



Creatures of the Winter Solstice

Many Canadians and Americans are familiar with Santa Claus, but there are many different creatures that appear in countries around the world to visit children. While the American Santa Claus is slowly taking over the other creatures, many still persist to this day!

Name	Country	Where does the creature live the rest of the year?	Popular Image	Other notes
Santa Claus	Canada	North Pole		Santa Claus was given Canadian citizenship in 2008, issued a Canadian passport in 2013, and has his own Canadian postal code (HOH OHO)
Santa Claus	United States	North Pole, Alaska		

<p>Sinterklaas</p>	<p>The Netherlands, Belgium</p>	<p>Spain</p>		<p>Sinterklass arrives in Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Antwerp (Belgium) in a steamboat from Spain.</p>
<p>Père Noël / Papa Noël</p>	<p>France and French-speaking regions</p>	<p>Lapland/North Pole</p>		<p>Sometimes accompanied by <i>Père Fouettard</i>, who punishes naughty children.</p> <p>Children leave wine instead of milk on Christmas Eve.</p> <p>Has a donkey at his side rather than flying reindeer.</p>

<p>Jultomte</p>	<p>Sweden</p>	<p>Lives in a nearby forest, or in the north of Sweden, or Tomteland.</p>		<p>Evolved from a gnomish creature, but has largely merged with the American image of “Santa Claus.”</p>
<p>Ded Moroz</p>	<p>Russia & Eastern Slavic Nations</p>	<p>Veliky Ustyug, Vologda Oblast</p>		<p>Originally banned by the USSR (Soviet Union), but gradually was adopted.</p> <p>In Many Eastern Slavic nations, Ded Moroz is accompanied by the “snow maiden,” his granddaughter and helper.</p> <p>There are multiple variations of Den Moraz across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.</p>

Name	Country	Where does the creature live the rest of the year?	Popular Image	Other notes
Sheng Dan Lao Ren	China	A fairytale Arctic Christmas Village in China's North Pole.		<p>A fun, cultural character rather than a religious one, popular in commercial settings like shopping malls.</p> <p>He's often accompanied by female "sisters" (not elves) and plays musical instruments (saxophone, trumpet).</p>
Noel Baba	Turkey	Demre, Turkey		<p>Noel Baba is expected to leave gifts under a "New Year Tree" (a pine tree) set up in homes for December 31st.</p> <p>Noel Baba does not use reindeer (who are not native to Turkey). One statue of Noel Baba in Demre depicts him on a raft pulled by sea horses.</p>

<p>Joulupukki</p>	<p>Finland</p>	<p>Korvatunturi, Lapland, or Rovaniemi, Arctic Circle</p>		<p>The name joulupukki literally means 'Christmas goat' or 'Yule goat' in Finnish.</p>
<p>Father Christmas</p>	<p>England</p>	<p>The historical English figure was originally a personification of the Christmas season, not a gift-giver who lived in a specific place.</p>		<p>Even though Santa Claus is sometimes called Father Christmas, they are separate characters with their own distinct histories.</p>