

CHRISTMAS in Australia

SUMMER

Christmas in Australia occurs towards the beginning of the summer. Children have their school holiday from mid-December to early February.



DECORATIONS

Wreaths are often hung on Australians doors at Christmas time. People sometimes go out Christmas carol singing on Christmas Eve. Homes and gardens are often decorated with Christmas trees and lights. Neighbors may compete to see who has the best light display and often go around to look at each other's decorations. Bunches of "Christmas Bush," a native Australian tree with small green leaves and cream-colored flowers, are also used to decorate homes. The flowers turn a deep shiny red over several weeks in summer. Poinsettia plants are also popular decorations in Australia at Christmas.



SERVICES

Carols by Candlelight are popular Christmas events held outdoors in each state capital in Australia. People come together to light candles and sing Christmas carols. These are broadcast on television across the country. Huge Christmas pageants are held too. Most towns and cities in Australia have festivals and parades. Fireworks are sometimes set off at local parks. Many towns, cities, and schools hold their own carol services. Local bands and choirs perform songs. Many of the words are changed in carols since the holiday occurs in summer there. Families often attend church together on Christmas Eve.

SANTA

Some Australian children expect Father Christmas to come leave presents, while others wait for Santa Claus to visit and deliver gifts. Once Santa gets to Australia, he lets the reindeer rest and may use kangaroos. His clothes are also changed to adapt to the warm temperatures. Santa is often shown in shorts on a surfboard in Australia. Carrots are often left out for the reindeer and cake is often set out for Santa.



GATHERINGS

Families usually try to get together around Christmas. Australian families enjoy doing things outside like swimming, surfing, sailing, and riding bicycles. The main meal is normally eaten at lunch time. People today often have a cold Christmas dinner, or barbecue seafood like prawns and lobsters along with traditional English food. Fish markets are full of people buying fresh seafood on Christmas Eve. Presents are typically exchanged between families in Australia on Christmas Day. Some people eat Christmas pudding, but there are often other cold desserts like pavlova and trifle. Christmas crackers are often eaten during mealtimes too.

POST CHRISTMAS

The day after Christmas, December 26, is Boxing Day. Most Australians visit friends and have barbecues at the beach on Boxing Day. A famous yacht race from Sydney, Australia to Hobart, Tasmania is held on Boxing Day. Tips are given to grocers, postmen, newspaper carriers, and others to thank them for their help throughout the year. New Year's Eve is always a special time. Dinners, dances, and parties are held. There is one final party on Twelfth Night, January 6, to end the Christmas season.



Name _____

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MATCHING: Match each term with its description.

1. ____ Boxing Day	A. Often eaten on Christmas in Australia
2. ____ summer	B. These are sometimes set off at local parks
3. ____ seafood	C. Santa may exchange his reindeer for this animal
4. ____ board	D. Are often given to people on Boxing Day
5. ____ kangaroos	E. Santa is often portrayed on this in Australia
6. ____ Twelfth Night	F. Season in which Christmas occurs in Australia
7. ____ Christmas Bush	G. The holiday after Christmas in Australia
8. ____ fireworks	H. Native Australian tree with green leaves and flowers
9. ____ surfboard	I. January 6th, ends the Christmas season
10. ____ tips	J. Santa is often portrayed in these shorts in Australia



MULTIPLE CHOICE: Choose the best answer.

11. What is the most likely reason Santa is often portrayed on a surfboard in Australia?

- A. Australia has a lot of beaches.
- B. It is summer in Australia at Christmas.
- C. Many people in Australia like to surf.
- D. Santa is much "cooler" in Australia than other places.

12. What is the most likely reason many words in traditional Christmas carols are changed in Australia?

- A. They speak a different language in Australia.
- B. Australians wanted to modernize the carols to appeal to younger people.
- C. Many carols discuss winter and cold weather, which is not the case in Australia.
- D. Most Australians practice a different religion.

13. "Tips are given to grocers, postmen, newspaper carriers, and others to thank them for their help throughout the year." What is the best meaning of *tips*, as used in the quote?

- A. To give extra money
- B. The pointed end of something
- C. To upset or overturn
- D. To give advice

COMPARE AND CONTRAST:

Compare and contrast similarities and differences in Christmas in America and Australia.



AMERICA

BOTH

AUSTRALIA

