



Chapter: 1

Celebrating Christmas Holidays – History and Significance

Christmas is indeed among the greatest and most awaited religious festival celebrated in the Western part of the world. You might already know that the actual name of this festival is Christ's Mass, and it is one of the most important holiday in the calendar of Christians as it commemorates the birth of Lord Jesus. As per the Hebrew Old Testament, Lord Jesus was the savior of the Jews.

All the believers of Christianity throughout the world celebrate this festival with much enthusiasm. The people of different countries have their own separate ways of celebrating this day. But, the essence and significance of Christmas remains the same. The most popular of the traditions that is generally followed today is that of the Americans and the British. They usually involve in age old traditions like gift-giving and dressing up as Santa Clause to delight the children. The concept of Santa Clause with round jelly belly and a red nose has its roots in their traditions.

The exact date of the birth of Lord Jesus is not known, however Christmas is celebrated every year to commemorate his birth. It is believed that during the days of the reign of the Roman Empire in 4th Century AD, Christmas became an important day to celebrate. In the second half of the century, Christianity became the official religion of the state and since then Christmas is celebrated every year on the 25th of December.

Throughout the world, it is widely accepted that this festival was specifically chosen to be celebrated on this date with the intention to bring together the traditions of the Old pagan and the new Christians.

Romans were known to commemorate their God Saturn with a holiday which was celebrated on the 17th of December. This holiday initiated the custom of giving out gifts to the near and dear ones. The Romans also worshipped another God known as 'Sol Invictus'. These similarities helped the Romans to accept Christianity.

Chapter: 2

Remembering The Birth Of Christmas Carols

When the carols are sung, it creates the atmosphere for Christmas, and you can feel the significance of this holy day. There are several Christmas carols composed on Santa Claus, Baby Jesus, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, and the holiday of Christmas. Many of them are much older than you can imagine. You will be surprised to know that one of the oldest carols that are sung even today was actually created in the 300s. The first ever Christmas carol written by a human is believed to be "Of the Father's Love Begotten," written by Aurelius Prudentius.

The Christian leaders have over the years created several Christmas carols to be sung during the festival time. Some of the most popular among them are the songs by St. Francis of Assisi, and the ones that were put together by Italians during Renaissance. Some of the British also added a few mix to the collection of the Christmas carols.

The popularity of these carols grew rapidly when the well known inventor, Johannes Gutenberg started his printing press around 1447. The machine created thousands of copies of the carols and these were distributed among people so that they can sing and have fun during the holiday season. However, around this time Christianity was strict and under the control of the Puritans, many times the carols were frowned over. There are times when the Christmas carol prints were completely destroyed purposely. In England, when the Puritans ruled the country, it was banned in total.

It wasn't long when again the Christmas carols were created. This time the Messiah by George Frederick Handel became very popular and he sang it in Ireland in 1742 to raise funds for charity. Another very famous carol, 'Silent Night, Holy Night,' was written around the same time in 1818 by Joseph Mohr, a priest in Austria.

Despite of all these efforts, it was not until the 1800s that the Christmas carols started appearing. Today, the popularity has increased with technology. Earlier it was heard in radio and records. Today, these carols are available in CDs and DVDs.

Chapter: 3

Celebrating Family Traditions and Customs

Giving of gifts, singing Christmas carols, Santa Clause, and parties are just some of the things that make Christmas one of the most awaited times of the year. It is also that time when you get together with family and friends to celebrate and spread love all around you. The twinkling lights in display during Christmas showcase the brightness of the spirit, the soul. The little customs and traditions followed in the family have been passed down since generations and this creates the essence of Christmas togetherness. Some of the top holiday traditions that mark the excitement are as follows:

Many families celebrate Christmas Eve by watching movies together. You can gather a whole collection of Christmas DVDs and videos. You can sit together with your family members and enjoy the movies while sipping on hot cocoa. You can also prepare some fresh Christmas cookies to nibble on. Some classic movies would be a great choice as your grandparents will be delighted as well.

