerbread people, make the holes in their arms so that ribbon can be threaded through at a later stage.
5. When completely cool, decorate with the icing.

Or if you prefer the dough, you can stop before the point 3 and eat the dough.



Merry Christmas!

In some families it is tradition to make even ginger bread houses. This is the one that Susanna made for her friends at the stables. See the horses!



Christmas traditions in my family (Mia)

There are five people in my family, and my sister's boyfriend. On Christmas Eve morning I wake up at about ten o'clock. Almost we all wake up then but my mother is so enthusiastic so she wakes up very early to make food. When we others have woken up we help my mother to clean up places. At about five o'clock

we eat Christmas food and then we talk about something. Then Santa Claus comes and gives gifts. After that we maybe go to sauna or we watch television. If we have time or if we manage, we go to the graveyard. In the evening we do our own things, watch television or play some games.

On Christmas day we don't usually do anything special. And there is one recipe what I like to eat at Christmas:

Rice porridge

Prep Time: 1 hours

1 1/2 cups water 1 Tbsp. butter 1/2 tsp. salt 1 cup short-grained, glutinous rice 4 1/2 cups milk, cinnamon-sugar and butter to taste

Preparation:

Rinse rice well and drain. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring 1 1/2 cups water, butter, and salt to a rapid boil over high heat. Pour in rice, stirring constantly to prevent sticking. Reduce heat to low, stirring rice until boiling is reduced to a simmer. Cover the pot and let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until rice has absorbed most of the water.

Add milk to rice, stirring to incorporate.

Bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, then immediately reduce heat to low. Once boiling has reduced to a simmer, cover pot and allow to cook, without stirring, for 45 minutes. Serve with cinnamon-sugar and butter to taste (Christmas Eve Reminder: Don't forget to stir a single blanched almond into the rice porridge before serving, particularly if there are family members you'd like to see married off. If there are Nisse about and livestock at stake, it's also a good idea to top the porridge with a big slice of butter ... or face the consequences!).

Yield: 5-6 servings.

Christmas traditions in my family (Sanna)

There are four people in my family. On Christmas Eve morning I'd like to sleep late but I always wake up when my mom rattles in the kitchen. It is almost half twelve. I lumber around the house and I'm still dazed. Then I wish happy birthday to my sister and give her the birthday present. I decorate the Christmas tree with my dad and then I take some food and go to the living room to watch movies. After a while, few relatives come for coffee but they won't stay long. When it's getting dark, my mom and dad leave for the graveyard and I stay home with my sister. In the evening, at about six o'clock, we eat Christmas meal among the family. There are Karelian pies, porridge, carrot and rutabaga casseroles and everything. Of course we have a ham too, but I won't eat it. After the meal we go to my aunt's place. She lives quite near and all of my relatives, who live in the vicinity, push their way there. Time goes fast I'm always a little bit excited. Everybody talks, laughs and eats delicacies. I often play cards with my cousins. After a couple of hours, it's time to share presents. When I was younger, Santa Claus visited there but nowadays my dad and uncle sneak outside and take the present sacks in. If there are small relatives, my uncle tells

them that Santa Claus has thrown presents around the yard because he was so busy. Funny idea, if you ask me. Soon all of our presents are in the middle of the floor. Usually I and my sister share them until every sack is empty. The presents are opened and last coffees are drunk. Soon everybody is leaving for home, my family, too. At home we have more presents under the Christmas tree and near the fireplace. Mom goes to sleep quite soon, she must be tired. Dad eats something, I and my sister stay awake late. That's how we spend Christmas in my family.



On the left the Christmas ham, just taken out of the oven, not decorated yet and on the right the same, decorated ham.

Rutabaga Casserole

is my favourite Christmas food, so here is the recipe:

1 med. rutabaga or turnip, peeled and diced,
1 med. potato, 1/4 c. dry bread crumbs,
1/4 c. cream or half & half 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. salt, 1 egg and 3 tbsp. butter

Cook turnip and potato until soft, in water to cover. Drain and mash well. Soak bread crumbs in cream and stir in nutmeg, salt and egg. Combine with turnip and potato. Turn into 2 1/2 quart casserole. Dot with butter and nutmeg. Bake in moderate 175 degree oven for 1 1/2 hour or until lightly brown.

