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504 Homes for Sale

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EAST OREGONIAN

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS | CELEBRATIONS



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Christmas Around the World

Want to add a little international flair to your holidays this year? Countries and cultures throughout the world have a variety of traditions that celebrate different days of the season or highlight activities unique to their region.

Green Global Travel shares a variety of traditions; look for one to incorporate in your family fun this year. Hiding a Christmas pickle in the

tree has long been thought to be a **German** tradition. On Christmas morning, whoever finds the pickle-shaped ornament gets an extra present. There's a legend about a Civil War soldier from Bavaria who begged for a last pickle before he died, which helped him survive, and another story about St. Nick rescuing two boys from a pickle barrel. But historians believe it likely started with the sale of pickle-shaped ornaments imported from Germany.

In **Iceland**, people exchange books on Christmas Eve, then spend the evening eating chocolate and reading them. It's part of a season known as the Christmas Book Flood, or Jolabokafloð; because of this tradi-

tion, Iceland publishes more books per capita than any other country in the world, with most of those sold went in September and November.

In **Peru**, Christmas Eve is La Noche Buena and is the main celebration. After Christmas Mass, families have a big meal, open gifts and toast each other at midnight. Houses are decorated with nativity scenes that are intricately carved from stone or wood, and gifts are spread around the manger. The person chosen to put the figurine of baby Jesus in the manger is supposed to have good luck.

The **Syrian** tradition holds that children receive gifts from one of the wise men's camels, which according to legend was the youngest and smallest in

the caravan and collapsed from exhaustion at the end of the journey to Bethlehem.

In **Spain**, families eat Roscon de Reyes, a sweet bread ring similar to king cake, on Jan. 6 during the celebration of Dia de Reyes, or Kings' Day. This celebrates the arrival of the three wise men. The bread is topped with crushed almonds, candied fruit and powdered sugar and has a baby Jesus doll (or dried fava bean) inside the cake.

In **Poland**, people often decorate Christmas trees with spider webs because a Polish legend holds that a spider wove a blanket for Jesus, and many Polish people consider spiders to symbolize goodness and prosperity.