As December sets in, most families get into the baking mode. Everyone bakes their favorite Christmas cookies for the holiday season. It may take around three or four days of preparation but it is fun. It is also a time to remember the past and relive the moments.

Adorning and setting up the Christmas tree is a yet another important tradition that is celebrated in this holiday season. Many families set up the tree before Thanksgiving, or some wait till the

Christmas Eve. Some choose to get the pre-lit ones. Others prefer to create a Christmas tree and decorate it with stars, gifts and glitters.

Hanging of the stocking is also widely celebrated tradition during the holiday season. It is believed that the Santa Clause fills up the stockings with goodies. You can hang them for your kids and fill all sorts of treat in them. Singing the Christmas carol is also one of the popular family traditions. The whole family comes together to sing the carols in the spirit of Christmas.

Chapter: 4

Ideas For A Fun Christmas Party

Christmas is the time to make merry and throw parties. Organizing a party could be really cumbersome but with a bit of planning and proper management, you can ease this out. Here are some ideas for fun Christmas party:

4.1 Fun Christmas Party For The Kids:

Kids are the ones who most eagerly wait for this holiday season. There is no better way to treat and surprise your kid than throwing a Christmas party for them. You can get the invitations sent out beforehand so that all the parents can drop their kids to your house for the party. To get started, some of the basic things that you would require are decorations, treats, and food. Here are some tips that will help you from sending out invitation to enjoying the party to the fullest.

One of the most cost effective methods to create Christmas cards is to cut the front part of an old Christmas card, and get a simple print of the invitation from computer and paste it at the back. This is an easy way to create your own personalized card.

Adorn your house with a nice tree, lights and other holiday items. You can hang up the stockings and put the fire in the fireplace, if there is one in your home. You can have a Christmas song playing in the background to create a holiday atmosphere.

Get some yummy food prepared and lots of cookies for the kids to enjoy. Remember to give out treats and gifts to all the kids, put inside stockings. You can also make the kids play some exciting game to add to their merriment.

4.2 A Secret Santa House Christmas Party:

How about throwing a fun filled secret Santa house party? Sounds interesting and fun, doesn't it? Some of the things that you would require to successfully organize your secret Santa house party are candy canes, eggnog, red punch, Santa hats, glitter, cookies, appetizers, chips, and some CDs.

Invite your friends to the secret Santa party and ask them to bring along some gifts ranging between \$5 and \$10. This is necessary because your friends should know that you need to bring in some gifts to make the secret party a success.

Don't forget the food- make some rounds to the grocery store and bring all the goodies and stuff like eggnog, Christmas cookies and cupcakes, red punch, candy canes, chips and dip, and appetizers.

Bring some Santa hats and glitter pens from the arts store. Also get some decoration stuff to adorn your home. When your friends arrive, ask them to keep their gifts under the tree and have food.

Now write number in chits and put them inside the hat, ask your friends to choose the chits and take the gift with that number.

4.3 Terrific Christmas Party for the Holidays:

If you love to throw a lavish party for your friends at your place and indulge in lots of eating and drinking then you would require some planning done. Some of the things that you would require include good music, alcohol, and dessert.

You can invite about 15 to 30 guests at your home. You may choose to be selective about the guests because they are the ones that drive the party and create the atmosphere. You can start by sending out simple invitation cards which includes the venue, date, time and the dress code.

It is preferable to start the party in the evening time, after the dinner. If you keep the part around 7 or 8pm then your guests can have enough time to enjoy a few drinks and mingle with other people.

You can get some mouthwatering delicacies prepared at your home and also serve colorful drinks. You can choose to serve drinks like Strawberry Margaritas, Strawberry Daiquiris, Cranberry Juice, and red wine.

After dining and drinking, you can indulge in playing some exciting Christmas games and exchanging gifts among yourself.

