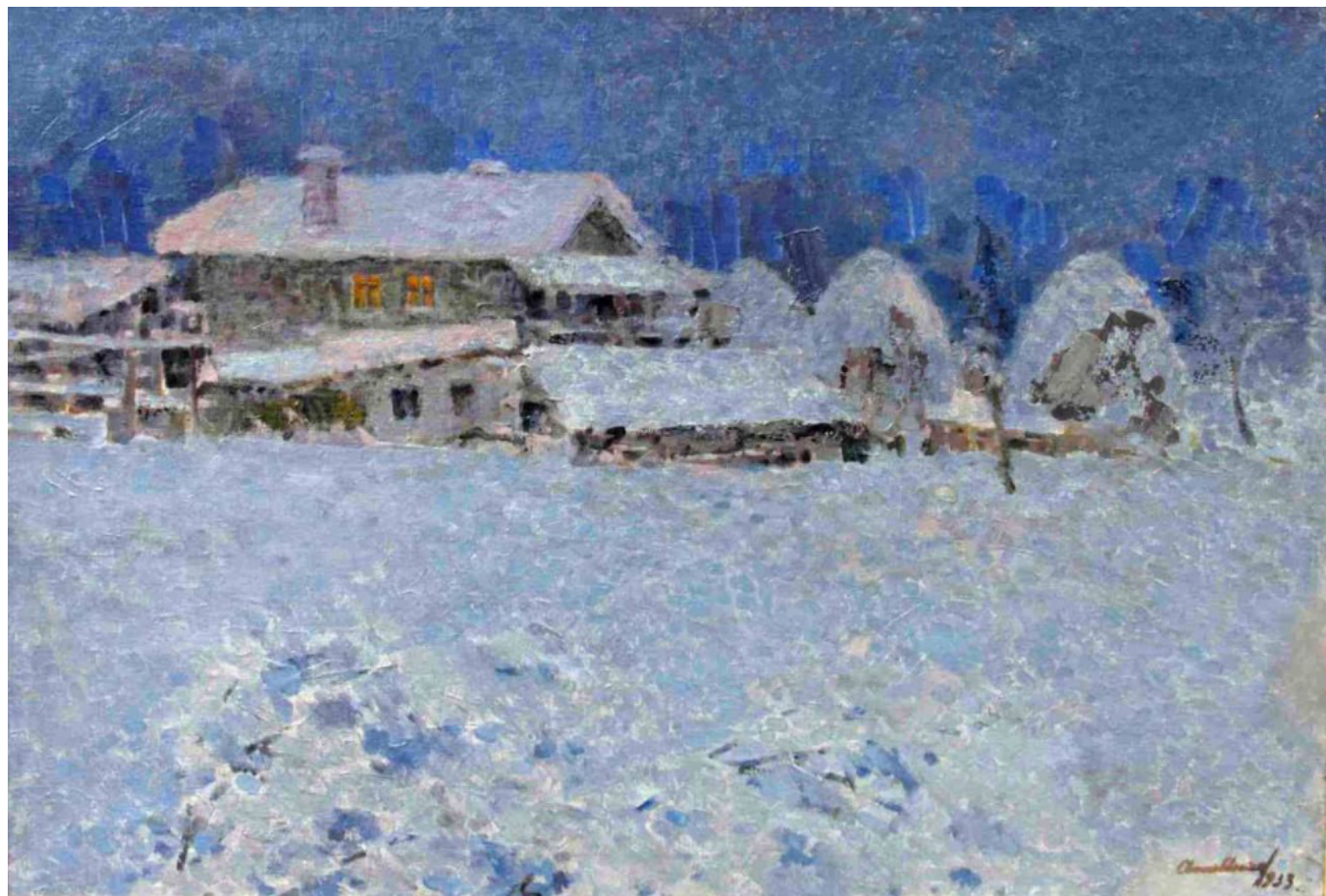


# The Art of Christmas

By FAO



## Christmas in Bulgaria

### ATANAS MIHOV

Atanas Mihov is among the pioneers of the Bulgarian landscape painting who dedicates his art to the beauty of Bulgarian nature.

Atanas Mihov was born on 24.09.1879 in the city of Stara Zagora. In 1904 he graduated from the National Academy of Arts under the supervision of Prof. Ivan Mrkvička and Prof. Jaroslav Věšín. As a member of the Contemporary Art Association and co-founder of the Society of the North Bulgarian Artists, he was actively involved in the country's art circles.

