

Winter celebrations: Epiphany

Many holidays and festivals are celebrated in London by different communities. Take a quick look at Epiphany then try an activity inspired by this winter celebration.



Epiphany is a Christian holiday on 6 January, 12 days after Christmas. On this day, people celebrate when three kings visited Jesus and his family after he was born.

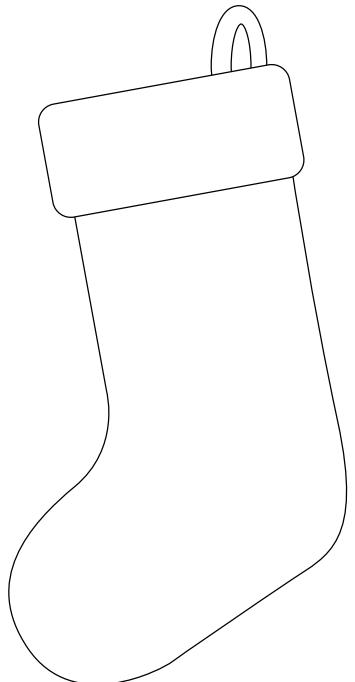
There are many different traditions and customs to celebrate this day around the world. Other names for this festival include Three Kings' Day and Little Christmas.

In Italy, some people celebrate by remembering the legend of La Befana.

Tradition says that La Befana was a wonderful baker. She created cakes that were as light as air, and her delicious biscuits always made people smile. On the way to find the new-born Jesus, the three kings came to her house, ate her treats and told La Befana where they were going. When they left, La Befana decided she wanted to follow them. She packed sweets and biscuits as gifts for the baby but she could not catch up with the kings. So instead, on 6 January, she gives away the gifts she packed for her journey to children who leave out stockings.

What gifts would you want in your stocking? What would you put in someone else's?

Can you decorate
this stocking?



Special treats

Sugar, spices and other sweet treats were once very expensive and only eaten during special occasions. This is because some foods and spices could only be grown in certain countries. Many people could only eat these goods after they had travelled across the world by ship. What spices do you have at home? Do you know where they come from?

Once spices arrived in London they were stored in warehouses, like the Museum of London Docklands, then sent to shops across the country.

Try at home

Can you make pretend treats as tasty as La Befana's biscuits? Make your favourite homemade playdough. Then, mix in different spices or add essences, rose water or herbs to create different scents. Mould them into different shapes to see what treats you can create.

Don't have your own play dough recipe? Use the one below. Remember to ask an adult for help.

1. Mix the flour, cream of tartar and salt together in a bowl
2. In another bowl, mix the water, food colouring (optional) and oil
3. Add the water mix to the flour mix and stir together until a dough begins to form
4. Mix together until the dough is cooled. Then use your hands to knead the dough until you are happy with how it feels.

Tip: Add more flour if you feel it is too thin or more water if it is too thick

Once you are done playing, store your dough in a closed container in the refrigerator to keep it fresh.

You will need:

1 cup of flour
½ cup salt
2 tbsp cream of tartar
1 cup of boiling water
1½ tbsp oil,
Food colouring (optional)