4.4 Cheap and Budgeted Christmas Party:

If you are planning to enjoy Christmas but are a bit tight on the budget this season then here are some tips to enjoy a budgeted Christmas party. You can start by playing the secret Santa. It is much cheaper than getting gifts for everyone. While playing the secret Santa, you draw a name couple of weeks before Christmas and only buy presents for him/ her.

You can also try out another gift exchanging scheme where everyone brings a gift with him or her. These gifts are put in one place, and then people draw numbers and pick the gift that they want. This can cost less to one person and evenly distribute the cost of buying gifts.

You can also save by throwing a pot lucky party. In this party, everyone coming in the party can bring along some delicacies prepared, however ensure that everyone brings along a unique preparation. This can increase the variety of dishes in the party and all the guests can have a merry time.

Nor for the drinks, you can supply the inexpensive soda at the Christmas party. Alcohol can cost you much so you can avoid that. If you are throwing a large party then you can tell to your guests, they will obviously understand.

Chapter: 5

Tips On How To Plan A Successful Christmas Party

With the festive season approaching, everyone is a mood for fun and entertainment. If you wish to throw a party at your place and have a nice time with close friends and family members then this is the right time. You would of course want everything to turn out perfect and get compliments from the guests. A good planning can ensure that everything is organized and your Christmas party is a success. Here are some things that you may need to consider while planning a party for Christmas.

5.1 Creating Invitations For Christmas Party:

After you have decided to throw a party and be the host, the first step towards the realization of your goal would be to send out the invitations. You may need to send the party invitations to friends and family members couple of weeks before Christmas so that they can book the dates for you. Now coming to the preparation of the Christmas invitation cards, you need to make your choice according.

If you can send lavishly then you can get some well designed invitation cards from the card store. Your cards should speak your mind and should deliver the warmth and love to the receiver. If you wish to spend less on the invitation cards then you can opt to create the cards yourself. If you have basic knowledge of computers and its applications then you can easily create impressive cards at home.

5.2 Interesting Decoration Ideas For Christmas Party:

As Christmas draws near and fills your heart with brightness and cheer, you would also want to your home to look as happy and bright as you. There are many ways and themes based on which you can decorate your home for this festive season. The decorations add a dash of splendor and zeal to the party. They offer a visual treat to the guests coming into wish you. Here are some interesting ideas that will help you to decorate your home and collect praises.

Before starting to decorate the venue for a Christmas party, remember that it should represent a riot of colors. The place should look really colorful, bright and vibrant. People coming in should be able to feel the colors fill in their soul and make them happy.

If you arrange for the party at your own house then ensure that you decorate each and every corner of the house. Starting from the entrance door, the fireplace, and center table to the bathroom, every part of your house looks great.

You can decorate the walls with balloons and streamers. The windows can be decorated using the window clings. They are quite inexpensive and at the same time can make your house look great.

You can put small bells at the corner of the rooms to make it look pretty. You may also get the bells and stars that glow in the dark to create a good appearance.

To create an atmosphere of Christmas you can light up the fireplace or just place some lighted candles in the house and enjoy the warmth of togetherness in Christmas. Get the banners that say "Merry Christmas" and hang them in your walls.

The Christmas tree is an important part as it creates the centerpiece too. You can either get the pre-lit ones or create your own Christmas tree and decorate it with lots of goodies, lights and gifts. You can also cut out pictures of Santa Clause, angels, and Lord Jesus and paste them in your house.

If you wish then you can also decorate your entire house with lovely blossoms of the season. The flower decoration always is a hit and looks extremely pleasing to the eye.

