

From Iceland comes the legend of the sinister and gargantuan Yule Cat who ate lazy humans.

Thanks to Susanna Viljanen for contributing to this story.



The snowman is part of Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is pretty hot at Christmas time.

Factoids

The Earth orbits the Sun at an average speed of 29.79 km/s (18.51 miles/sec, or 67,000 miles/hour).

It takes light 8 min 20 sec to travel from the sun to the earth. Light travels at a speed of 3×10^8 km/sec, or 299 792 km per second (186 281 miles per second).

Evergreens and trees were cherished at solstice as a natural symbol of rebirth and life amid winter whiteness. The annual Tree Festival is still celebrated among nature-based faiths such as Wicca. This tree festival was eventually adopted as use for the Christmas tree.

Many legends survived from the time of pagan solstice celebrations. In Scandinavia, the Julbuk, or Yule goat, was the carrier for the god Thor. Now he carries the Yule elf on the rounds to deliver presents and receive his offering of porridge.