From 1906 till 1932 he worked as an art teacher in several Bulgarian cities: Silistra, Razgrad, Ruse and Sofia. His works were of a constant appearance at the Collective Art Exhibitions and exhibitions of the Union of Southern Slavic Artists "Lada", as well as those of the Association "Native Art". From 1914 he has organized many solo exhibitions in Bulgaria and abroad. Mihov has also taken part in international exhibitions in Venice, Rome, Prague, Plzen, etc.

In 1932 Atanas Mihov retired and devoted himself entirely to his work. He worked predominantly in the field of the realistic landscape painting. During his participation in the WWI the artist also created military themed paintings.

In 1952 Mihov was awarded the People's Artist title. Works of Atanas Mihov are possessed by the National Art Gallery, many Bulgarian Embassies around the world, some city galleries in Bulgaria, as well as numerous private collections in Bulgaria and abroad.

He died on the 22th of January 1975.





## Christmas in Colombia Fernando Botero



Happiness, warmth, and party spirit characterize Colombian people. We are known for turning any special occasion into a big celebration, full of colors, lights, and good music. In Colombia, the Christmas season is the perfect occasion for family gatherings.

As a largely Catholic country, during these festivities, Colombians honor the nativity of Jesus Christ. Families and friends gather every day during the nine days before

Christmas eve, to sign, pray and share traditional Colombian treats and food.

For this year's Christmas celebration, the Colombian Embassy decided to showcase the talent of the internationally renowned Colombian artist Fernando Botero. Botero, born in 1932 in Medellín, Colombia, the city of the "eternal spring", is currently the most valued Latin-American living artist. In Norway, we have the great fortune to be able to visit two of his sculptures; the Female Torso (1983) at the Kistefos Museum and at the Reclining Woman (2003) at the Eckeberg Sculpture Park -.

While his work includes still life and landscapes, Botero has focused on situational portraiture. His paintings and sculptures are notable for its exaggerated proportionally, or "fat" figures, as he refers to them; Botero explains "*an artist is attracted to certain kinds of form without knowing why. You adopt a position intuitively; and its only later, you do attempt to rationalize or even justify it*".

His paintings, sculptures, and drawings are exhibited and showcased in museum collections throughout the world. You can find the Maternidade in Lisbon, Portugal, The Venus in London lying near Liverpool Street station, and The Great Bird in the Financial District of Singapore. Additionally, Botero

has a permanent exhibition in Florence, Italy at the Courtyard of the Uffizi, Piazza della Signoria and the Arms' Room in Palazzo Vecchio.

In 2000, he donated to the "Museo Botero" located in Bogotá, Colombia, 123 his own master pieces and 85 pieces from his personal private collection, including art pieces by Chagall, Picasso and Robert Rauschenberg, among others. Botero also donated 119 pieces to the Museum of Antioquia; of these, 23 bronze sculptures lay in front of the museum, now known as the Botero Plaza. Botero currently spends his time traveling between Colombia, Pietrasanta, Monaco, New York and Paris.



“Sailboat on the snow”

