

Crazy Christmas Customs

Crunchy Christmas Caterpillars

Nothing as safe as smoked salmon for starters in South Africa.

December's when impressive Emperor Moth Caterpillars are at their finest and juiciest so what better time to put them on the menu than Christmas Day. This 'delicacy' is served as an appetiser, lightly fried for a crispy, crunch.

Nativity Newcomer

Don't be surprised to see a squatting figure with lowered trousers in a Catalan Nativity. It's the 'Caganer' and yes, he's doing the toilet. Some say he's a nod to local humour.

Others explain him as a down-to-earth symbol. Whatever he is, no Catalan Nativity is complete without his pooing presence.

Advent Arson

Gävle in Sweden erects an enormous straw Yule Goat in the town every year for Christmas. It takes two days to build. But it's most famous for the number of times it's been burned down. In 50 years, the goat's only survived 10 arson attacks and, miraculously, only 5 arsonists have ever been caught.

Kentucky Fried Christmas

Fast food at Christmas is tragic, right? Not in Japan apparently. Here, KFC Family Buckets are such a big deal on December 25th, Japanese queue for hours at KFCs to collect orders made months in advance. The chain celebrates this touching new tradition with the line 'KFC = Christmas' – only in Japan, so far.

Christmas Log Love

No Catalan forgets to bring home a log on December 8th. It's the Tio de Nadal and children have to love it, feed it and keep it cosy under a blanket until December 24th. Then, on Christmas Eve, they beat the living daylights out of it with a stick to make it 'poo' presents.

Norwegian Prize Pig

Norwegian Christmas dinner is filled with traditions and families pick and choose the ones they like. But everyone, without exception, includes Rommegrot somewhere in the meal. This Christmas rice pudding always has a single almond baked into it and whoever gets the almond wins a marzipan piglet.

Sinister Santa Snaps

Live near Scottsdale, Arizona? Make your Christmas one to remember with a charming portrait of you, your children, Santa and his AK47s. Yes, Scottsdale Gun Club have been upholding this wholly questionable tradition for decades now. And if you're speechless at the thought, that's as it should be.

Ravishing Christmas Radishes

The humble radish is king of Christmas in the Mexican town of Oaxaca on the 23rd and 24th of December every year. Hundreds of delicate and fantastic radish carvings made by local artisans fill the central plaza and everyone celebrates El Festival de los Rabanos with two days of dancing, eating and drinking.

Roll On Christmas Morning

It's not ancient, it's not traditional and it's got nothing to do with the nativity but as cute customs go, roller-skating to church on Christmas Morning is right up there. Kudos to Caracas for making this such a big thing on December 25th. The centre of the Venezuelan capital is skater-only for hours.

Santa's Evil Austrian Twin

No mollycoddling children in Austria at Christmas. Find yourself on Santa's naughty list and his demonic doppelganger, Krampus, will get you. Okay, it's only men chasing kids around as part of December's traditional Krampusnacht festivities. But they're wearing satanic goat heads with fangs. Now you know why psychoanalysis was born in Vienna.

