



Christmas in Kenya

How does two big days of partying with the whole family sound to you? That's how Kenyans typically celebrate their Christmas! In Swahili, the greeting is "Heri ya Krismasi" (Merry Christmas) and the response is "Wewe pia" (You also).

Families Far Apart

Most Kenyans in the cities have left their families in the rural areas for work or study reasons, so many people start the holiday season by travelling back to the villages to their parents' home.

Christmas Eve

By December 24, everyone has usually gathered in the rural home. The home is decorated in the morning with flowers and a Cyprus tree. People attend church in the evening, for midnight mass. On returning from church, the party starts! There's no time for sleep. Plenty of singing occurs, starting with the traditional songs of the family's tribe and finishing with the Christmas carols we all know. Popular Christmas foods include a barbecue which can be a goat, sheep, beef or chicken. This is eaten with rice and *chapati* flat bread.

Boxing Day

Boxing Day, December 26, is the day for giving gifts. Families usually give each other small gifts on this day.

Christmas Day

Some people will also go to church on Christmas morning. Most people, however, are still partying and the celebrations continue through the day with more eating, drinking, singing and catching up with family members. For many, this is the only time of the year that they have the opportunity to see their families, so it is a very important time.