

The middle of winter has long been a time of celebration around the world. The Norse believed that each spars worn represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year. The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. Germans were named after Oden, as they believed he made nocturnal flights through the sky to observe his people, and then decide who would prosper or perish. In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. Centuries before the arrival of the man called Jesus, early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter. In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday.