

# USEFUL VOCABULARY TO SPEND CHRISTMAS IN BARCELONA



## GALET

A basket-shaped pasta shell eaten as part of the traditional broth, *escudella nadalenca*, on 25th December as part of Christmas dinner. Galets come in different sizes, but if you want to make a typical *escudella* you'll have to opt for the larger version. Interestingly enough, *escudella* has recently been named the Catalans' favourite dish. Maybe it's something to do with the galets?



## FIRA DE SANTA LLÚCIA

The city's oldest Christmas market and a firm favourite with the locals. This bustling fair is located in front of the cathedral and is a haven for people who love Christmas. Whatever you're looking for, at the Fira de Santa Llúcia you'll find the perfect Christmas decoration. We recommend you pay two visits, one during the day and another at night. The fair has its own unique and special charm at any time of the day.



## CAGANER

One of the most entertaining characters from the Nativity scene and one of the Catalans' best-loved Christmas figures. The traditional caganer is usually depicted as a shepherd wearing a white shirt and Catalan cap, or *barretina*, who is crouching down among the bushes answering a call of nature. If you're visiting any of the Christmas fairs you'll be surprised to find fun celebrity spin-offs of the traditional figurine.



## NEULES

These elongated, cylindrical sweet wafers are the stars of the table after the Christmas meal. Made from flour, water and sugar they are usually washed down with a glass of cava or dessert wine. They are the perfect pairing with *torró nougat* and are the best way to help digest the Christmas fare.



## NADALA

Nadales are popular Catalan songs performed during the Christmas holidays. *El desembre congelat* (The Frozen December), *El dimoni escuat* (The Devil with no Tail), *El 25 de desembre* (The 25th December) and *El Rabadà* (The Shepherd) are some of the most famous ones. During the Christmas season you'll hear them everywhere: in schools, in the street, on TV... Don't be alarmed if you hear someone singing "Fum, Fum, Fum"\* (Smoke, Smoke, Smoke) at the top of their voice... there's nothing burning!

\* "Fum, Fum, Fum" is the refrain of one of the most popular Catalan nadales.



## CAVALCADA

Barcelona is decked out in all its finery to welcome the Three Kings: Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar. A spectacular procession with floats and carriages fills the city streets with magic on the night of 5th January. All the children eagerly await the Kings to hand them their letters and keep their fingers crossed that they won't bring them any coal\*...

\* If you've been naughty during the year, the Three Kings, who see everything, won't bring you presents but candy coal instead.



## CANELONS

Rolls of pasta stuffed with meat or another mixture and covered in béchamel sauce. They are usually served as a main course during lunch on 26th December, Saint Stephen's Day. According to tradition, they are filled with the left-overs from the escudella, but each household has its own special recipe which is passed down from generation to generation as one of the most zealously guarded family secrets.



## TIÓ

A log with a smiley face wearing the traditional Catalan cap, the barretina, and covered in a warm blanket which we feed on the days leading up to Christmas with the finest foods from our larder. On Christmas Eve, after a lovely meal, it's time for the kids' most eagerly awaited moment: they have to beat the tió with a stick so that he 'poops' sweets and gifts. As you beat the tió, don't forget to sing the song: "Poop Tió, almonds and nougat, don't poop sardines because they're too salty, poop nougat because it's better!"



## PESSEBRE

A small-scale depiction of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem featuring the adoration of the shepherds and Wise Men. It contains clay figurines of the characters present at the Nativity and is decorated with natural plant materials including cork, tiny logs and moss. Families usually place the pessebre in the dining room as a Christmas decoration. If you decide to build your own Nativity scene don't forget to include the caganer (hidden away behind a bush) and a river made from silver paper. A true Christmas classic!



## TORRÓ

The Christmas sweet treat par excellence and guest of honour after the festive meals. Traditional *torró* is made from almonds, honey and eggs although it is produced in many different flavours and in soft or hard varieties. One thing's for sure, you'll be spoilt for choice!



## TORTELL DE REIS

A round or oval ring cake made from brioche dough, filled with marzipan and topped with candied fruit (cherries, oranges...) and nuts (pine nuts or chopped almonds), which is eaten for dessert on 6th January. At first sight it may look like just a cake, but don't be fooled by appearances, the Tortell de Reis has a secret inside. If you find a small figure of a king while you're enjoying your slice of cake, you'll get to wear the cardboard crown that comes with it, but if you find a broad bean you'll have to dig into your wallet and pay for the cake!

# HAPPY CHRISTMAS!