## Christmas in Croatia Boris Cvjetanović

Boris Cvjetanović

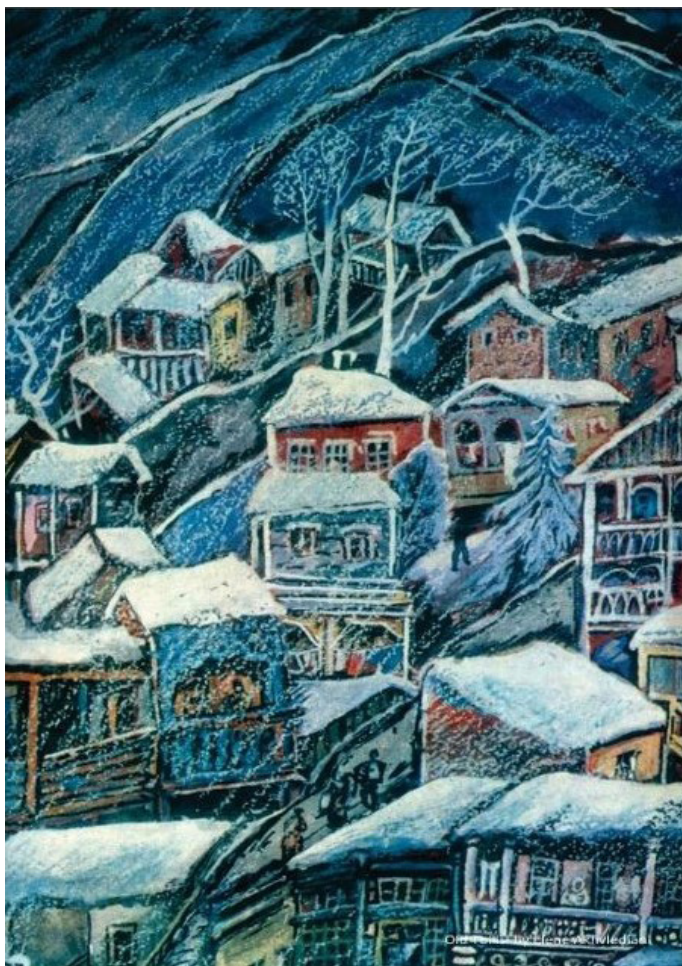
Born in Zagreb (Croatia) in 1953. Attended and completed The High School of Applied Arts and graduated from the Fine Art Department of the Teachers Training Academy in Zagreb in 1976. He worked as a sculptor - restorer at the Croatian Restoration Institute from 1976 to 1984. In 1981 he became involved in photography and began working for the student papers "SL" where he was the photography editor in 1987 and 1988. He has been working as a professional photographer since 1984. Since 1981 until present time he had about sixty solo exhibitions and he has participated in a number of group exhibitions in Croatia, European countries, Japan, USA and Australia. He has published photographs in numerous newspapers and magazines. Won prizes in Japan at the exhibition "ism '95; The 1st Tokyo International Photo-Biennale" - Nikon Camera Co. Award; Grand Prix of the exhibition Croatian Photography in 1997 and Homo Volans Award in 1997.

In 1996 published a book of photographs "Scenes Without Significance". His photos were published in the book by Francesco Bonami "Echoes - Contemporary Art at the Age of Endless Conclusions" (The Monacelli Press, New York, 1996). He represented Croatia at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003.

His photos are in the collections of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatian History Museum in Zagreb, Gallery Dante Marino Cettina in Umag Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, Gallery of Fine Arts in Split (Croatia) and private collections.



"Snowman on the sea"



Elene Akhvediani (1901-1975), a famous Georgian painter, graphic artist, and theatre decorator of the 20th century. 1918 – Graduated the Art Studio led by B. Vogel and N. Sklifosovsky with the certificate of an artist- teacher. 1922 – Studied at the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, the faculty of painting under tutition of Gigo Gabashvili. 1922 – Left for Italy and continued to France. 1922 – 1927 – Worked in Paris. 1924 – Studied at the Académie Colarossi, founded by Italian Sculptor Filippo Colarossi. After returning to Georgia Akhvediani had exhibitions in Tbilisi, Telavi and Kutaisi. Worked with famous Georgian theatre Director Kote Marjanishviliat at the Kutaisi Theatre as well as at other theatres in total making the stage designs for 70 plays. In 1950s she began working in cinematography as an art director. She designed costumes for the films: “Chrichina” (Cricket), “Eter’s Song”, “Ceased Song”. Later Akhvediani made drawings for Sergo Parajanov’s film “Color of Pomegranate” (unfulfilled project). At the end of 1950s she travelled to the Baltic States and Czechoslovakia and made series of landscapes of Tallinn and Bratislava. In 1960s the artist revived the tradition introduced by Boris Vogel and, together with a group of artists, visited various regions of Georgia, doing plain-air painting and organizing concluding exhibitions.



## Christmas in Georgia

Christmas and New Year are celebrated in Georgia according to the Orthodox tradition on January 7; however, that is also the excuse for many to celebrate the New Year twice -on 1 and 14 of January.



Nino Chakvetadze, a contemporary Georgian artist born in 1971. In 1996 she graduated from Tbilisi State Academy of Art. Since 1997 is a member of Georgian Painters' Union. She also works as Children's Books' illustrator. She made illustrations for the works of the famous Norwegian author of children's literature Anne-Catharina "Anne-Cath." Vestly.

