Christmas is not just a major celebration in Romania, it’s a time when traditions, ancestral roots and family values are the ones that mostly count, besides the usual race for presents or holiday preparations.

It’s a time of giving, sharing, singing and dancing, from the farthest hamlet in the mountains up to the country’s cosmopolitan cities.However, many Romanian villages kept these winter traditions unspoiled, even if for the show’s sake. Overall, despite their particularities from one region to another, they preserve some main benchmark moments.However, the Christmas celebrations actually start on Christmas Eve, on December 24th, when people should decorate their Christmas trees and go carol singing, when Santa is coming and gifts are shared.Carol singing is indeed a very popular part of Christmas in Romania. On Christmas Eve, children go out carol singing from house to house, being rewarded with sweets, fruit, traditional cakes called ‘*cozonaci’* and sometimes money for their performance. Adults go carol singing on Christmas Day evening and night.

A traditional Romanian carol is the ‘*Star Carol’*. The star, made of colored paper and often decorated with tinsel, silver foil and sometimes bells, is put on a pole. A picture of baby Jesus or a nativity scene is placed in the middle of the star. Carol singers take the star with them when they go carol singing.Other popular carols to sing include ‘*Oh, What Wondrous Tidings*‘ (‘O, ce veste minunata’), ‘*Three Wise Men coming from the East*‘ (‘Trei Crai de la rasarit’), “*Today Christ Was Born”* (Astazi s-a nascut Hristos), “*Three Shepherds*“, “*The Star*” or “*Sus la poarta Raiului*” (Up at Heaven’s Gate).

