

Celebrating Christmas and New Year in Greece



Ο Εορτασμός των Χριστουγέννων και της
Πρωτοχρονιάς στην Ελλάδα

The custom of Camel



In the region of Macedonia a popular happening with Camel takes place on New Year's Eve. In this event, people dressed in Camels walk around streets shouting various slogans. Their intent is to "deceive" Herod's soldiers who are looking to find the newborn Jesus so they cannot kill him.

The coupling of fire



On Christmas Eve in many parts of Greece people took two pieces of wood, one from a tree with male name and another one from a tree with female name representing the housewife. They “married” them to the fireplace and “crucified” the fire three times pouring red wine and oil. They believed that it would have brought good luck to the hosts.

The Sweets of Christmas



Melomakarona, sugared buns (kurabiedes in greek) and baklava are sweets that decorate Christmas dinner and usually are being offered to children when singing the carols. Vasilopita is New Year's cake which contains a coin. It is considered that the person who finds the coin will be lucky the whole year.

Carols



Carols are songs embodying wishes that children sing on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and Epiphany. Children ask homeowners whether they are allowed to sing the carols and if they respond positive, they start singing. At the end, the homeowners, in order to show their satisfaction, offer to the kids a tip or a sweet.

The folklore of Goblins



Goblins are small, bad, skinny creatures which during the year live in the down below gnawing the earth tree. They appear on Christmas Eve by cheating in various ways, for example by spilling flour or ash fireplace everywhere. It is thought that people can get rid of them by sanctification at the day of Epiphany.

Christmas Dinner



People used to eat at 12:00 o'clock at noon as they woke up early in the morning. Father crossed the Christopsomo, which was a bread dedicated to Jesus, while the lady of the house served the roast meat or turkey to the guests.

Christmas Wreath



The wreath by fir on the outdoor decorated with Christmas ornaments is used to welcome the guests and according to the tradition bring luck to the household. Among these decorations there is a hidden garlic which is believed that sends away the evil eye.

The Christmas boat



Greece, an island country, had the custom of decorating a boat. It was a way to welcome the sailors who came back to their home after long journeys. Nowadays, this tradition is on the verge of extinction.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from Rhodes