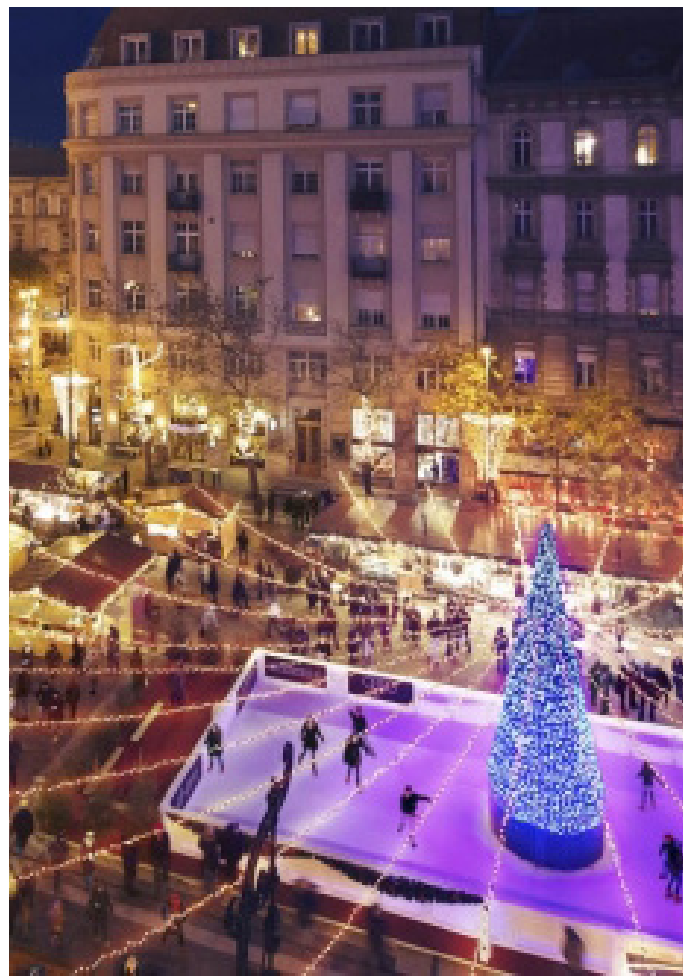
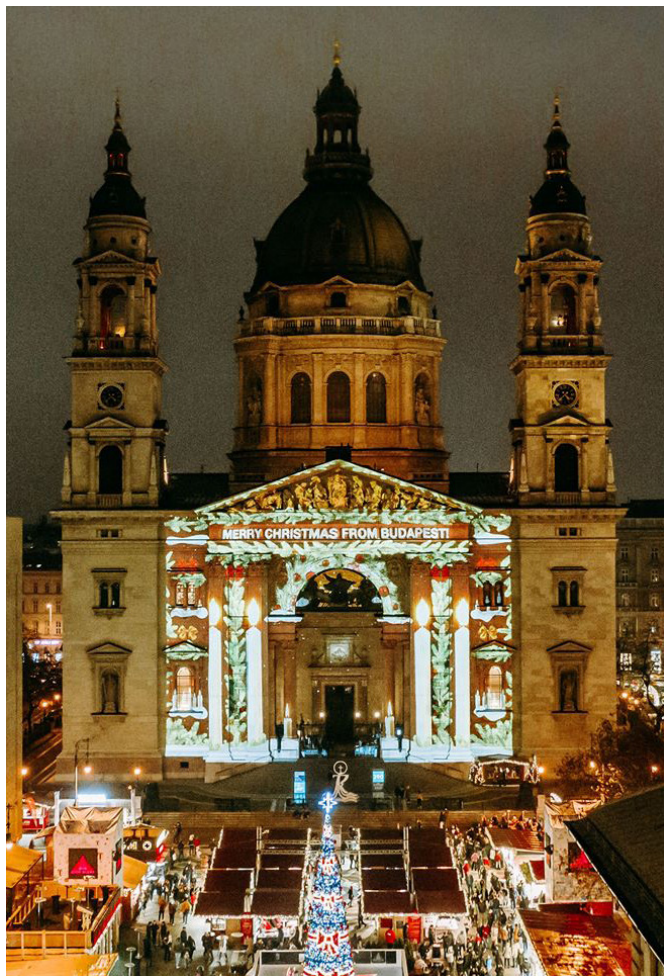


Nativity, 15th c., BXM 2021  
©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports - Byzantine and Christian Museum

## Christmas in Greece

Greek icon from the 15th century, depicting the birth of Christ. This icon is part of the permanent collection of the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens. The iconographer is anonymous, but the icon originates presumably from Crete.

It is painted in the artistic traditions that originated in the Byzantine Empire and which are inherently linked to Greek culture and history. Icons are traditionally placed on prominent spots within the church, while printed copies of Nativity icons are in newer times widely used in the form of Christmas cards for the exchange of the season's greetings and wishes.



