




merry
christmas



CHRISTMAS IN BULGARIA

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Koleda (Cyrillic: коледа) is the original Slavic word for Christmas, which is still used in modern Bulgaria. Some think that the word was borrowed from the Latin *calendae*.

Other ones believe that it comes from the Bulgarian word "**коля**" (kolia), which means "*to cut an animal for eating*".

Some claim it was named after **Kolyada**, the Slavic god of winter.





The day before Christmas (24 December – Christmas Eve) is called **Badni vecher** or “small Koleda”. Its name is believed to come from “**бъда/bada**” or TO BE in Bulgarian. This day people wish each other all the best in the future.

Whole family gathers for a festive dinner. The most important thing is **BADNIK**, the food with the ritual bread and **KOLEDARI**.







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The ritual bread is kneaded and baked in a special way. Figures on it represented God, fruits, grains, domestic animals, tools for work, and people.

There is BADNIK (pear tree or oak log) in the fire. The Badnik is cut and brought by a young man and it has to burn all night.

The oldest member of the family incenses the food and house and says a prayer.





All food is laid on the table at once; all members of the family sit at the same time and then nobody stands until the dinner is over. There is only Lenten fare on the table – and there must be an odd number of dishes – 7, 9 or 11. Usually, there are: beans, stuffed peppers, stuffed cabbage leaves, cooked corn, pumpkin pastry, dried fruit, garlic, honey, nuts, fruits, ritual bread.







The oldest member of the family breaks the ritual bread and leaves the first piece for Jesus Christ, the second one is for the house and the next pieces are for the oldest to the youngest members of the family.

When the dinner is over, the hostess leaves the food on the table for God to come for dinner.





Koledari (коледари) is the Bulgarian word for Christmas carolers. In Bulgaria, carolers traditionally start their rounds at midnight on Christmas Eve. They visit the houses of their relatives, neighbours and other people in the village.





The members of the group are mainly young men who are not married or teenage boys. Wearing their best clothes they sing carols to wish health and welfare. The host invites them to the table and gives them a treat and then young, unmarried women from the family give them a special ring shaped bun called **koleden kravay**. Also they are given from the family money, meat, bacon, beans, wine, etc.







On Christmas Day religious people go to the church to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Usually families cut a pig for eating. Christmas dinner is a feast of pork dishes, home made sausages, baked duck, turkey or goose, cheese pastry and cookies. There are fortune slips in the cheese pastry. One of them is a coin that symbolizes wealth.





Nowadays....

Although there is nothing about giving presents on Christmas day, a Christmas tree and Santa Claus in Bulgarian traditions they have become very common in Bulgaria. People decorate their houses with Christmas ornaments and Christmas trees and children write their letters to Grandpa Koleda /Father Christmas/.

At school we prepare Christmas celebrations, usually concerts and Christmas markets. Students perform Bulgarian traditions as Koledari, make greeting cards and paint pictures about the fest.









































- This presentation was made by:
- Antonia, Dimitrinka, Slavi, Iva and Peter from the fifth grade who translated the text /with some help from their English teachers 😊 / ;
- The students from fourth grades who worked on the Christmas decoration and greeting cards;
- The students from club Computers, who made the presentation;
- And all their teachers who were there to help 😊.





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