

COMENIUS PROJECT

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS AND

GASTRONOMY



DECEMBER 2011

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS AND GASTRONOMY

Portugal

“Feliz Natal”

Founded around 1143, Portugal has long been a Christian country. It remained a kingdom, until 1910, when the monarch was thrown out and a Republic was established. This did not dampen the customary Catholic spirit of the country though, and many long held traditions are still used to this day.



“Altar do Menino Jesus” (Madeira Island and Azores)

Starting about three weeks before Christmas, families place moistened wheat in saucers. By Christmas day the wheat will have grown to about six inches if it is watered periodically. This makes a pretty decoration, which is placed by the Baby Jesus' figurine. Fruit, as oranges which give a fresh sense, can also be used as decoration.



Wheat in saucer

Families who have time might also build nativity scenes out of natural materials. Little houses and animals are made out of clay, and, for scenery, lots of moss, and foliage. Children of all ages participate in gathering the moss and help out. A nativity scene can also be built in church, which will come particularly alive at Midnight Mass.



One of the most common decoration is the Nativity scene (called "Presépio"), with Mary, Joseph, the cow and the donkey, the Three Wise Men, and lots of other figures. The figure of the Christ Child is added to the scene after the family attends Midnight Mass or after midnight. But practically everybody has a Christmas tree too; the typical colours are the gold, red and green.



In Portugal, the tradition of gift-giving was defined mostly by the strong Christian religious beliefs of the people. The children receive the presents at midnight of 24/25 December or early in 25th December morning. They put their shoes near the fireplace and hope to find their shoes packed with gifts and treats in the morning. The treats left are more likely to be candied fruits and sweet breads. The children believe in Santa Claus (called "Pai Natal" - which means: Father Christmas) and the parents tell them that is the baby Jesus who helps Santa with the presents.

The "Consoada" (a meal eaten on Christmas Eve) is the reunion of the family, until they wait for the coming of Father Christmas at midnight and takes place on the dinner of 24th December/Christmas Eve. There are families who reserve an empty place for the persons who died, but it doesn't happen very often. This originates from the practice of leaving seed offerings for relatives in the hope that they will provide a bountiful harvest.



Dinner at night originates in Ancient Rome, before Christianity: people had banquets that would end on the 25th of December. It was eventually incorporated into Christmas. It is a date full of symbol because it recalls the last supper of Jesus and the Apostles before His death. In old times, Europeans would leave on Christmas day their door open for peregrines and travellers to enter and be in communion with the family.

The most typical dishes during the “Consoada” are boiled codfish and Portuguese sprouts (in pure olive oil normally) and then everybody puts lots of desserts in the table and typical plates (“arroz doce” – rice pudding with cinnamon, “rabanadas”- seems like French toast, “filhoses”- fried desserts, “broas de mel” - pastries made with honey, “Sonhos” - pumpkin fritters).



Codfish



“Rabanada”



“Sonhos”



“Broas de mel”



“Filhoses”



“Arroz doce”

The Vikings discovered codfish as an essential food in their long journeys: it was dried and would endure through the trip. However, the Basque were the ones who started salting the dry fish and commercializing it. The Catholic Church in the Middle Age was important in the increase of the use this fish: during fasting Catholics could not eat meat and as codfish was cheaper it was highly consumed in Christmas and Easter. After Second World War, it became more expensive and started being eaten only on special occasions as in Christmas.

Another very traditional dessert is the "Bolo Rei" (King's cake) which is a wreath-like very rich fruit cake laced with crystallized fruits and pine nuts. There is a little present inside the cake and a broad bean - who finds the broad bean in one slice, must pay the next “King Cake”. It represents the star the wise men followed to Jesus. The legend goes as follows: close to the place where Baby Jesus was the Three Wise Men had an argument – who would first offer their gifts? The solution was given by a baker: he would bake a cake with a broad bean inside. The first to find the bean in the slice of cake would be the first to offer the gifts. The shape of the cake is similar to the shape of a crown, the crystallized fruit, the almonds, walnuts and figs symbolise the jewels. This cake symbolises the gifts that the Three Wise Kings gave to Baby Jesus. The crust of the cake represents the gold, the dried fruit symbolises myrth and its smell incense.



In Ancient Rome, dried fruit were a gift in the celebrations of the winter solstice. They were regarded as a toy for children besides being food. Each fruit had a meaning: hazelnuts avoided hunger, walnuts meant abundance and prosperity, and almonds protected people from the effects of drinking. The fruits are more than food they are an ancient custom of the Romans.

