

Holiday GIFT GUIDE



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Origins of some holiday traditions

Christmas stockings

The Christmas stockings of today may be a byproduct of various traditions. One such tradition dates back to a Dutch custom in which children would leave shoes full of food to feed St. Nicholas' donkeys, and then St. Nicholas would leave small gifts in return. Another origin story of Christmas stockings can be traced to the twelfth century, when nuns would leave socks full of nuts, fruit and tangerines for the poor. This is why some people still put tangerines in stockings.

Christmas tree

Christmas Trees are everywhere this time of year. The use of evergreen trees predates Christmas and is associated with the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which celebrated the agricultural god Saturn with partying and gift-giving. During the winter solstice, green branches served as a reminder that spring would arrive anew. Germans are credited with first bringing evergreens into their homes and decorating them.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus' origin story can be traced to St. Nicholas, a Christian bishop who lived during the fourth century. St. Nicholas was very generous and gave away his fortune to help the needy. He also did various other good deeds. St. Nicholas' became infamous and began to be known by various names around the world. The Dutch called him Sinter Klaas, which was eventually transformed to Santa Claus. The jolly persona came later when 20th century advertisers — especially the artists responsible for Coca-Cola ads — portrayed Santa in a red suit with a big smile.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is hung in doorways and couples who stand beneath are encouraged to share a kiss. The tradition of hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. Mistletoe was thought to bring good luck to a household and ward off evil spirits. The custom of kissing under mistletoe can be traced to England. Originally, a berry was picked from the sprig of mistletoe before the person could be kissed. When all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing.



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*Have a Wonderful Christmas Season
and a Safe and Happy New Year!*

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