



Merry Christmas!

The Spalkes

December 2012

Warm Christmas



Unbelievably, we have arrived at our last newsletter for this year. We usually just send a small card via email in December, but this time we thought we will give you a short, one page look into our Christmas Celebration. Because anyone who has ever spent December or even Christmas itself in the Southern hemisphere knows that it can be a little awkward and 'non-christmasy' ☺. But first of all: we LOVE Christmas in Cape Town! We do not miss the grey, wet winter weather, the dark days and stress that is often associated with December in Germany. But to compensate for the actual nice things we're missing out on (Christmas markets, sparkly lights in the dark and Christmas tree scents) and in order to keep some of our German traditions, we do put some effort in. So we decorate the whole house including the tree come December 1st (not something we would do at home). The tree is fake, although we would have the option of a thin, rather 'light' green tree. Advent is an important time for us. The kids have calendar (this year they are collecting puzzle pieces until Christmas Eve) and an advent wreath graces the dining room table, a rather untypical tradition in South Africa. Every day we read from our special kiddies [bible](#) that tell the old testament stories by showing how they point to Jesus – and how for years the world has been waiting for the Light! Obviously, Christmas Carols and baking Christmas cookies of all sorts is a must. Even though the latter makes us open windows and doors wide open since the oven heats up this place when it's so hot and sunny outside already ☺. Christmas also means it's the long summer break. And not just for schools - most businesses, companies and organisations close down and take a looong relaxed break. Even if our suburb, a holiday and weekend destination, is crowded with people over the holidays we realize how we also go with the South African slow flow. Friends organize more braais (barbecues), we spend more time at the beach... Christmas in Cape Town!



And Christmas Eve...

In South Africa most families celebrate the actual Christmas on the 25th of December.

That's quite practical for us because we can do

our traditional German Christmas on the 24th, as usual, and then just repeat the happy feasting the South African way the next day. Since we don't have relatives around Christmas is a friend fest. We usually celebrate with another German or German/international family. And then it goes the Cape Town way: every one brings something! We make our traditional dishes (polish potato dumplings, beef olives, red cabbage and makofki, a polish poppy seed bread pudding) and the others bring whatever food makes Christmas christmasy for them. Then we share and feast merrily (in shorts and t-shirts, obviously). Afterwards we open a few gifts and re-play the Christmas story with our self-constructed Duplo nativity. We sing German and English Christmas Carols. And at some point, around 8pm, it starts going dark outside, the fairy lights start twinkling more, we have seconds of all the food (who doesn't, right?), it all becomes more cozy... and we celebrate the birth of our King and Saviour, the Light of the World!

