

Christian Religious Holiday Celebrations

Here is how Christians celebrate their two most well-known religious holidays.

Christmas (in December)

- Most Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25, while others celebrate as late as January 6.
- The “Christmas Season” extends from early December until January 6.
- Traditionally Christians give gifts to family and friends during this season.
- Typical Christmas Season activities include: sending Christmas cards; decorating Christmas trees; attending Christmas parties; decorating homes and businesses; and performing service for the needy.
- Commercial aspects of Christmas (Santa Claus, Christmas sales, extravagant decorations, etc.) are enjoyed by some Christians but rejected by others as too materialistic.
- Most Christians expect December 24 and 25 to be vacation days. Many take off extra days to visit family and friends.
- Christmas customs vary in different cultures and regions.

Easter (in March/April)

- Celebrates Jesus Christ’s last week – the Atonement, death on the cross (crucifixion), and resurrection. The cross is a major symbol for Christianity.
- Easter begins in a somber tone and ends joyously.
- Traditional Christians also celebrate Lent, a time period before Easter during which they deprive themselves of things they would normally eat, drink, or do.
- Most Christians go to church services on Easter Sunday in more formal clothing than usual.
- Commercial aspects of Easter (the Easter Bunny, Easter baskets with candy and colored eggs, baby chicks, etc.) are enjoyed by some Christians but rejected by many others as missing the point.
- Some Christians use the Friday before Easter (Good Friday) as a vacation day.

For further reading:

- Selected Christian Feasts and Holidays. <http://www.holidayfestival.com/Christianity.html>
- ThinkQuest Articles on Easter and Christmas in different countries, including the U.S.A. <http://library.thinkquest.org/10007/text/easter.htm?tqskip1=1&tqtime=1029> and <http://library.thinkquest.org/10007/text/christ.html?tqskip1=1&tqtime=1029>