



Christmas Around the World



Christmas in Colombia



Día de las Velitas

Early in December, Colombians begin decorating their houses and streets with candles and other lights. December 7 is Día de las Velitas (Day of the Little Candles) and it marks the beginning of Christmas celebrations in Colombia. As well as candles and lights, people in Colombia often decorate their homes with a Christmas tree and a nativity scene. Children write letters to baby Jesus with requests for toys. In the lead up to Christmas, many Colombians participate in 'novenas', during which people come together to pray and sing Christmas songs. These are held from December 16 right up until Christmas Eve. Fireworks are a very common part of Christmas celebrations. Unfortunately, many accidents occur each year as a result of people setting off their own fireworks.

It is very common for Colombian families to attend a church service at midnight on Christmas Eve. After the service, people make their way back home and may continue prayers. Many people exchange gifts at midnight on Christmas Eve. This is also the time for the main Christmas feast, called 'Cena de Navidad'. Popular foods include arepas and tamales. Arepas are a round, flat savoury 'bread' made from corn flour. They are often topped with cheese or different meats. Tamales are wrapped in banana leaves and often filled with meat, cheese, eggs and rice. As for sweet dishes, natillas and buñuelos are traditional Colombian foods. Natilla is a sweet custard dish and buñuelos are balls of sweetened flour with a crispy crust. These foods are eaten year-round but are particularly popular during Christmas.

Christmas Day is a day for families to enjoy together. Many spend the time talking, relaxing, eating and drinking. Dancing and singing are also very popular. Christmas Day is a time when many Colombians will contact friends and wish them blessings for the year ahead.

Do you think you would enjoy Christmas in Colombia?

Use the Venn diagram to compare Christmas in Colombia to Christmas in your country.

