Las Navidades are celebrated throughout the Spanish-speaking world with family gatherings and special meals. Celebrations start in mid-December and, in some countries, extend to January 6.

Many families gather the night of December 24, or la Nochebuena, to share a special meal of traditional foods and drinks that vary depending on the country. Tamale, empanadas, and buñuelos are served in many countries. In Spain, there is turkey, or pavo, and turron. In Argentina and Chile, where it is summer, people eat cold foods and salads.

The tradition of giving and receiving gifts also forms a part of las Navidades. In some countries, families exchange gifts at midnight on la Nochebuena, while in others children receive gifts the morning of December 25, and in other countries the gifts appear the morning of January 6. Often gifts are given primarily to children.

Un desfile navideño The holiday parade in Panama City takes place in mid-December.

La noche de rábanos On the night of December 23, elaborate carvings made from radishes, or rábanos, are on display in Oaxaca’s central plaza. The figures include people, animals, and even entire scenes. This unique tradition has been celebrated for over 100 years.

Las empanadas Dancers dress as empanadas in Buenos Aires. These meat-filled pies are especially enjoyed during las Navidades.