Midnight mass, or "Missa de Galo" (The Roosters Mass), is still a large event for religious citizens. Catholics participate in the Midnight Mass because the cock announces the new day and therefore the day of Christmas. The celebration takes place very late because many of the events in the life of Jesus happened in dawn: His birth and His resurrection. The cock represents the end of darkness and the beginning of a new day. In some villages of Portugal, a cock was taken to mass and if he sang it would mean great crops that year. Some of the most fervent followers will bring small gifts to set in the cradle of the church's Nativity scene. After Mass, everyone files up to the altar to kiss the figurine of Jesus. The "Christmas Feast of the Immaculate Conception" and the "Feast of the Holy Innocents" are both celebrated during the season too.

At home, just as in the local church, people find a special place to put the Saviour's crib from the nativity. It was the idea of St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th Century to recreate the stable where Jesus was born at Christmas. In the regions of *Bragança*, *Guarda* or *Castelo Branco*, a Yule log is burned in the atrium of the village church after mass. It helps keep everyone warm through the night and to wish family and friends a Merry Christmas.



During Christmas day, Portuguese people visit friends and family and have a big lunch normally with roast chicken, lamb or turkey.

Festivities go on until January 6th – called “Dia de Reis”, also known as “Epiphany Sunday”, “Three Kings Day” or “Twelfth Day”. Some families give children their main gifts on this day. Until the Three Kings Day, there are parties, gift giving and masses.



A long time ago in the Azores, people would make home-made liqueurs during the Christmas season and invite friends to go to their homes to taste the liqueurs, Christmas cakes or other sweets. Since these drinks were made in honour of Baby Jesus, whenever they were poured into a glass it was referred to as the Baby Jesus urinating or "O Menino Mija" in Portuguese. This tradition still continues today. Although people no longer make the home-made

liqueurs, they still invite friends and relatives to visit them during the season to participate in "O Menino Mija" by having a drink and tasting the Christmas cake.

On New Year celebrations, at midnight, there's a fireworks display in every town. Everyone eats 12 raisins, with one wish for each month, and drinks champagne to bring in the New Year. At the start of the New Year, people sing in the streets. These are the "Janeiras" (New Year's carollers). People sing traditional songs and those who pass by are wished a Happy New Year full of luck.



"Janeiras"

Italy "Buon Natale"

Christmas, as it is celebrated in Italy, has two origins: the familiar traditions of Christianity blended with the pagan traditions predating the Christmas era. The greatest feast of the ancient Roman Empire, "Saturnalia" (a winter solstice celebration), just happens to coincide with the Christmas celebrations of the Advent. Consequently, Christmas fairs, merry-making and torch processions, honour not only the birth of Christ, but also the birth of the "Unconquered Sun." "Natale," the Italian word for Christmas, is literally the translation for "birthday."



A delightful, but rapidly disappearing tradition in Italy is the ushering in of the coming festivities by the "Piferari" or fifers. They descend from the mountains of the Abruzzo and Latium playing inviting and characteristic tunes on their bagpipes, filling the air with anticipation for the joyous celebration to come.

The Christmas season in Italy goes for three weeks, starting 8 days before Christmas known as the Novena. During the holiday season, the shepherds play musical instruments and sing Christmas songs in the villages. Children collect in groups dress up as shepherds, play pipes and recite Christmas poems and sing Christmas songs door to door. In return, they receive money to buy presents.

In Italy, Nativity Scenes are very popular and can be seen displayed in almost every Christian household. In fact the tradition of having Nativity Scenes began in Italy first and traces its origins back to St. Francis of Assisi and Giovanni Vellita, a workman from the village of Greccio. Apparently St. Francis came up with the idea of performing mass before a recreated version of the Nativity Scene and asked the above mentioned Giovanni Vellita to construct a scaled down model for him. Giovanni Vellita set to work and, it seems, managed to render such an amazingly moving model that it profoundly impressed all beholders at the ensuing mass. After this Nativity Scenes or 'Presepios' (mangers) as they are known as in Italy became a norm at Christmas time and now people strive to create the best, most skilfully designed and decorated scenes. These scenes are arranged on a wooden pyramidal setting, sometimes several feet high that is known as a Ceppo. At the top, of course, is the manger scene or 'Presepio' as it is called in Italy, in which you will often come across some very skilfully hand-carved and carefully





detailed human and animal figures. On the shelves of the ceppo below this gaily packaged gifts and sweets are usually displayed and, while the overall decorations vary according to skill and taste, the whole pyramid is made as eye-catching as possible. The most beautiful Cribs are set up in churches. There is often a contest between churches of the same town for the best Crib. People go from church to church to view and compare the Cribs and displays.