X-mas tradition in my family (Raita)

Every year some of us will dress as Santa Claus. So we can say that Santa Claus would visit my house every year. Last year it was Armi, my sister.

Sometimes we by x-mas tree really early and sometimes on the x-mas day. And we throw it away after the twelfth day. Last year we got three or four big x-mas trees.

The tradition x-mas food:

- carrot / yellow turnip casserole.
- sheep meat
- salmon
- potatoes

- ham

Every year we will eat rice pudding with plum kissel and we will put there an almond.

Christmas traditions in my family (Sami O)

Our family's Christmas starts when we go to visit cemeteries and grandparents' place. After that we go home and eat Christmas meal. On Christmas meal, we have a lot of food, carrot casserole, rosolli, potatoes, steaks, ham, sauce and salad.

In the evening we open presents and have fun with the whole family playing board games or singing karaoke.

Some of us like to eat fish in different form at Christmas



CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN MY FAMILY (Sofia)

Our family has nine people. I think that Christmas is important for us because it is Jesus' birthday anniversary. My religion is Laestadian. Santa Claus does not visit our home. My grandma and granddad come to us. We are together the whole day. First in the morning my dad and my brothers heat our sauna, which is outside. My mum cooks rice porridge which we eat together. After this we go to the sauna and take a swim in the hole in the ice. My mum cooks dinner: rutabaga casserole, carrot casserole, ham, turkey, sometime lutefisk...

CARROT CASSEROLE

2 c. carrots,

- 1 c. sugar
- 3 tbsp. flour (all-purpose)
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 dash cinnamon
- 1 stick butter
- 2 eggs

Mix all ingredients together. Spray casserole dish with Pam and put in dish. Bake at 210 for 15 min then reduce heat to 180 C and bake for 45 minutes or until done.

My dad reads Christmas gospel from the bible. After this we sing Christmas hymns and songs. My grandma 80, and granddad 76 tell us about the old times. We give presents to each other. My little sisters are so happy and start to play with their new toys. In the evening we drive to the burial ground. We put candles and remember my dead grandma.

Christmas traditions in my family (Erja)

There are six people in my family: dad, mom, two sisters, brother and I. We spend Christmas at home but we go to graveyard in the evening. I sleep long on Christmas morning but my little sister and little brother wake up early because they watch the children's TV show on Christmas morning. My dad has to work on Christmas morning but he comes back home at about noon. We eat Christmas food in the evening and thereafter we go to the graveyard. When we are at the graveyard, Santa Claus visits our home. We are very happy when we notice that Santa Claus has brought us presents. We open them and we go to Christmas sauna.

The visit at the graveyard



My favourite Christmas food is my mom's graven rosol.

Ingredients: beetroot, pickled cucumber, carrot and onion.

Put the ingredients into the same bowl or on a plate but do not mix them.

Christmas traditions in my family (Antti)

We have six people in our house every Christmas Eve, me, my mother, my father, my step-sister, my grandmother and my aunt. Father always wakes up first in the morning and cooks rice porridge. Others wake up before 11 a.m. After breakfast we watch Christmas programs on TV and then we usually go to church

at 3 p.m. I decorate the Christmas tree and we light big candles outside. We visit the graveyard and light there some candles in a memory of our dead relatives. We go to sauna at 5 p.m. and after sauna we eat dinner. We always have potato-, carrot-, liver- and rutabaga casseroles, Karelian pasties, mushroom salad and different kinds of fish. We have ordinarily baked our ham before the Eve. Father goes to hunt every fall so we generally have black grouse roast. When everyone has eaten we move to the living room and I start to hand over the gifts from under the Christmas tree. That's the highlight of the day. After that we just thank each other for giving good gifts. At this Christmas I hope I'll play my new XBOX 360 through the night.

Rice porridge recipe:

Recipe Ingredients

3 dl short-grain rice

½ liter water

1 liter milk

1 – 2 tsp salt

butter or margarine

1 blanched almond

Recipe Cooking and Preparation Method

In Oven:

Grease an oven casserole well. Add rice, water, milk, blanched almond and salt, stir well. Put a few pats of butter on the top of the mixture. Simmer at 175 degrees Celsius for 1 ½ hours.

On Stove:

Bring water to boil in a saucepan with a thick bottom (porridge burns on the bottom easily). Add rice and cook until water is absorbed in the rice. Add milk and bring to the boil stirring frequently. Simmer at a low heat until cooked, approximately 30 - 40 minutes. Season with salt and a few pats of butter.

