

# Christmas in Britain & the USA

Read lots of facts about Christmas with your students. Then why not have students create a Christmas menu and send invitations to a dinner party using the copymaster?

In Britain and America, Christmas is a time of fun. Homes and offices are decorated with paper chains, balloons and other fancy decorations. In America many people decorate their houses and gardens with Christmas lights and illuminations.

Christmas cards are big business: People send hundreds of them – to all their friends, relatives, neighbours and colleagues.

A few days before Christmas, people put up a Christmas tree in their homes. In America, they sometimes go up as early as Thanksgiving! Some have a real tree, but today many people have an artificial tree. Trees are decorated with brightly coloured tinsel, baubles and fairy lights. There's often a star or a fairy on the top of the tree.

Mistletoe and holly are typical of Christmas. People make Christmas wreaths out of holly and hang them on their front doors. Sprigs of mistletoe are often hung up in doorways. Then, when two people meet under the mistletoe, they are supposed to stop and kiss each other!

The 24<sup>th</sup> December is known as Christmas Eve. It isn't a public holiday, so the shops are usually open, and people often work at least until lunch-

time. Traditionally parents tell their children that Father Christmas (or Santa Claus in the USA) brings their presents during the night! The story goes that Santa travels through the sky on a sleigh pulled by reindeer. He lands on the rooftops and goes down the chimney to deliver the presents to each house! Young children often hang up stockings (big socks) for Santa to put small presents into. It's a tradition in America for kids to leave cookies and milk for Santa.

The 25<sup>th</sup> December is called Christmas Day. It's a public holiday. People open their Christmas presents on Christmas Day. Children often wake up to find their presents waiting for them at the end of their beds or in the sitting room.

On Christmas Day people traditionally have a big Christmas dinner. The main course is usually a huge roast turkey, roast potatoes, and lots of vegetables. And for dessert there's Christmas pudding. Before or during the meal, people in Britain pull Christmas crackers, containing a small gift, a joke and a paper crown, and everyone wears their paper crown throughout the meal!

The 26<sup>th</sup> December is called Boxing Day and it's also a public holiday in Britain. It's a day for relaxing or visiting relatives and friends.

## Quick & quirky

- You can buy advent calendars in Britain and the USA, sometimes filled with chocolate, but rarely with small presents for each day.
- In America, people bake traditional Christmas cookies. In Britain, they bake mince pies and Christmas cake.
- Christmas cake and Christmas pudding are not the same thing. Christmas pudding is a very rich, fruity dessert usually served hot at Christmas dinner. Christmas cake is a rich fruit cake, usually covered with white icing.
- People usually decorate their trees with small electric fairy lights.
- People say 'Merry Christmas' or 'Happy Christmas'. Christmas is often shortened to 'Xmas' in writing, for example on Christmas cards.
- German-style Christmas markets are becoming more and more popular in Britain.

› Gillian Bathmaker

Redakteurin im Verlag Ernst Klett Sprachen und Kursleiterin an der Schiller-Volkshochschule, Kreis Ludwigsburg



## Christmas dinner copymaster

**Goal:** Students learn the lexis needed to write and reply to an invitation for a dinner party.

**Level:** A1 – A2

**Length:** ca. 90 minutes

**Type of activities:** Reading comprehension, writing, individual and pair work

## Great to teach!



› **Great! A1–B2**  
Great! A1  
Kurs- und Übungsbuch + 2 Audio-CDs  
978-3-12-501480-0



› **Fairway new A1**  
Kurs- und Übungsbuch + 2 Audio-CDs  
978-3-12-501610-1

Mehr Informationen unter  
[www.klett-sprachen.de/great](http://www.klett-sprachen.de/great)  
[www.klett-sprachen.de/fairway](http://www.klett-sprachen.de/fairway)



## Invitation to Christmas Dinner

*You're invited!*



Come & join us  
for a Christmas dinner  
on 21<sup>st</sup> December  
at 6:30 p.m.  
at Tom and Julie's house

RSVP asap, please

*Menu*

*Starter*  
Prawn cocktail

*Main Course*  
Roast turkey and stuffing with  
sweet potatoes, green bean casserole,  
corn, peas, sprouts, gravy  
and cranberry sauce

*Dessert*  
Christmas pudding  
Coffee and mince pies

### 1 Read the invitation and find the answers.

1. When is the Christmas dinner at Tom and Julie's? .....

2. What's on the menu? Tick ✓ the answers.

☐ fish

☐ vegetables

☐ meat

☐ cake

☐ salad

☐ seafood

3. What's for dessert? .....

### 2 What do you usually have for Christmas dinner? Ask others in class.

What do you usually have for a starter?  
What do you usually have for your main course?  
What do you usually have for dessert?

Really?  
Me too!  
That sounds interesting / great /  
delicious / different ...

We usually have ...  
We sometimes have ...  
And you?



### 3 Read Sue's reply. Are the statements true ✓ or false X?

- ☐ 1. William can't eat prawns.
- ☐ 2. Sue doesn't eat meat.
- ☐ 3. Sue likes vegetables.

### 4 Write an invitation to a dinner party at your house next Saturday. Include the menu!

### 5 Give your invitation to another student in your class. Write a reply to the invitation you get.

Hi Julie,  
Thanks very much for the invitation. William and I would love to come! The menu sounds wonderful.  
By the way, William is allergic to fish and I'm a vegetarian. But don't cook me anything special. I can just eat vegetables. And William doesn't like Christmas pudding, but he loves mince pies. Thanks again for the invitation.

Look forward to seeing you,  
Sue