

Christmas Traditions in the Philippines

- **Long Christmas Celebration:** People in the Philippines start celebrating Christmas as early as **September**! The official celebrations begin on **December 16th**, with special early morning masses called **Misa de Gallo** or **Simbang Gabi**. The celebrations go on until **Epiphany** (the Feast of the Three Kings) on the first Sunday of January.

- **Misa de Gallo:** This is a special tradition where many Filipinos attend **nine pre-dawn or early morning masses** leading up to Christmas Day. It's a time for prayer and celebration.



- **Christmas Decorations:** One of the most famous decorations in the Philippines is the **parol**, a star-shaped lantern made from bamboo and colourful paper. It represents the star that guided the Wise Men to Jesus. Parols light up homes and streets during Christmas.

- **Christmas Eve (Noche Buena):** Christmas Eve is a big event! Many people stay awake all night, going to church for the last **Simbang Gabi** mass. Afterward, they have a huge feast called **Noche Buena**, which means "Good Night." Families eat together with lots of food like:

- **Lechon** (roasted pig)
- **Ham**
- **Fruit salad**
- **Rice cakes** (bibingka and puto bumbong)
- **Sweets and drinks**



- **Santa R-Kayma Klaws:** A very special Filipino Santa Claus is **Santa R-Kayma Klaws**. He even has a **giant motor sleigh** (a bus!) and a **reindeer farm** in the Philippines!



- **Different Ways to Say Merry Christmas:** People in the Philippines speak many languages, and here's how to say **"Merry Christmas"** in a few of them:
 - **Tagalog:** "Maligayang Pasko"
 - **Cebuano:** "Maayong Pasko"
 - **Ilocano:** "Naragsak nga Paskua"
 - **Ilonggo:** "Malipayon nga Pascua"

Fun Facts:

- Christmas in the Philippines lasts for many weeks, and people love to decorate with **star-shaped parols**!
- **Santa R-Kayma Klaws** brings Christmas joy to children in the Philippines, especially in poor areas.