Aside from the Presepio - and usually next to it - each family also usually displays a large vessel or bowl that is dubbed as the Urn of Fate and is filled with presents.

Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City hosts the popular midnight mass given by the Pope inside Saint Peter's Basilica. Those in the square see it on big screen TV. At noon on Christmas day the Pope gives his Christmas message from the window of his apartment overlooking the square. A large tree and nativity scene are erected in the square before Christmas.

Another tradition is the burning of the Yule log, which must stay alight until New Year's Day. This, again, is an example of pagan and Christian blending. The pagan belief explains the purifying and revitalizing power of fire, and that with the burning log, the old year and its evils are destroyed. Christian legend tells how the Virgin Mary enters the homes of the humble at midnight while the people are away at Midnight Mass and warms her newborn child before the blazing log.



Amidst the general merrymaking and religious observance of Christmas Eve, Christmas tapers (long slender candles) are lighted and a Christmas banquet is spread. In some places, Christmas Eve dinner consists largely of fish. There may be as many as 10 to 20 fish dishes prepared. In Rome, the traditional dish of Christmas Eve is "Capitone," a big female eel, roasted, baked or fried. North of Rome a traditional dish may be pork, sausage packed in a pig's leg, smothered in lentils, or turkey stuffed with chestnuts. Other various delicious items that are traditionally served at this feast include Spaghetti, Anchovies, Amaretti (a baked sweet dish made up of eggs and almonds), Tortellini, Panettone (cake filled with candied fruit), Torrone (nougat) and Panforte (gingerbread) made with hazelnuts, honey and almonds and different types of chocolates. Peasant folklore theorizes that to eat nuts favours the fertility of the earth and aids in the increase of flocks and family. In ancient Rome, honey was offered at this time of year so that the New Year might be sweet.

Turkey stuffed with chestnuts



“Capitone”



“Tortellini”



“Panettone”



“Amaretti”



“Torrone”



“Panforte”



Of Special Note...

The main exchange of Christmas gifts in Italy takes place on the Feast of the Epiphany. This event takes place on 6th January and it is on the night preceding day that Italian children hang up their stockings in anticipation of gifts. The bringer of gifts is a female character known as Befana. Italian children set out their shoes for the female Santa Claus, La Befana, to fill with gifts of all kinds like toys, candies and fruit. If the children were good, their shoes would be filled on Christmas morning. If they were bad, they would find their shoes filled with coal.



According to Italian legend, Befana lived on the route the Three Magi took when they set out to visit the Infant Jesus. They stopped at her house to ask her for directions to Bethlehem as well as for food and shelter. However Befana wasn't in a very sociable mood just then and told them to be off. Later, like most people, she had a change of heart and decided she wouldn't mind entertaining a few guests after all. But by then the guests were far beyond recall. Befana decided to go after them in any case and set off for Bethlehem. Like them she followed the Star in the Sky, but unlike them she was unable to find the stable where the Christ Child lay. Befana however wasn't the sort to give up and is still flying around looking through windows and down chimney tops. She visits every house where there are children and leaves gifts just in case one of them happens to be the Christ Child. For the naughty children it is said she only leaves coals - but that is very rare since there are very seldom any really naughty children, especially during Christmas time, when they know Befana is on her way.

New Year's Eve in Italy - *La Festa di San Silvestro*

La Festa di San Silvestro is celebrated December 31 on New Year's Eve. As with most Italian festivals, food plays a major role. Families and friends get together for a huge feast. The star of the dinner is lentils, symbolizing money and good fortune for the coming year. Traditionally, the dinner in many parts of Italy also includes a *cotechino*, a large spiced sausage, or a *zampone*, stuffed pig's trotter. The pork symbolizes the richness of life in the coming year.



"Zampone"



"Cotechino"



Lentils



"Prosecco"

Huge midnight fireworks displays celebrate the coming of the New Year. Most towns have public displays in a central square but private parties will also include firecrackers or sparklers, too, and will continue for a long time. Naples is known for having one of the best and biggest New Year's fireworks displays in Italy. Some smaller towns build a bonfire in the central square where villagers will congregate into the early morning. If you're near the coast, lake, or river you will hear boats and ships blowing their horns.

