Saint Nicholas Day

On the 6th of December, Saint Nicholas Day is celebrated in countries like Germany, Poland, Holland and Belgium. Although it is typically a European holiday, it is also celebrated in North America in some immigrant communities who have continued the tradition.

Saint Nicholas was known for giving gifts secretly. When he passed through a village he would leave coins in the shoes of children who had left their shoes out for him. He is considered to be the model for Santa Claus, which comes from the Dutch, *Sinterklaas*.

According to the legend, every year Saint Nicholas would pass through the countryside visiting schools and homes to find out which children had been good. Then, on December 5th, the eve of Sinterklaas, he would visit each home and leave gifts in the shoes of children who had been good. The next day, Saint Nicholas Day, the children would wake up to find the gifts he had left.

Traditional Saint Nicholas gifts include fruit, like mandarin oranges or clementines, and nuts.

Other treats include hot chocolate, speculos or spiced biscuits, and chocolate letters, shaped like the first letter of the child's name.

Today, many cities celebrate with a Saint Nicholas parade, and often families gather together to have a special meal.