



Christmas & New Year in the UK 2023



Christmas is a big holiday in the UK. Schools usually have a break for 2-3 weeks. The most important day is December 25th, when everything, like shops and most other places, is closed. Even most petrol stations are closed. The day after, December 26th, is called Boxing Day, and it's also a day off for people, although some shops may open. On December 25th and 26th, there are very few trains or buses running. December 24th is called Christmas Eve, but it's not a day off for most people. However, many shops and places close early on that day.



In Ukraine, Christmas has traditionally been celebrated on January 7th, following the Julian calendar. However, a law was passed on July 14, 2023, changing the official Christmas celebration date from January 7th to December 25th.



Christmas Traditions: Office Xmas parties, Secret Santa

Most households put up a Christmas tree in their home in early / mid December. Many people use artificial trees. The trees are decorated with shiny decorations and wrapped presents are usually left under the tree, mainly for the children. People send each other Christmas cards during December, which is the busiest month for 'posties' (the people who deliver letters for the Royal Mail). Many houses have a big bowl of wrapped chocolates in their living room during December – the classic brand is Quality Street, but others like Celebrations are also popular nowadays.



January sales – when items are reduced in price – start immediately after 25th Dec. You may see Christmas written as "Xmas" but we still say the word Christmas, or sometimes 'Chrimbo'!





Christmas Trees & decorations: In the UK, during Christmas, people like to have Christmas trees in their homes. They decorate these trees with colorful ornaments, lights, and shiny things to make them look pretty and festive.



Christmas Cards: Sending and receiving Christmas cards is a widespread tradition. Many people exchange cards with friends and family, often featuring festive designs and well-wishes.

Christmas dinner / Christmas food In the UK: The traditional Christmas meal is roast turkey with roast potatoes, brussels sprouts, and bacon (or small sausages wrapped in bacon called 'pigs in blankets'). For dessert, people often have hot Christmas pudding, which is made with spiced dried fruit and served with brandy butter or ice cream. In the UK, people usually drink wine with their meals, and they do not typically have vodka or whisky. Also, people in the UK do not make many toasts during their celebrations, which is different from how they celebrate meals in Ukraine.



Church: Many Christian churches hold nice 'Christmas Carol' or Christmas Tree services during December. More people than usual go to church at Christmas, especially to carol services or 'midnight mass' late on 24 Dec.



New Year: is also a holiday in the UK. On 31st December (evening) many people go to the pub or to parties, and at midnight you'll hear fireworks and some street celebrations on the evening of 31st Dec. 1st January is a public holiday with nearly all shops closed. In Scotland New Year is a bigger celebration than in the rest of the UK and is called Hogmanay. In Scotland both 1st and 2nd January are public holidays. Generally speaking in the UK gifts are not exchanged at New Year.