Guests of private or public parties are sometimes entertained with a game called "Tombola", similar to Bingo.

The New Year is also celebrated with *spumante* or *prosecco*, Italian sparkling wine. New Year's parties, whether public or private, will often last until sunrise in order to watch the first sunrise of the newborn year.

An old custom that is still followed in some places, especially in the south, is throwing your old things out the window to symbolize your readiness to accept the New Year. Wearing red underwear to ring in the New Year is said to bring you luck in the coming year.

Norway

"Lystig Jul" "God Jul"



Christmas is filled with traditions, rituals and customs based in part on a number of old superstitions that continue today. Old and young, friends and family draw close together through several weeks of festivities. People become more reflective and caring. In ancient times, Christmas was a mid-winter sacrificial feast - a festival of lights marking the transition from the dark winter to spring and summer. Christmas was a time for celebrating the harvest, fertility, birth and death. In the 900s King Haakon I decided that the heathen custom of drinking Jul (Yule) was to be moved to December 25th, in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The ancient Norse used the Yule log in their celebration of the return of the sun at winter solstice. "Yule" came from the Norse word hweol, meaning wheel. The Norse believed that the sun was a great wheel of fire that rolled towards and then away from the earth. Ever wonder why the family fireplace is such a central part of the typical Christmas scene? This tradition dates back to the Norse Yule log. It is probably also responsible for the popularity of log-shaped cheese, cakes, and desserts during the holidays.

Gradually, the pagan feast was Christianized. The name Jul was retained, but the holiday was dedicated to Jesus Christ. Christmas is thus a mixture of ancient heathen and Christian traditions. Today, Christmas is the most popular celebration of the year in the Christian church, and for families and friends.

In the past, barn doors were marked with a cross to keep evil spirits away. The cross was also used as a decoration on bread, as a pattern in the butter or on the ceiling over the Christmas table. Menus varied from district to district, but everywhere the table was laden with the best and finest food the household could offer. All the people living on the farm - servants, family and guests - ate Christmas dinner together. Often the food stayed out till the next day in case spirits and little people should visit the farm during the night. The nisse could not be forgotten; otherwise ill fortune could befall the farm.



Advent is described as the preparation for Christ's Nativity and marks the beginning of the church year. It comprises the four Sundays before Christmas Day on December 25th. Church leaders decided early on that it was to be a time of fasting to ensure

spiritual preparation. In the old Agrarian society children were fed little fat during Advent so they would appreciate the rich Christmas fare.

Advent is a time for preparations. Day-care centres, schools and families spend time preparing for the Christmas holiday. Around the country, a number of Christmas arts and crafts fairs are held to the delight of people who would rather buy homemade decorations and gifts.

Saint Lucia's Day - Dec. 13th



December 13th is celebrated in honour of Saint Lucy, the young girl who according to legend died a martyr in Sicily. St. Lucia's Day is celebrated in other countries including Sweden. This day is celebrated in schools, day-care centres, nursing homes and hospitals, with processions led by a young Lucia in a white robe with a crown of lights on her head and a candle in her hand. In Norway, this night used to be called Lussinatten. It was the longest night of the year and no work was to be done. From that night until Christmas, spirits, gnomes and trolls roamed the earth. Lussi, a feared enchantress, punished anyone who dared work. Legend also has it that farm animals talked to each other on Lussinatten, and that they were given additional feed on this longest night of the year.

During the midwinter feast in Norway, evergreen branches, mistletoe and holly were used long before the Christmas tree became a tradition. Not until the first half of the 1800s did this German tradition come to Norway. Today the Christmas tree has a central place in the celebration of Christmas in Norway. The tree, a spruce or pine, is usually bought in town or chopped from one's own forest. It must be fresh and green and fragrant, with a good shape and thick branches. Outdoor Christmas trees put up on squares, in parks and other places where people walk are lit the first Sunday in Advent, but the tree in the home is not lit until Christmas Eve. Year after year the tree is decorated with homemade and bought ornaments. Norwegian children proudly present the decorations they have made at school and these are hung on the tree.



Christmas is a festival of lights and candle-making was one of the annual and necessary steps in the preparations for Christmas. The job was often turned over to the oldest people on the farm. All fat from the slaughtering was saved. The tallow was melted and strained. Tallow from small animals made the finest candles. Wicks were made of linen or hemp. Airing out was forbidden to prevent bubbles or crooks from forming in the candles.