Photos: AdventBazilika.hu

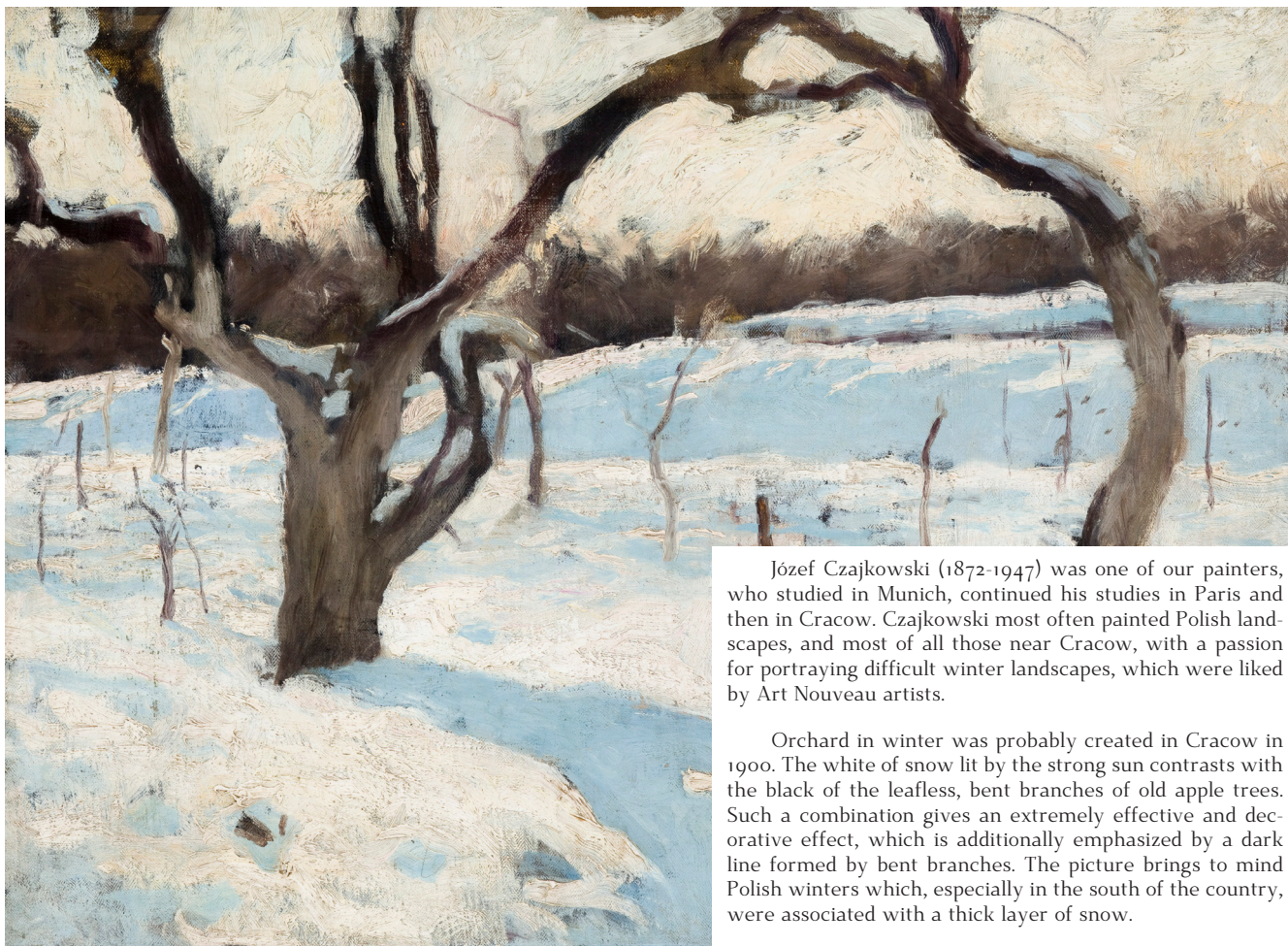
## Advent Basilica Christmas Market in Hungary

The Advent Basilica, winner of the the online voting of the European Best Destinations award of 2020, is without doubt one of the most beautiful Christmas fairs in Europe.

“In love and safety” - with this slogan, the Advent Basilica, Budapest’s uniquely spectacular Christmas fair, opened this year 2021, on November 19th, in front of St. Stephen’s Basilica, which is one of the most impressive square of the Hungarian capital.

True to the tradition of this year’s 11-year-old Advent Basilica, it promises an unparalleled festive atmosphere, quality pastimes, a special gastronomic offer and a more colourful program than ever before - with all safety measures that allow for cloudless celebrations during a coronavirus epidemic.