Christmas traditions in my family (Senni)

There are four people in my family: my dad, mum, sister and I. Sometimes my step-sister and her husband or my step-brother and his family visit us at Christmas. Here is what we usually do at Christmas.

On Christmas Eve morning we decorate the Christmas tree, which has been brought inside the day before. At the same time we often watch Joulupukin kuuma linja (Santa's hot line) on TV. We have watched it since we were little children. In the midday we eat rice porridge and after that we go to the cemetery and put candles to our grandparents' graves. We often have the car radio on, because the declaration of Christmas peace is broadcast from Turku. In the afternoon we often eat gingerbreads and Christmas tarts. When my parents come from the cowhouse (they have to milk the cows also at Christmas), we go to sauna and we have birch twigs there. After sauna we ate Christmas meal: ham, potatoes, Karelian meat stew, Karelian pasties, carrot and swede casserole as well

as rosolli. Then it's time to share the presents. If there are little children visiting us, Santa Claus arrives there of course. But when there is only our family there, Santa Claus doesn't visit us any more and the presents are under the Christmas tree. On the next days we eat much Christmas food and chocolate and visit our relatives and neighbours.

Here is the recipe of swede casserole:

about 1,2 kg Swedes

0,5 l water

0,5 teaspoon salt

2-3 dl swede's boil water

(1 dl cream)

1 dl breadcrumbs

2 eggs

0,5 dl syrup

little ginger, cinnamon and white pepper

For pan:

butter or margarine

1. Slice up and peel the swedes and put them to the kettle. Add water only so much that swedes are covered in water. Put salt and boil the slices completely soft.
2. Spill the boiling water to the measuring jug.
3. Mash the Swedes.
4. Oil the pan.
5. When the mixture has cooled, add the other ingredients and spice well.
6. Cook the casserole in the oven in 150 degrees 2-2,5 hours.

Christmas isn't anything without flowers!





Christmas traditions in my family (Sirja)

I've been almost every Christmas in Rovaniemi, Lapland. My mother's family lives there so we have traditional family Christmas. There are going to be my sisters Saana and Anni, mother and father, grandmother and her boyfriend, my aunts Leena and Ansku and their male friends and five cousins Henni, Katariina, Valtteri, Jouni ja Atte. One of my cousins is going to travel to Rome this Christmas.

On Christmas Eve morning we eat rice pudding and decorate the Christmas tree. In midday we go to sauna and put on festive clothes. At about six o'clock we all go to grandma's place, maybe watch some Christmas programme on TV. Then we eat dinner and have a great time. Sometime during the evening the Santa Claus comes and we share Christmas presents. Rest of the evening we play board games we might have got.

This year I would like to have hair extensions for Christmas present. I give presents to my relatives, boyfriend and some of my friends. I'll also send Christmas cards.

Every Christmas my grandmother bakes each of her grandchild own big heart-shaped gingerbread. She also decorates them and writes our names on them.

Christmas traditions in my family (Aleksi)

There are seven people in my family. My sisters, brother and granddad come in our house every Christmas Eve. Because my parents are divorced we spend half of the day with mum and half with dad. Santa Claus visits in the evening and gives some gifts. After that we eat Christmas meal and go to the sauna. On

Christmas day the entire family goes to grandmother's house to eat Christmas day meal. Christmas day evening we visit the graveyard and we take candles there.

Christmas traditions in my family (Veera)

There are eleven people in our family. I think that Christmas is very important anniversary because it's the birthday of Jesus. So Santa Claus doesn't visit our home.

In the morning when we wake up we eat breakfast. Later on we eat rice porridge. After this my dad and my brothers Konsta and Jaakko heat our outdoor sauna. In the meantime my mum makes dinner and I help her and play with my little brother and sisters. Then we go to sauna. When all have gone to sauna we eat Christmas dinner: ham, turkey, rutabaga- and carrot casserole, rosolli, potatoes, Karelian hot pot, salad, salmon, Karelian pasties...And we drink water or home-made beer. The dessert is plum- or lingonberry sorbet.

Then my dad reads Christmas gospel and we sing some Christmas psalms. After this some of us give out the presents. Then we stay together and eat chocolate and cake...

