

Christmas Tradition

"Nothing ever seems too bad, too hard, or too sad when you've got a Christmas tree in the living room." - Nora Roberts

Christmas is a familiar tradition to most if not all of us, whether we celebrate it or not. Bells and holly, trademark snow and jolly music; the so-called giving season is here!

Although it historically began as a celebration of Christian significance - in line with its name - today Christmas is enjoyed by people of all faiths and followings. Some people's best and earliest memories are of Christmas, and how can you blame them. Hollywood Christmas blockbusters and all those classic tunes seem synonymous with today's distinct Christmas tradition, and certainly root themselves in our memory; leaving you either completely sick of anything that reminds you of stockings and tinsel, or nostalgically yearning for the next year to come around.

However, most of the true origins of our modern Christmas traditions are much more humble - far from the big screen and big voices. A large amount of the Christmas traditions we know today originated in Germany around the 16th century, with the holiday being widely and flamboyantly celebrated there to this day - with fantastically lit markets, unique foods specific to the season, and many of the same Christmassy activities that the rest of the world embraces in turn.

Carried by German colonists to the New World, these Christmas quirks quickly spread like wildfire through the U.S., including the famous hoisting of the Christmas tree and baking cookies. These things were mixed with more English traditions, such as hanging stockings upon the fireplace mantle, and gifts beneath the tree. However, the most important transformation that Christmas tradition underwent was yet to come in the Christmas of 1862, when German-American artist Thomas Nast drew a depiction of 'Santa Claus' visiting the Union Army during the United State's Civil War.

Today, Christmas-themed merchandise and accessories are a staple to the attic or basement of every household, and certainly something we all set aside time for when the time of year comes around.

A favorite subject in movies, and with songs themed over the season among some of the most well-renowned and best-selling in history, Santa Claus and his friends certainly have become a hit amongst kids and adults alike.

So, whether you have a winter Christmas or a summer one (here's looking at you, my Southern Hemispherian friends), make sure to relax, put your feet up, and absorb the season. Now is the time for giving, family, and - above all - peace. Merry Christmas, everyone!