5.3 Exciting Themes For Christmas Parties:

Christmas is the time in the year when you can celebrate and rejoice with your friends and family members. It is the time to rekindle the warmth of love and friendship. If you are throwing a party at your home this season, then make it more exciting by trying out new party themes for Christmas. Both kids as well as the adults will love your idea. Here are some interesting ideas and themes for a Christmas party:

Setting up a carnival theme: Turn your home into a carnival so that it looks adventurous and fun. Apart from the Christmas tree in its place, you can decorate the entire house with lights and pictures. You can get interesting stuff like sprigs of holly, stars, and bells. You can also create stuff that all your guests can wear and get into a carnival party mood.

Choose the fattest Santa: This is a fun theme for all your friends who love to dress up as Santa Clause. You can then choose the fattest Santa among them and give them presents.

Get the Reindeer horns: While making invitation cards mention at the bottom that guests need to bring Reindeer horns with them. This can be a real fun for the kids. You can also ask your guests to wear a Rudolph nose. This would combine to create a wonderful atmosphere for Christmas.

Chapter: 6

Fascinating Ideas For Christmas Gifts

Giving out and receiving gifts form the essence of this holiday season. People spend days together selecting the gifts for their loved ones. Everyone wants to delight their friends and relatives with the most innovative and interesting gift. If you are also among those who love the excitement of selecting gifts and presenting your loved ones with your love then here are some interesting ideas.

6.1 Special Gift Ideas For Your Family and Friends:

Christmas is the time when you decorate your houses, throw parties and organize events. You would require lots of decorations and ornaments items. You can gifts some decorating stuff like painted glass, glowing stars or scented candles to your near and dear ones. Another interesting way to give out personalized gifts is to know who want what.

You can do a quick survey about your friends and relatives to find out what they want the most. Otherwise if you just know something that someone is really crazy about you can even get that. For example, if you know someone in the family who love to go out for fishing then get some fishing stuff for him. Similarly someone who loves reading can be gifted a novel or story book. If your mom loves cooking then gift her with a new cook book. Some other interesting gift ideas for ladies are dishes, serving bowls, and trays. Cosmetics are a hit with girls all time. So if you have a sister or niece in your family, then gift a manicure kit or a facial set. Flower vases also make for great gifts all the year round. They come in different shapes, sizes and color, so you have a wide option to choose from.

6.2 Buying Fun Christmas Toys For Children:

Kids are the ones who wait all the year round for their Christmas gifts. They keep counting days and planning on what to do for Christmas. If you have kids at home then you better delight them with fun and interesting gifts that make their patience worth. One of the best gift ideas for the children is the special Christmas toys. Here are some interesting toys to choose from this season.

Transformers Optimum Prime is a great choice for your kid. Your child will simply love this Christmas gift. Speed Racer Sky Jump Track Set is a yet another wonderful Christmas toy that your little one will fall in love with. Check this out. Some of the other interesting ones are LEGO Mindstorm NXT, Leap Frog Learn & Groove Musical Table, and Hannah Montana Malibu Beach House.

6.3 Christmas Gifts For Your Loving Wife:

Your wife takes care of the house and gives your family love throughout the year. This is the time when you can show her how much you care and love her. There are many interesting Christmas gifts for wife to make her feel truly special. If you wish to delight her then try to find out what she is actually longing for, and give her something that she wants to have badly.

Choosing gifts for women is not as easy as it seems, there are so many choices that you can be confused. Gifts can give out signals so you must be careful. If you have a girlfriend whom you have met recently, then giving an expensive gift will scare her. On the other hand if you give a cheap gift to your wife then she can make you sleep on the couch. So, you have to be really careful about this.

If you have time then visit some good shop and choose your gift. But, if you are pressed for time then you can simply check the gifts online and make your purchase. Some classic gift ideas could be photo frames, Christmas crystal bowls, Jewelry, or makeup boxes. If your wife is a working woman then you can consider presenting an authentic leather laptop case or leather travel bag. Smart travel kits and manicure kits also make for great gifts.

6.4 Gifts For Those Staying At Distance:

Christmas is the time when the distances are bridged and people get closer. If you have friends, relatives or loved ones staying far away in some other city or country then you would like to send them some gifts to make them feel that you are near. When a simple card would not suffice, you need to think of some ideas to present something good to those staying at distance.

