**Advent**

**Advent** a [season](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgical_year) observed in many Western [Christian churches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the [Nativity of Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_of_Jesus) at [Christmas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas). The term is a version of the Latin word meaning "coming".

Advent is celebrated this year from Sunday 27th November until Saturday 24th December.

Practices associated with Advent include keeping an [Advent calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advent_calendar), lighting an [Advent wreath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advent_wreath), praying an Advent [daily devotional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daily_devotional), as well as other ways of preparing for Christmas, such as setting up [Christmas decorations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_decoration).

It is unknown when the period of preparation for Christmas that is now called Advent first began – it was certainly in existence from about 480.

In England, especially in the northern counties, there was a custom (now extinct) for poor women to carry around the "Advent images", two dolls dressed to represent [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) and the [Blessed Virgin Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blessed_Virgin_Mary). A halfpenny coin was expected from everyone to whom these were exhibited and bad luck was thought to menace the household not visited by the doll-bearers before [Christmas Eve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_Eve) at the latest