Scandinavian Christmas Traditions

Get into the holiday spirit with activities that can be passed down to the next generations.

BY TAYLOR HUGO

From powdery snow and handmade gifts to caroling and the smell of lefse baking on the griddle, there is something so magical about Christmas. With the abundance of family gatherings throughout the winter season, it’s also the perfect time to teach little ones about Scandinavian holiday traditions, and maybe even create some of your own — while sipping a toasty beverage (glogg for you, hot cocoa for the kids).

Activities for Young People

PRESCHOOL

Read Together

Embrace the Icelandic tradition of jólakokkinið (Christmas Book Flood) by gifting and reading books to your little ones on Christmas Eve.

ELEMENTARY AGES

Decorate the Tree

Make ornaments for the Christmas tree by weaving paper, felt or velvet ribbon together to form a traditional Scandinavian woven heart (see resources at right).

EXPAND IT

Learn and practice other Scandinavian Christmas terms throughout the season, such as julenissen (Santa), God jul (Merry Christmas) and juletre (Christmas tree).

TEENAGERS

Bake a Cake

Mix up some fun in the kitchen while crafting a kransekake with your teen. The traditional, tiered holiday dessert is sure to be the showstopper of your Christmas spread.

EXPAND IT

Encourage your teen to lead a family and friend dessert exchange with other Scandinavian Christmas delicacies, like krumkake or pepperkaker. Have each participant include a card with the recipe and a short lesson on the history of the dessert.

Learn More

“Handmade Scandinavian Christmas” by Hege Barnholt

Scandinavian Woven Heart Template

northpole.com/craftcottage/scandinavian-woven-hearts

Sons of Norway’s Language Lesson 15: Christmas Words

sonsfonwry.com

Kransekake Recipe

sweetpaulmag.com/food/kransekake