

## Fun facts about (Danish) Christmas



**8.257.040** text messages were sent Christmas Eve the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

The Danes also take a lot of pictures in the Christmas holiday. The top 3 motives are:

1. Pictures from the celebration of Christmas Eve and New Year
2. Christmas decorations and the Christmas tree
3. Other family members

These motives rank over motives such as your own parents, your own children and your spouse/partner.



After the 1<sup>st</sup> World War the Christmas in Denmark was highly influenced by England and USA. The traditions with Santa Claus and his flying reindeers, Christmas cards, the mistletoe and the turkey as Christmas food originates from these countries. Around 1930 Denmark was also influenced by the German Christmas traditions like the Advent Calendar, but Denmark was also influenced by Sweden with the straw



Christmas goat and other Christmas decorations, glögg (a type of Scandinavian

mulled wine made with brandy, almonds, raisins and spices) and especially the Lucia tradition.

The consumption of chocolate in Denmark increases from 84 to 131 DKK in average in December.



Ris à l'amande" is a typical Danish Christmas dish invented in Denmark in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and the name means something as simple as "rice with almonds". Ris à l'amande is made from rice porridge, chopped almonds and cream. At Christmas Eve a whole almond is put in the Ris à l'amande and is typically served with cherry sauce. The person who finds the whole almond wins "mandelgaven" (the almond gift), which was traditionally a pig made out of marzipan, but today it can be anything.

33 % of all Danes have cheated with the almond at Christmas.



60,6 % of all Danes eat duck at Christmas Eve, while 45,9 % eat roast pork with crackling. So many people get both kinds of meat at Christmas Eve.



“Klejnen” (Danish fried cookies/biscuit) is the eldest Christmas cookie in Denmark. It was cooked the first time in the middle ages – or actually it was boiled, because “klejner” is traditionally boiled in fat from a pig.



100 million “æbleskiver” (Danish doughnuts) are eaten in Denmark each Christmas, which equals 1.400 km. of “æbleskiver”, which is the distance from Copenhagen to Milan.



The Danes are eating 1000 tons of “brunkager” (best translated as Danish gingerbread cookies) and up to 2000 tons of “pebernødder” (Danish Christmas biscuits) each Christmas.





The Danish consumption of apples, bananas and pears is halved during December, whereas the sale of oranges and clementines rises with 150 % compared to the rest of the month in a year, because the Danes associate these types of citrus fruits with Christmas.



0 % of Danes think that the Christmas presents are the most important about Christmas Eve – at least when you are asking adult people. “Hygge” (there is no translation of the word that means exactly the same as hygge, but the closest word in English is cozy) obtains the absolute favorite score with 81 % of the votes.



We sing about the reindeer Rudolf, whose nose is red and glowing in the dark, but does this phenomenon actually have a basis in reality? Yes, it has! Rudolf’s nose is red, because the scientists have discovered that adult reindeers’ noses have 25 % more blood circulation than humans. In the same way we get red cheeks from blood circulation, the reindeers get their red noses, especially when they work/are physically active. Did you know? Originally Rudolf with the red nose was made as an advertising campaign for an American department store.



Santa Claus (‘julemanden’ in Danish) has not existed as a deliverer of presents for more than 100 years. The Santa Claus is mentioned in the book ‘Peter’s jul’ (Peters Christmas in English) from 1866, but not as a deliverer of presents, but he brings the Christmas joy, the Christmas spirit, with him.

It was first in Louis Moe’s book ‘Julemandens bog’ (‘The book of Santa Claus’ in English) from 1898, where the idea about Santa Claus from Greenland delivers the presents, is created. Louis Moe was born in Norway, but he lived in Denmark most of his life, and died in Copenhagen in 1945. He was a painter, illustrator and author.



“Kravlenisser “ (The Christmas Elf or the cut-out pixie) are a Danish invention from 1947, where a Danish illustrator by the name Frederik Bramming printed a bunch of clipping sheets with Elves on it and called them “Kravlenisser”. The Elves made by Bramming are characterized by not having any teeth.



The Danish company Asp-Holmblad, well-known for their candles in Denmark, made the first Advent candles in 1942. But back in the 1920<sup>s</sup>, people made their own Advent candles by drawing lines with a waterproof color on the candles.

The marzipan, that we among other things use to make our Christmas confections with, is originally from Iran and dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The marzipan came to Denmark in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the marzipan had become a permanent part of the Danish Christmas traditions. Marzipan is made from grinded almonds and sugar.



When the Danes use their credit cards at Christmas time, the estimated expense per household is approx. 3000 DKK for Christmas presents. But the Norwegians are the ones that use most money at Christmas in whole Europe with an average of more than 6000 DKK.





The most popular Christmas tree in the Danish living rooms is the Nordmann fir. It does not lose its spruce needles, when it is cut down, and you do not get pricked, when you decorate the tree. And we of course dance around it while singing Christmas carols.



The first Danish Door-Christmas calendar was produced in 1932 or 1933 in Copenhagen after a German model. At the same time Advent calendars that were fabricated in England were introduced in Denmark. Behind the doors were pictures of Santa Claus, drums, rocking horses, Christmas trees and much more.

The first Christmas cards that were sold in Denmark in 1870 were produced in Germany. In the beginning of 1880 a company in Copenhagen called Levison announced that they had made their own Christmas cards even in color, as it was underlined.



We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy  
New Year ☺!

Glædelig jul og godt nytår

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