The candles would turn out better if the weather was good. The first batch of candles was the whitest and most beautiful and was therefore saved for holidays and parties. The way the candles burned on Christmas night presaged what would happen in the coming year. If a light went out it meant death for the person to whom the candle belonged. Even today making candles for the Advent wreath is a cherished tradition enjoyed by many.

SANTA CLAUS

At Christmas time, a little gnome or elf called Nisse, who guards all the farm animals, plays tricks on Norwegian children who do not place a bowl of special porridge for him. He is said to be a goat-like creature known as Julebukk or 'Christmas buck'. Julebukk dates back to Vikings and pagan traditions of worshipping Thor and his goat. In those times, a person dressed in a goatskin used to carry a goat head would suddenly burst in a party, 'die' sometime in the evening and then return to life.

Early Christians started associating goat with the devil and used it only during wild merry-making and euphoria. After the Middle Ages, the State and the Church forbade the game and a tamer form emerged.

The most characteristic features of the Norwegian Santa Claus "Julenisse" are his red stocking cap and long white beard. The nisse wears knee breeches, hand-knitted stockings, a Norwegian sweater and a homespun jacket. On top he wears a heavy fur coat - it can get cold in Norway in the winter. He is jolly and happy, but can also be stern. According to old superstition, the nisse was the original settler of the land. His primary duty was to protect the land and buildings. He kept the farm in good order and would be helpful as long as he got his Christmas porridge or Christmas beer and lefse on Christmas Eve. Many farms would make up a bed for the nisse on Christmas Eve and the honorary place at the table stood ready and waiting for him. He comes to the house with a sack of presents on Christmas Eve. When the Christmas porridge is put out in the barn on Christmas Eve, it is gone the next morning. It is best to stay on his good side. If you forget, he can stir up a lot of trouble.



CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24th



At 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve all the churches begin to ring in Christmas. After church, the family gathers for a holiday meal. Food traditions vary, but a porridge meal with an almond hidden in someone's bowl is on most menus. Before the family sits down to dinner a bowl of porridge with butter, sugar and cinnamon has to be put out for the nisse. Afterwards the family sits down to listen to the Christmas Gospel and then join hands to walk around the Christmas tree, singing carols. The children anxiously await the knock on the door, announcing the arrival of Julenissen with his sack full of gifts. Before he takes the presents out of the sack he

always asks "Are there any good children here?" Shop-bought presents have gradually replaced the homemade presents that used to be common.

After the presents are opened and the excitement subsides, the family sits down again for coffee and cake.

Christmas food traditions vary from district to district. Coastal traditions are different from those found inland and the traditions of Eastern Norway are different from those of Western Norway. Years ago, diets reflected locally available foods and the resources and bounty of nature. In the coastal districts and in North Norway, the traditional Christmas dinner naturally consists of lutefisk, cod or halibut. Traditionally lutefisk is served boiled, accompanied by cooked split peas, steamed potatoes, mustard and goat's cheese. In north-western Norway it is often prepared as a purée. In Eastern Norway pork ribs, pork patties, Christmas sausage and spiced cabbage are served. The tradition of pork butchery dates back to pagan times when a pig was sacrificed to Frøy, the god of fertility, during the Jolu celebrations. Spit-roasted, it was later shared among all the members of the community during a big banquet. To this day, it's traditional to butcher a pig, though the ways in which the pork is prepared depends on family or local preference: roast piglet, pressed pork, roast pork with sour cabbage, smoked ham, pickled pig's feet... Western Norway supplies mutton ribs served with mashed kohlrabi, while easterners like to have them grilled with crispy rind.



Lutefisk



Pinnekjøtt



Pork ribs



Christmas sausage



Pork patties



Cloudberry cream



Crème caramel



Yule log cake



Lefse

Norwegians retain a great attachment to the tradition of the seven Christmas cakes and feel obligated to make them themselves. The most typical cake is "julekake," a sweet bread studded with raisins, candied citrus peel and cardamom, whose fragrance fills the house. Krumkake are thin pancakes that are rolled into a cone while still hot. The name literally means "crumb cake" since they are so crumbly. Generally served filled with cream or fruit, they are a special treat for the Christmas season.

Desserts range from cloudberry cream, crème caramel and creamed rice to fruit. A holiday cookie called Sand Kager is quite popular, which is prepared using butter, sugar, flour and chopped almonds.