But this Christmas, on Christmas Day, I, Iina, and Lotta go to Sweden's Jällivaara with our friends because there is the yearly revival meeting (for Laestadians) which lasts for five days.

I prefer carrot casserole but this is recipe of **rutabaga casserole** because I normally make it .



Ingredients :

- 2 medium turnips or rutabagas
- 1/4 cup fine dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup cream
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 x eggs, beaten
- 2 tbl brown sugar
- 3 tbl butter

Method :

You can use Turnips or Rutabagas. When we were children my mother started adding brown sugar to the beaten eggs, if you like, add 2 tablespoons of brown sugar to the beaten eggs before adding to the turnip mixture. It works well to halve or double the recipe, depending on how many people you are serving. Cook the turnips until soft (about 20 minutes) in salted water to cover. Drain and mash. Soak the bread crumbs in the cream and stir in nutmeg, salt and beaten eggs. Combine with the mashed turnips. Add the brown sugar (if using) to the beaten eggs before adding to turnips. Turn into a buttered casserole

dish, dot the top with the butter, and bake in a moderate oven (180 C.) for 1 hour or until lightly browned on top. Serves 6-8.

Christmas traditions in my family (Sami)

There are six people in my family. I have three sisters, mum and dad who usually come home for Christmas. On Christmas Eve morning we decorate the Christmas tree. We always have a Christmas tree. Every Christmas we have ham, cookies and all that. In the forenoon we eat Christmas pudding and inside the porridge there are almonds. After porridge we watch tv or something else. Then an hour later we drink mulled wine and eat pies and cookies. Christmas dinner is about at three o'clock and then we eat ham. After dinner we take candles and go to the grandparents' grave. Then we share our Christmas presents. In the evening we watch tv and the new presents and eat chocolate. We go to sleep very late. On Christmas day we usually stay at home.

Christmas traditions in my family (Lauri)

In my family there are four people, me, father, mum and sister. We spend Christmas at home. We have Christmas tree every year. Some years we have people over for a visit. At Christmas we eat ham and other Christmas dishes. We send Christmas cards a good time before Christmas Eve. We buy presents to friends and of course other family members.



Christmas traditions in my family (Sami T)

There are five people in our family. We spend the Christmas together in our home. My dad, Sakari wakes up first to take care of the Christmas ham. Other persons wake up, when they wake up :D. Me, Joni and Henri decorate the Christmas tree. Someone of our family is the Santa Claus at Christmas and gives the Christmas gifts. We always eat the Christmas dinner together. For example different kind of casseroles, Christmas ham, potatoes, salad etc.

Christmas traditions in my family (Sami N)

There are five people in my family. I have two sisters, dad and mum. Normally they all are at home at Christmas and I am regularly the whole day with my family. We also often have some guests for example kinsfolk. We bring the Christmas tree inside about one day before Christmas Eve and then we decorate it. On Christmas Eve we eat some Christmas porridge and later some of us go to Christmas church. After that in the evening we go to sauna and then eat Christmas food, Christmas ham, different casseroles etc. A little later we give our presents to each other.

Christmas eve traditions in our family (Matias)

We spend every Christmas eve in our grandparents' house. Every time there is our family, my cousins and of course granny, granddad and his brothers. On the eve morning granddad carries the Christmas tree to the house. After that kids decorate the tree. Then we watch the program where the traditional peacetime is declared. We have also the tradition that we watch some programs on TV, like Snowman, and also we go to Christmas church every year. When it is 5pm, we are going to have Christmas sauna and after that we have a delicious meal. When we have eaten desserts, rice pudding, it's time to go to the living room. There we wait until the presents have mystically appeared to the corridor. We open the presents and have a fantastic and funny time together.

Christmas tradition in my family (Mikael)

In my family there are four persons, me, my dad, my mum and my big brother. We spend this Christmas at home, but usually we spend the Christmas at our cottage. Santa Claus doesn't visit our home because we have too small a chimney. At Christmas we have many delicious foods, like casserole carrot, escalloped potatoes, ham, rice pudding and gravlax. When we have visited the graveyard, we will the Christmas food. In the evening we open presents and we watch Christmas programs on television.



In Susanna's family it is a tradition to make home-made cheese with cranberry jelly. It is her favourite Christmas food!

It is also typical to serve all the guests who come to visit, many different kind of sweet biscuits and cakes.

