

Strange and Unusual Christmas Traditions to Ponder this Holiday Season

On the eve of Christmas, in the midst of holiday madness and last minute shopping, why not pause and reflect on some truly wonderful traditions from around the world? Think about what your family and friends do every year; maybe its watching a Charlie Brown Christmas special, hanging stockings, an ugly sweater party; whatever brings you joy. Here are some fascinating (and I dare say) endearing traditions from around all over the globe.

Pictured above is the “Yule Cat” of **Iceland**, a huge and vicious cat who lurks about the snowy countryside during Christmas time (Yule) and eats people who have not received any new clothes to wear before Christmas Eve. Thus, its tradition for everyone to give and get a new outfit at Christmas, which is also very practical!

In **Germany** it’s been a tradition since the 16th century to hide a pickle in the tree, and the lucky child who finds it gets a gift! Today you’ll find pickle ornaments instead of an actual dill pickle, but the spirit is still there. I can get behind this!



If you're visiting **Austria** in December brace yourself for horrifying masks depicting Krampus, the evil accomplice of St. Nick! There is even an annual Krampus parade in Vienna every year.



Are you afraid of spiders? You should probably avoid the **Ukraine** at Christmas time then! An old folk tale speaks of a widow, who could not afford a tree and the spiders in her house took pity on her and her children and spun an amazing display for the family. Check out this fantastic tree:



Here's a tradition I can get behind: KFC on Christmas! My own family has a long-standing practice of having Kentucky Fried Chicken on New Years Day; everyone contributes to a pot luck and for some reason my family has long been tasked with bringing The Colonel along for the ride! Requests go out a week in advance for extra biscuits, Mac N Cheese and especially potato wedges. In **Japan** KFC famously co-opted the Christmas holiday back in the early 1970's with an aggressive campaign that pushed the message "Kentucky for Christmas!" and it stuck. To this day, KFC does HUGE business on Christmas with many families carrying on the tradition.



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So what are some of YOUR Christmas traditions? Share them in the comments, maybe you'll start a whole new fad! Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Joyous Kwanzaa, Happy Hanukkah and Happy Festivus for the rest of us!

