
The Faroese Santa Claus

Julius



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Design: Allan Davidsen

Christmas holds a special place in all our hearts, regardless of age.

It envelops us in a sensory experience, from the gentle touch of snowflakes on our cheeks to the warmth of hot cocoa on our tongues, the aroma of freshly baked crullers filling the air, and the familiar melodies of Christmas music. It's a time when we feel a deeper connection with one another. But why is that?

When you were little, adults worked to cultivate the magic of Christmas around you. Remember those moments when your parents would proclaim, *"Santa Claus is on his way!"*? Your eyes would widen with anticipation as you imagined the perfect gift from Santa Claus. Yet, as you grew older, your understanding of Christmas evolved, and you came to realize that Santa Claus was simply a legend. Or was he?

To me, Santa Claus represents more than just a fairy tale. And that sentiment continues, especially now that families with children have embraced him as Santa Claus here in the Faroe Islands. But how did Julius come to be?

Let's turn back the clock to 2016, when I stood in the heart of Tórshavn eagerly awaiting the lighting of the grand Christmas tree. Excited families gathered in anticipation, the air filled with festive cheer. The town was adorned with holiday decorations, offering homemade waffles in cozy stalls, while a towering fire engine stood ready to hoist Santa Claus up to the poinsettia at the top of the tree. It was a moment awaited eagerly by children and adults alike.

Then the priest started talking about the holiday, and so did the mayor. The children and I waited impatiently for Santa Claus. I remember being excited to see who this year's Santa was and how he would do the job. Then I heard the words: *"Let's shout for Santa!"* The children shouted louder and louder, and suddenly I heard the recognizable old whistle coming howling up the

street. I looked around, hoping that the play would unfold as I had imagined. Fun and wild.

Santa got out of the fire engine and the children shouted: "Hello Santa!" It was the first time I wondered why they didn't call Santa Claus by name. Then my thoughts began to fly. Perhaps I would like this task – to play a Santa Claus that all the children in the Faroe Islands would know by name.

When the Christmas tree was lit, I told the organizer who was standing next to me that I would like to try next year. The answer was clear: "You must be allowed to!"

Early the following year, I teamed up with a friend, Rógvi Brekku Dam, who has long been part of the entertainment scene in the Faroe Islands, to create a Santa that all families with children would know. The task was taken seriously. We were both excited and impatient. After much discussion, we decided that Santa's outfit should reflect Faroese style, he should be lively, clumsy,

mischievous with a crooked smile, and his name should be *Julius*.

We had many dreams and set ourselves big goals. The dream was to entertain the entire Faroe Islands, create Faroese children's programs on TV, write new Christmas songs, stage theatrical performances, have our own website, and our biggest wish was to have the children shout, "Hello Julius!"

The number seven holds significance in fairy tales. After seven years we reached our goal and then there was only one thing to do and that was to dream new dreams and set even bigger goals.

Some of our new dreams and ideas involve producing more Faroese children's content for social media, TV, the theatre stage, and getting all families with children to send their Christmas wishes with Julius stamps on the envelope via the good old mailbox.

Sasho Bjartsson



Julius distributes Christmas treats
Photo: Jens Kr. Vang