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CHRISTMAS IN WARTIME IN AND BEYOND UKRAINE

Christmas in Ukraine has a long and distinguished history and is deeply rooted in culture and religion. Many deeply rooted traditions in Ukrainian culture can be observed during the Christmas season, including building a *vertep* (a nativity scene) and singing traditional songs like *koliadky* and *shchedrivky*. Nonetheless, the problems posed to Ukrainians have forced people to modify their traditional celebrations to the new conditions. As a result, Christmas has been significantly impacted in Ukraine throughout these turbulent times. Christmas celebrations during the war were more modest than usual since families had to make do with what they could find. Christmas trees were frequently in short supply, therefore ornaments were made from whatever materials were available.

Despite the challenges Ukrainians faced during the war, they were still able to unite and celebrate their beloved customs. Communities developed strong friendships by sharing what little they had and enjoying each other's company. Many went to church to pray and to find comfort and strength in God. Religion played a big part in the celebrations.

Many Ukrainians have been pushed to leave their country today as refugees, frequently ending up in new countries with unfamiliar customs and cultures. Ukrainian refugees have stayed committed to honoring their cultural heritage despite the difficulties presented by their new situation, particularly during the Christmas season.

Ukrainian refugees cook traditional delicacies like *varenyky* and *kutia*, they decorate their homes with straw ornaments. Furthermore, Ukrainian churches and community organizations are essential in assisting refugees in preserving their cultural identity and celebrating their customs. In order to stay in touch with their loved ones, technology has also been a crucial tool for Ukrainian refugees. Social media and video chats have made it possible for families to enjoy Christmas together even when they are separated by hundreds if not thousands of kilometers of distance.

The resilience and strength of the Ukrainian people's cultural identity have been on full display during times of conflict and as refugees. Christmas has served as a symbol of hope, unity, and tradition that has allowed Ukrainians to come together in times of hardship and celebrate their shared cultural heritage. The commitment to preserving their cultural traditions in times of crisis has been a testament to the strength of the Ukrainian people and their ability to maintain a sense of identity and belonging, even in the toughest of times.

In conclusion, the Ukrainian people's unwavering dedication to their traditional heritage is demonstrated by the way they celebrated Christmas during the war and as refugees. The difficulties Ukrainians confront have compelled them to modify their traditional festivities in order to reflect the new reality while preserving the core of their cultural traditions. The Ukrainian Christmas celebration serves as a reminder of the value of tradition, faith, and community as well as the tenacity and power of the human spirit.