

Yule in Denmark – Christmas in Denmark

In this video you can see an average Danish family holding Yuletide

The mother is called Lykke (Felicity), she is a service worker at the hospital, the father is called Kent, he is a teacher at the technical college

The family lives in a typical Danish terraced house in the outskirts of Odense

The video has been recorded during the Christmas 2005 and shows white Christmas in Denmark

No, to be quite honest the snow did not come until the second day of Christmas

These pictures were taken during the afternoon of December 24th – Christmas Eve, as as you can see the sun was shining from a blue sky.

In Denmark there is according to statistics a white Christmas every tenth year

Inside the house there has been decorated for Christmas with lots of pixies.

Real pixies were always male. The first time pixies are described is in 981 in the saga of Olav Tryggvesons.

The Christmas pixy as we know it comes from 1836 and was invented by the painter Constantin Hansen.

The pixy is a heathen creature and in most of the Danish churches it is not allowed to decorate with pixies.

Jul (Yule) is not a Christian word either, but comes from around year 200 to 300. 1700 years ago jul meant a feast being held around the time when the days grew longer again, in other words solstice time.

The family's Christmas cards are kept in this Christmas card holder, which has been embroidered by Rikke, Lykke and Kent's daughter.

She has also embroidered these two advent calendars that she has given to her mother and father. Every year she hangs four presents onto each calendar, these may be opened on the four Sundays before Christmas.

It is now the 23rd of December, the night before Christmas Eve, and the Christmas tree is going to be decorated.

The tree is decorated by Rikke, Victoria, and Kasper

Rikke is 29 years old, she is married to Brian and they have two children; Victoria who is three years old, and Elisabeth who is half a year old.

Brian is a naval lieutenant and is not home for Christmas.

Rikke is a teacher, the same is her little brother, Kasper. He is 24 years old and graduated as a teacher this summer.

Lykke is sitting with Elisabeth watching the tree being decorated.

The Christmas tree is decorated with a star on top, glass balls and candle lights on the branches.

The family is having goose on Christmas Eve. In Denmark the typical Christmas meal consists of duck, pork roast or goose.

Victoria helps peeling the eggs. The Christmas tree has been decorated and is ready for the next day – Christmas Eve.

The family already gathers in the afternoon to enjoy coffee, wine and beer.

Together they watch the Disney Christmas Show, it is a tradition in many Danish families to watch this particular show during the afternoon of December 24th

When the family has dined the presents are brought in and the candle lights on the Christmas tree are lit.

The custom of having a Christmas tree goes back to Germany and is 200 years old, but already during the Viking era branches from fur trees were brought in to celebrate the solstice.

Now it's time for taking photos of Elisabeth, Victoria, and Rikke. The photos will be e-mailed to Brian who is on the Faroe Islands on board a navy vessel.

"This is quite incredible"

"Victoria, please sit still"

"Victoria sit still"

"The very last photo"

"Could you smile then?"

"Smile to the photographer"

"No, a real smile, Victoria!"

"Say Cheese"

"Cheese"

"With open eyes!"

"Cheese"

Finally it's time to dance round the Christmas tree

Translation of chant:

What a tremendous hustle and bustle

It's cold and one has to walk to get warm

The lights are lit at four o'clock

It has to be a real night
In the middle of the street trees and fruit are sold
Watch the shop, how wonderful it shines
Products are available by thousands
Just imagine below cost price
Price, price, price, price, price, price
Just imagine below cost price
Price, price, price, price, price, price

After the dance round the Christmas tree the presents are distributed

“Mum, this is for you, mum”

The next two days the family has Christmas lunches

The table has been decorated and is ready.

In the kitchen Lykke is cooking the meals that comprise warm dishes: Meat balls, filet of fish, sausage accompanied with candied potatoes that are scrambled in butter and sugar

Most dishes come with rye bread

In Denmark one always starts with herrings and other fish dishes.

The drinks are traditionally beer and aquavit – especially for the herrings, but nowadays many prefer to have wine.

The children’s Christmas presents are assembled – so also the grownups have great pleasure from these.

The days of Christmas usually ends with a card game or other games where everyone can participate.

Translation of chant:

Oh, how soft and nice
What a wonderful cap
It’ll ensure granddad
Against frost and cold
Lotte, she can be so proud
Just imagine she has held the yarn.
Hanne cannot do so
She can only knit

Children, now I’m growing tired
And you get no more
Mother is in the kitchen

Now it's her time to treat you
That's why she gets this purse
Lift it, it is very heavy
Christmas goes on for long
Costs a lot of money

Full song text available at text: www.languages.dk/archive/video_data/DK/DK08_DK.pdf