Internet has made the world a small place and this can also help you in sending gifts to your loved ones staying at far away places. All you need to do is go to the website selling interesting Christmas gifts and choose the one that you want to be delivered. You can make the payment with your credit card and the gifts will be delivered to the address that you say. You can either choose to gift a nice chocolate holiday basket. The basket can be used for decorations even after all the treats inside it has been eaten up.

Chapter: 7

Top Family Vacation Ideas for Christmas Holiday

You have worked throughout the year and its time to take a break and enjoy Christmas. While you enjoy the warmth of get-togethers and gatherings, you can also take some time to enjoy a vacation with your family. There cannot be a better gift than this to present to your entire family. So, if you are wondering about how to enjoy a fun filled vacation along with your family then here are some interesting ideas:

7.1 Exotic Travel Destinations For Christmas:

Consider visiting Indiana with your family. It has everything to make your Christmas truly enjoyable. The wonderful lightings, Santa Clause and interesting Christmas find in this part of the world makes it truly interesting.

If you have kids then head to the Christmas markets that are packed with family fun and entertainment.

There are lots of festivities and merry making attached with the markets. Not only the kids, the adults can also have lots of fun shopping in the markets. You will find dazzling Christmas market throughout Europe, mostly in France, Switzerland, and Germany.

Mostly families meet at their grannies place to get together and have fun. This season you can change the rules and try something new. How about meeting up at one common destination and spending the holidays together. You can choose some of the hottest travel destinations and ask all your family members to come there directly. However this requires proper planning in advance so that you get all the accommodation and events booked.

Another interesting vacation idea for this Christmas would be to take the cruise. You can book the cruise lines that provide unique vacation packages. You can go around different places and visit lots of sightseeing place. This can be fun and truly exhilarating. There are some Christmas cruises that offer interesting activities for Christmas, New Year and other holiday times.

7.2 Great Things To do During Christmas:

If you love spending cozy Christmas times at granny's home then you needn't sacrifice that to enjoy exciting activities. You can enjoy various interesting things to do in Christmas before or after the holidays. You may also ask the entire family to gather at one vacation destination and have fun together. You can make advance bookings to ensure that you don't have any hassles when you reach the destination. Some of the must do things at Christmas include:

- Amazing Shopping at German style Christmas market in the heart of Chicago
- Fun at Santa clause, Indiana
- Christmas bash at Walt Disney World
- A Fun Christmas party on a cruise

- Indoor activities at Park Hotels

Chapter: 8

Fun Christmas Holiday Games Ideas

Christmas games are not only for children, it is for all who are young at heart. For the kids it is time to have enjoyment and make merry. While for the adults, it is the time to remember the childhood fun and silly moments. So, how about getting the holiday started with interesting Christmas games. Here are some interesting games ideas that you can try out when you have a gathering at your house.

Silly games for the adults: If you have a group that is fun loving then you can try out this silly game. You would require balloons and pantyhose. Ask your friends to blow the balloons and stuff them inside the pantyhose. The one who gets all the balloons stuffed inside it would sing the Christmas carols. You can take pictures of your friends playing and add these up to your memories.

Relay games for the adults: You can enjoy interesting Santa beard relay game. All you need is a bowl of cotton balls and some petroleum jelly. Make small groups. Each should have not more than 5 people. The first player in each team should start by picking cotton balls and attaching them to his chin, once the beard is made, he can run to the second player and give him the chance. The team which has all its members wearing beards becomes the winner. This beg truly demands a picture to be saved in the closet of memory.

The quieter groups can enjoy some quiet Christmas games, which those who have a kid in their heart can enjoy the children inspired games. If you are creative then you can come up with a hundred ideas of having fund and playing games during Christmas. Whatever the way is, the main motto is to have fun and make merry during the holiday season!