Józef Czajkowski (1872-1947) was one of our painters, who studied in Munich, continued his studies in Paris and then in Cracow. Czajkowski most often painted Polish landscapes, and most of all those near Cracow, with a passion for portraying difficult winter landscapes, which were liked by Art Nouveau artists.

Orchard in winter was probably created in Cracow in 1900. The white of snow lit by the strong sun contrasts with the black of the leafless, bent branches of old apple trees. Such a combination gives an extremely effective and decorative effect, which is additionally emphasized by a dark line formed by bent branches. The picture brings to mind Polish winters which, especially in the south of the country, were associated with a thick layer of snow.

## Christmas in Poland

Christmas in Poland? It's the most magical and unique time of the whole year. In the past, when the climate of our country was still much colder and the winters were more severe than today, Christmas time was synonymous with harsh weather and amazingly white landscapes seen from the houses by those gathered on Christmas Eve's supper. For those who are believers - and traditionally the majority of Poles are Catholics - it is also an important religious experience, linked with the birth of Jesus Christ. Poles celebrate this special time with beloved ones, very often traveling from one family house to another relative's home. The most solemn celebration, the Christmas Eve's Supper, is traditionally composed of 12 meatless and fish dishes. Afterwards, participants exchange gifts and sing beautiful Polish carols. Around midnight, they go to attend the Christmas midnight mass called „pasterka”.

Juliusz Kossak was a painter, draughtsman, illustrator, and a representative of 19th-century Realism. He was a doyen of a family of artists regarded as a stronghold of Polish tradition. He was born in 1824 in Nowy Wiśnicz near Bochnia and died in 1899 in Kraków. He is very well known for very accurate representations of daily life scenes, very often including horses, full of energy and movement.

„Fox hunting from a sledge” /Polowanie na lisa z sań/. The painting presents a typical entertainment of the Polish nobility during winter time. In many cases hunts were part of the so-called „Zajazdy”, during which its participants for weeks travelled from one mansion to another, each time arranging splendid parties filled with music, dances and big feasts.

After finishing the resources from the pantry of the house they were staying in, when the meat, pastries, beer, mead and liquors were over - they moved to the next mansion. Zajazdy were very popular especially during the Carnival period.



## AL-'ULA

The cooler winter temperatures allow for visits to the historical Al-'Ula site, the first Saudi Arabian UNESCO World Heritage Site. Much of Al-'Ula's epic rock formations, valley and sandy desert remains an untouched expanse, with discoveries yet to be made threaded through its rich and layered past. Here visitors can enjoy markets, sports and recreational activities and concerts.



## TABUK

The snowy part of Saudi Arabia where visitors enjoy camping amongst snow-capped mountains.





## Winter in Saudi Arabia

The winter weather in Saudi Arabia is diverse, some regions experience snowfall and low temperatures, especially during the night, some regions otherwise too hot to visit during the summer months finally become accessible and others are marked by mild temperate temperatures. Winter activities are determined by which part of Saudi Arabia you find yourself in.



RIYADH SEASON 2021- *"Imagine more"*

Is an arts and culture festival, basically, a five-month party in Riyadh. It will host 7,500 events covering everything from music and arts to food and sport. Included is the Riyadh Winter Wonderland, the Riyadh Season Football Cup, a section that mimics New York's Times Square with its majestic and attractive screens and spectacular firework displays.





## Christmas Celebrations in Bethlehem/Palestine

Palestine celebrates Christmas, according to the Western calendar, with performances from scout teams in the city of Bethlehem and in front of the Church of the Nativity where Madam Rula Ma'ayah, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities receives the Apostolic Patriarch of the Latin Patriarchate, Archbishop Pierbattista in the Nativity Square, to attend a midnight mass which took place in the Church of Saint Catherine.

Palestine celebrates also the Orthodox and Armenian Christmas as well in the Church of Nativity.

The oldest church in the Holy Land that is still in use, the original Church of the Nativity was constructed under the patronage of Constantine's mother, Helena, who came on a pilgrimage to Palestine in 325 AD to investigate the sites associated with the life of Jesus Christ, revered since the early days of Christianity.

Helena chose the Grotto of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, as the site for the huge basilica, which was completed in 339 AD. Inside the church, two sets of stairs on either side of the main altar lead down into the grotto, the site where Jesus was born. A silver star embedded in white marble and bearing the Latin inscription "Here of the Virgin Mary Christ was born" marks the site. In 2012, the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

