

Some Facts about Christmas

We are now in the countdown to Christmas, that special time of year filled with traditions and family get-togethers.

Here are a few interesting facts about Christmas as Dec. 25 draws nearer:

- In 1836, Alabama was the first state in the nation to declare Christmas as a legal holiday.
- Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, came up with the idea of electric lights (it figures!) for Christmas trees in 1882. That was three years after Edison invented the electric light bulb.
- Franklin Pierce, the 14th president of the United States, was the first president to place a Christmas tree in the White House.
- The use of a Christmas wreath as a decoration on the front door, mantel or bay window symbolizes a sign of welcome and long life to all who enter.
- For every real Christmas tree harvested, two to three seedlings are planted in its place.
- The first Christmas tree retail lot in the United States was started in 1851 in New York by Mark Carr.
- A rose was pictured on the first stamp printed for the Christmas season.
- The poem commonly known as *'Twas the Night before Christmas* was originally titled *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*.
- A snowflake has six sides.
- The Germans made the first artificial Christmas trees out of dyed goose feathers.
- Each year, more than 3 billion Christmas cards are sent in the United States alone.
- All the gifts in the *Twelve Days of Christmas* song would equal 364 gifts.
- The "true love" mentioned in the song, *Twelve Days of Christmas*, does not refer to a romantic couple, but the Catholic Church's code for God. The person who receives the gifts represents someone who has accepted that code. For example, the "partridge in a pear tree" represents Christ. The two "turtledoves" represent the Old and New Testaments.
- The traditional three colors of Christmas are green, red, and gold. Green has long been a symbol of life and rebirth; red symbolizes the blood of Christ, and gold represents light as well as wealth and royalty.



So there you have it: Information you were just dying to know. But, perhaps, it will provide a little more sparkle to your yuletide conversation.

– Beecher Hunter