"Krumkake"



"Julekake"



"Sand kager"



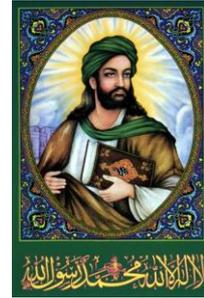
Christmas in Norway is known as "Jul"; thus a special "Juleøl", or Christmas beer, is brewed for the holidays. In the old days it was made on the farms, though in modern times it is made by breweries. The Juleøl tradition can be traced back to the time when horns filled with beer during the Joulu festivities were dedicated to the Norse gods Odin, Frøy and Njord. But when modern-day Norwegians time lift their glasses in the traditional Scandinavian "skål" (pronounced scawl), they likely give little thought to their Viking forebears who hoisted the sacrificial beer to drink for peace and a good year to come. After beer, it is aquavit that goes best with the Christmas meal. It could be said that this potato-based liquor is the Norwegian national drink. The well-known Norwegian Linie-akevitt is shipped to Australia and back to mature in the perfect way and to achieve the finest flavour. It gets the name Linie because it crosses the equator (The Line) on its journey.



While in many countries the holiday festivities end on Epiphany, in Norway they continue until January 13, the twentieth day of Christmas, and the feast day of St. Canute. Then, according to a saying, "twentieth-day Canute drives away Christmas."

Turkey "Noeliniz Kutlu Olsun"

In Turkey the majority of people are Muslim, who do not commemorate the birth of Jesus on December. Although their sacred book (the Koran) mentions Jesus, the most important figure is the Prophet Mahomet.



In Turkey, there are interesting New Year's Eve customs and superstitions.

At year's end, most Turkish cities will be decorated all over with lights. Shops throughout the country decorate their windows with green trees, white snowballs and red stockings and many other traditional Christmas ornaments.



Christmas in Istanbul

New Year's Eve is celebrated on Dec. 31 together with friends and family. Many clubs, cafes and bars often have special New Year's Eve programs with shows and events.

At home, however, people may have a small party with music and games or TV shows for the elderly. Food should never be missing, of course. Furthermore, the tradition of gift giving has started to find its way into some families, probably as an imported custom from the European Christmas Eve tradition. There will be lots of sweets and candies and maybe a New Year's Eve cake, which, at this meaningful evening, should traditionally include chestnut (kestane).

Although fireworks are generally a great tradition in Turkey when celebrating something, these are mainly organized by clubs, companies or municipalities. Private households don't usually purchase them. However, homes are decorated with candles, confetti and festoons and - replacing the cracker - people burn sparklers at midnight to welcome the New Year.

Common superstitions

To ensure, for instance, that the New Year is prosperous and peaceful, you may unlock your door at midnight and sprinkle salt at the entrance of your house. Salt symbolizes abundance or wealth in many cultures.

... And then there's the lottery!

The national lottery (Milli Piyango) becomes more popular at the end of the year. Draws are on every 9th, 19th and 29th day of the month. There are three different ticket prices, full (tam), half (yarım) and quarter (çeyrek), which you can get from street vendors as well as at lunch counters and newsstands.

Some of the dishes for dinner that are organised with family and friends are pilaf *dish*, *dolma*, hot *borek*, *Lacum Rahat* (a candy), *baklava* and various other eggplant dishes, topped with warm pita, *salep* and *boza*.

Asure (also known as ashura, ashure, Noah's Dessert, or Noah's Pudding) is a regular Christmas tradition in some Turkish-American households. Tradition holds that asure is the meal Noah made from all the stored fruits and grains on the Ark after the Great Flood subsided. The multitude of ingredients symbolises gratitude and sharing of life's bounty.

The legend regarding the origins of asure goes as follows: "When the Flood finally subsided and the Noah's Ark settled on Mount Ararat in Agri, those on the vessel wanted to hold a celebration as an expression of the gratitude they felt towards the God. But the food storages of the ship were practically empty and so they made a soup with all the remaining ingredients they could find and thus ended up with the asure". Following the legend, asure is today prepared by cooking together 15 or more ingredients. It is made of chickpeas, dry white beans, rice, water, dried apricot, dried figs, raisins (seedless), orange, sugar, rose water, walnuts (not crushed) and pomegranate.

Yeni yiliniz kutlu olsun! Happy New Year to everyone!



"Baklava"



"Borek"



"Dolma"



"Pilaf"



Eggplant



"Ayran"



Turkish Delight (*Lacun Rahat*)



"Asure"



Pita



"Boza"