

## SYMBOLS OF SANTA CLAUS AROUND THE WORLD

Other countries have different symbols of Santa or other gift givers during the Christmas holidays:

- Italy –Babbo Natale, which means Father Christmas. He is Santa and comes on Christmas Eve.
- Spain, Puerto Rico and Mexico –The 3 Kings come on January 6th. Children leave their shoes under the Christmas tree on January 5th evening, to find treats left for them the next morning.
- Switzerland and Austria-Christkind or the Christ Child.
- England—Father Christmas\France—Pere Noel, Father Christmas and Christ Child
- Morocco—Black Petr
- Japan—Santa Clause, Santa or Santa no ojisan, meaning “Uncle Santa”
- Sweden—Jultomen
- Norwegian—Julenissen
- Netherlands—Kerstman
- Finland –Joulupukki
- Dutch—Sinter Klaas
- Russia –Grandfather Frost
- German—Kris Kringle (means Christ Kind or Christ Like)
- China—Shengdan Laoren

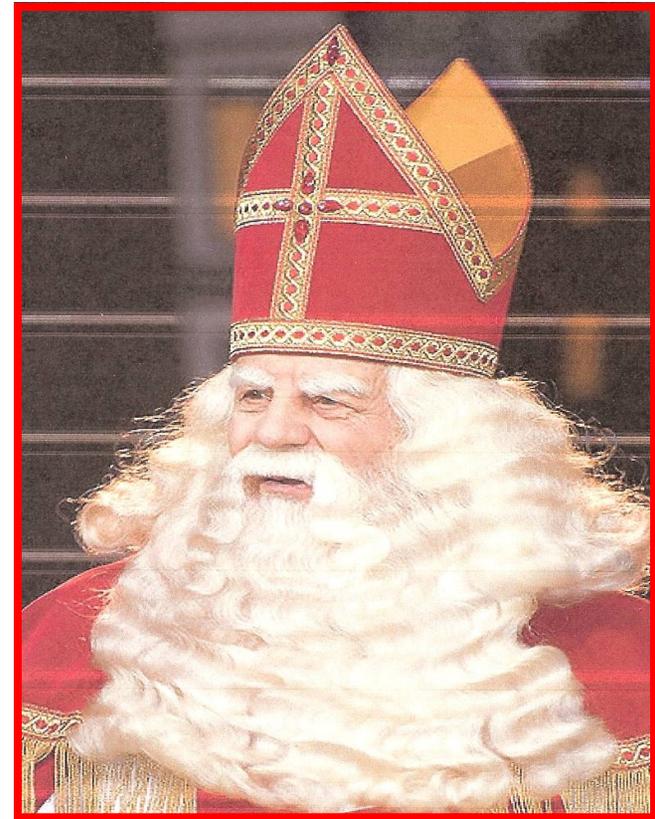
In the United States and Canada, Santa Claus lives in the North Pole. This area up north is owned by Canada. Many children have fun looking for their presents from Santa under the tree and in their stockings each year. They believe he flies around on Christmas Eve in his sleigh full of presents, pulled by his flying reindeer. It seems to make Christmas a little more fun and somewhat magical.

\*(excerpted from [www.suite101.com](http://www.suite101.com))



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## Saint Nicholas (friend of Children, giver of gifts)



### St. Nicholas Prayer

**Almighty God, who in thy love didst give to thy servant Nicholas of Myra a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea:**

**Grant, we pray thee, that thy Church may never cease to work for the happiness of children, the safety of sailors, the relief of the poor, and the help of those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. Amen**

## THE LEGEND BEGINS

\*Children of all ages have marveled in Santa Claus for years. Have you ever wondered where this all started and why? Where did the white beard and red suit come from?

Did you like Santa Claus as a child? If so, did you wonder where the story came from—the jolly old man with a red suit, white beard and the “Ho Ho Ho”? Actually, there really was a Santa Claus. Of course, the story has been passed down from years ago and there are some stories about him that are conflicting. Santa is what he is today because of many people in the past. Between myths, stories and biographies, it took awhile to create the jolly little man who we know as Santa Claus today.

## WHERE DID THE LEGEND OF SANTA BEGIN?

Saint Nicholas was born around 300 A.D. to a wealthy family. Unfortunately, his parents died when he was very young, from an outbreak of a plague. He was raised in an orphanage. He was noted of being special, with his warm heart and unusual generosity. He was even the youngest priest of his time, at age 17. Later he became the Bishop of Myra (which is Turkey today), and he was named St. Nicholas.

Since he came from a prosperous family, he liked to share his wealth with the needy. He was especially known for his love and generosity to children. He left presents for children, who were good. Many people believed that he could perform miracles, bring people back from the dead and had other special powers. In fact, he became the patron saint of Russia. He was remembered for his generosity and kindness. The Bishop’s long, white beard and his luxurious red cape was how he was pictured.



## HOW SANTA’S TRADITION CARRIED ON

Throughout Europe, it seemed that everyone was very dedicated to him. In Belgium, he was known as the patron saint of children and travelers. In Greece, he was known as the patron saint of sailors. In France, he was known as the patron saint of Lawyers. Around the 12th century, they made a holiday in his honor called St. Nicholas day. It was celebrated with gift giving and it was on December 6th because that’s the day he supposedly was born on and also the day he died. Some people still celebrate this day and gifts are exchanged.

Even though the memory of St. Nicholas lost its popularity in Europe, the Dutch still carried out this legend, however, they called him Sint Nikolaas, which was later transformed to Sinterklaas. The Dutch children left their wooden shoes by the fireplace. The good children were rewarded with treats that were left in their shoes by Sinterklaas. During the 17th century, the Dutch brought the same tradition to America. It was at that time, when his name was changed to Santa Claus.

## THE NEW IMAGE OF SANTA

Clement C. Moore wrote a poem for his children titled, “A Visit from Saint Nicholas.” It was published as “Twas the Night before Christmas,” in 1823, and it was in his description that gave us the image that Santa Claus was a jolly little chubby man. The artist, Thomas Nast, created a piece of work in 1870 called, “Santa and his Works.” This was the first association to Santa making toys. He used Moore’s descriptive poem to create the first photo of Santa Claus. Then in 1930, Coca Cola advertised with a photo of Santa Claus. There he was pictured with the long, white beard, the red suit with the white, furry cuffs, the black belt and boots and this amazing laugh. We have remembered him that way ever since.

