

## Holiday Brazil Traditions



### "Boas Festas" means Merry Christmas.

In Brazil, they have a Santa Claus who is called Papai Noel. It is believed that he lives in Greenland.

around the house. Sometimes children leave a sock near a window, if Santa Claus finds your sock, he will exchange it for a present!

There is a very common tradition among friends and families, called amigo secreto (secret friend). At the beginning of December, participants in the game write their name on a piece of paper. Each participant takes a paper (but does not reveal the name of the person on it). During the month there are exchanges of correspondence among the participants who use apelidos (fake names). On Christmas, family and friends gather to reveal their secret friends and offer them a special gift.

Favorite Christmas foods in Brazil include will be chicken, turkey, ham, rice, salad, pork, fresh, and dried fruits.

Many people start the Christmas celebrations on Christmas Eve with fireworks and a big churrasco (BBQ).

Brazilians are a mix of people from many parts of the world, and as a former Portuguese colony, they have many Christmas customs that originate from this heritage.



Because it is so warm in Brazil in December, Papai Noel usually wears lightweight silk clothing. He brings gifts to children during the night of Christmas Eve.

The children set out their shoes for Papai Noel before they go to bed. On Christmas morning, the children find their shoes full of small gifts, and they look for gifts that are hidden



One tradition is to create a nativity scene or Presépio. The word originates from the word "presepio" which means the bed of straw upon which Jesus first slept in Bethlehem. The Presépio is common in northeastern Brazil (Bahia, Sergipe, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Maranhão, Ceará, Pernambuco, Piauí and Alagoas). The Presépio was introduced in the 17th century, in the city of Olinda in the state of

Pernambuco by a Franciscan friar named Gaspar de Santo Agostinho. Nowadays presépios are set up in December and displayed in churches, homes, and stores.

The people of Northern Brazil, as in Mexico, enjoy a version of the folk play Los Pastores or "The Shepherds." In the Brazilian version, there are shepherdesses rather than shepherds and a gypsy who attempts to kidnap the Christ Child.

At the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century, many immigrants came from Europe and other parts of the world. They brought their traditions and adapted them to Brazilian conditions. Therefore, the food they eat (especially in the South states) during Christmas came from Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and other countries. A huge Christmas dinner, unusual in the hot summertime, includes turkey, ham, colored rice, and wonderful fresh vegetable and fruit dishes.

In the old days, devout Catholics would attend Midnight Mass or Missa do Galo. (A galo is a rooster.) The Mass has this name because the rooster announces the coming day and the Missa do Galo finishes at 1 AM on Christmas morning! This tradition has faded away in most places due to the high crime rate in the cities. In addition, many families prefer to gather for a special supper (ceia) at midnight. Masses are celebrated December 24 later in the afternoon, or early evening. December 25 there are masses in the morning and later afternoon. Many prefer the late afternoon Christmas Mass so that they can enjoy sleeping in after the midnight meal or going to the beach on Christmas morning.

Decorations include fresh flowers picked from the garden. Huge Christmas "trees" of electric lights can be seen against the night skies in major cities such as Brasilia, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro throughout the season. Fireworks displays go off to welcome the New Year.



As Brazil's other Christmas traditions, the music associated with Christmas is mostly imported. "Noite Feliz" ("Silent Night") is probably the song most associated with Christmas in Brazil. There are some Brazilian Christmas songs (pastorils and others), but they are not very well known.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btFICV98aTk&feature=related>

## CHRISTMAS NUT CAKE

2 c. walnuts

1 1/2 c. Brazil nuts

1 lb. dates, whole

1 c. granulated sugar

1 c. plus 1 tbsp. flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

4 eggs, well beaten

Mix nuts, dates and sugar. Add to the eggs. Add the flour, baking powder and salt. Mix well. This is only enough to cover the dates and nuts, but do not add more. Pour into a bread tin and bake slowly (1 hour, 15 minutes) at 275 degrees.

## BRAZIL NUT CHRISTMAS PIE

3 egg yolks  
1/4 c. sugar  
1/8 tsp. salt  
2 c. milk  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 c. maraschino cherries  
1/4 c. sugar

Beat egg yolks and sugar together. Scald milk, add egg mix and cook until it coats spoon. Remove from fire, add gelatin and jello. Cool until thick. Add thinly sliced cherries and beat until smooth; add salt and vanilla; beat egg whites and 1/4 c. sugar until stiff and fold into custard. Pour into crust; chill. Garnish with whipped cream, sliced cherries and Brazil nuts.

## Brazilian Chocolate

Ingredients 1/2 c. chocolate syrup

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. cinnamon

2 tbsp. instant coffee

2 c. hot milk

Vanilla to taste

Combine chocolate syrup, salt, cinnamon and coffee in saucepan; stir in 1/4 cup hot water.

Cook over medium heat until heated through.

Add 1 1/2 cups hot water and milk; cook until heated through, stir- ring occasionally.

Add vanilla; beat with rotary beater until foamy.

Serve immediately.

## Caipirosca (Brazilian Lime Cocktail)



Ingredients:

- 1 lime, cut into 4th 's
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 fluid ounce vodka
- 4 ice cubes

Directions:

Wash the lime and cut into fourths Put lime in a glass and add the sugar. Crush lime with the sugar. Add the shot of Vodka and the ice cubes. Enjoy!