

Herzlich Willkommen... to the

**German
Australian
Playschool's
End of Year
Concert**



German Parents Association Incorporated
ABN 227 9486 8994

Frequently Asked Questions about Nikolaus

Based on text from a German newspaper in English, www.thelocal.de

Is Nikolaus the same as Santa Claus?

Though they have similar outfits, *Nikolaus* is not to be confused with Santa Claus, who Germans call the *Weihnachtsmann*, or Father Christmas. They are two different people. In fact, many religious families try to focus more on *Nikolaus* earlier in December to ensure that Christmas is actually about Jesus' birth, and not presents from an Americanised and commercialised Santa.

Who is Nikolaus, then?

Each year on December 6, Germans remember the death of Nicholas of Myra (now the Anatolia region of modern Turkey), who died on that day in 346. He was a Greek Christian bishop known for miracles and giving gifts secretly. He is now the patron saint of little children, sailors, merchants and students. Known as Nicholas the Wonderworker for his miracles, he was made a saint. With his red cloak, gift giving, and mid-winter visits to children, it is widely believed that Saint Nikolaus is at the root of the legend of Santa Claus, along with a mix of myths and legends from other cultures.

What does his outfit look like?

He is usually pictured with a long white beard, a bishop's mitre and a red cloak, sometimes with a sack over his shoulder and a bishop's crosier (staff) in his hand.



The Nikolaus who visits us at Spielwelt has no long white beard, so that the children can clearly see his face. We find he is much less frightening to young children like that.

Why do children set their shoes out on the night of December 5th?

The custom began because the historical St. Nicholas had a reputation for leaving secret gifts, such as coins, in people's shoes overnight. Kids traditionally put out their boots ("Nikolaus-Stiefel"), though shoes or stockings will suffice for those without boots.

And do the boots have to be polished first?

Definitely! Dirty boots are unacceptable. Children polish their boots to show they've been good. They usually place just one boot outside their door so they don't appear too greedy, though.



One polished boot: Check! What happens next?

According to the legend, *Nikolaus* comes in the middle of the night on a donkey or a horse and leaves little treats – like coins, chocolate, oranges, nuts or small toys - for good children.

What do naughty children get?

This depends on different family traditions. Sometimes *Nikolaus* only leaves a branch or stick (“Rute”) in the boot, ostensibly for spankings. In other families, a man dressed as St. Nicholas might visit the family to question the children about their behaviour. Perhaps he might even bring along his sinister-looking side-kick, *Knecht Ruprecht*, who according to some stories will put naughty children in his bag and carry them off.

Of course, we have no naughty children in Spielwelt, so it is treats and encouragement for all.

Does Nikolaus come again on Christmas Eve then?

No. Santa Claus, or the *Weihnachtsmann*, usually comes to German homes – often in person – on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. In more religious homes, the children get presents purported to have been brought by the Christkind (the Christ child).

All these celebrations! Don't kids get tired of getting presents?

There are multiple advantage to speaking two languages, not the least of which is celebrating the holidays of BOTH cultures! German-Australian children get to celebrate Nikolaus on Dec 6, Weihnachten on Dec 24, and have their Aussie Christmas on Dec 25 each year. And no, of course they don't get tired of getting presents!

Frohen Nikolaus!

Sing with us, in German!



Kling, Glöckchen

Kling, Glöckchen, klinge-linge-ling,
kling, Glöckchen kling!

Laßt mich ein, ihr Kinder,
ist so kalt der Winter;
öffnet mir die Türen!
Laßt mich nicht erfrieren!

T: Karl Enslin (1814-1875) nach einer Volksweise

Ring, bells, ring!

Ring, little bells, ting-a-ling-a-ling
Ring, little bells, ring!

Let me in, please children,
The winter is so cold;
Open up the door!
Don't let me freeze!

T: Karl Enslin (1814-1875) from folklore



O Tannenbaum

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein auch im Winter, wenn es
schneit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
wie treu sind deine Blätter!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!
Wie oft hat nicht zur Weihnachtszeit
Ein Baum von dir mich hoch erfreut!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Dein Kleid will mich was lehren:
Die Hoffnung und Beständigkeit
Gibt Trost und Kraft zu jeder Zeit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Das soll dein Kleid mich lehren.

*TEXT: Ernst Anschütz, 1824
MELODIE: Volksweise (traditional)*



O Christmas Tree

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches!
In beauty green will always grow
Through summer sun and winter
snow.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How lovely are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
You are the tree most loved!
How often you give us delight
In brightly shining Christmas light!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
You are the tree most loved!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
Your beauty green will teach me
That hope and love will ever be
The way to joy and peace for me.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas tree,
Your beauty green will teach me.

Laßt uns froh und munter sein

Laßt uns froh und munter sein
Und uns recht von Herzen freu'n!
Lustig, lustig, trallerallera,
||: Bald ist Nikolausabend da! :||

Dann stell ich den Teller auf,
Nikolaus legt gewiß was drauf.

Wenn ich schlaf, dann träume ich:
Jetzt bringt's Nikolaus was für mich.

Wenn ich aufgestanden bin,
Lauf ich schnell zum Teller hin.

Volksweise

Let us be happy and lively

Let us be happy and lively
And really be happy from our hearts!
Jolly, jolly, tra-la-la-la-la
Soon it will be Nikolaus Day Eve!

I'll put a plate out [at night]
Nikolaus will certainly put something
on it.

When I sleep, I will dream:
Nikolaus is bringing something for
me.

When I wake up,
I'll run quickly to my plate [and see!]

Traditional

Stille Nacht

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht
Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
alles schläft, einsam wacht
nur das traute hochheilige Paar,
holder Knabe im lockigen Haar.
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

*T: Joseph Franz Mohr 1818; M: Franz Xaver Gruber
1818*

