

Germany

In Germany, Advent is a very special time. Many families have an Advent wreath with four candles. Each Sunday in Advent, another candle is lit until all four candles are burning. The light of the candles symbolizes the increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Advent calendars are also very popular and help children count down the days until Christmas. Each day, a door is opened to reveal a small surprise like chocolate or a toy.

Sweden

In Sweden, Advent is celebrated with the Lucia Festival on December 13th. On this day, girls wear white dresses and candle crowns on their heads to honor Saint Lucia. Lucia was a young woman who helped the poor and brought light into the darkness. There are also many lights and candles to brighten the dark winter days. Children sing songs and enjoy delicious saffron buns called "Lussekatter".

Mexico

In Mexico, Advent is celebrated with "Las Posadas," a nine-day celebration that reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. Each evening, people go from house to house, singing songs and asking for lodging until they are finally welcomed in and a party begins with food and piñatas. This tradition helps people remember Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

Italy

In Italy, the Advent season often begins with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th. Many families set up nativity scenes that depict the birth of Jesus. These nativity scenes are often very elaborate and include not only Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus but also animals and shepherds. On December 24th, the "Ceppo" or "Yule Log" is burned, and there is a big feast with many traditional Italian dishes.

Australia

Since Advent falls in the summer in Australia, the celebrations are often different from those in northern countries. Many people celebrate with barbecues and beach parties. Advent calendars and decorating Christmas trees are also popular. Children especially look forward to a visit from Santa Claus, who is often depicted wearing swim trunks and sunglasses.

Colombia

In Colombia, Advent begins with "Noche de las Velitas" (Night of the Little Candles) on December 7th. On this day, people place candles and lanterns in their windows and on the streets to celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Starting on December 16th, families begin the "Novena," a nine-day period of prayer, where they gather to pray and sing together.

Poland

In Poland, Christmas Eve begins when the first star appears in the sky. Then the family gathers for a feast that includes twelve dishes, representing the twelve apostles. There is always an extra place set at the table for an unexpected guest, symbolizing hospitality. After the meal, Christmas carols are sung, and gifts are exchanged.

Greece

In Greece, children go through the streets on December 24th with drums and bells, singing Christmas carols. In return, they receive small gifts from the adults. The big presents are given on New Year's Eve. On this night, a special Christmas cake is eaten, which has a coin baked inside. Whoever finds the coin is said to have good luck for the whole year.

Ukraine

In Ukraine, Christmas Eve is celebrated on January 6th. The family sits together at a table covered with not only delicious food but also hay, which reminds them of Jesus' birth in a stable. There are twelve traditional dishes, and after the meal, Christmas carols are sung.

