



2023

Christmas Greetings



The
News - Banner
Bluffton, Indiana

Simple ways to involve kids in holiday decorating

Millions of people across the globe feel that the holiday season is a magical time of year. Though those people come from all walks of life, it's likely that no group is as taken by the unique spirit of the holiday season as much as children.

Whether they're looking forward to Santa's arrival or preparing for a school holiday pageant, kids have much to be excited about come December. Parents can channel that enthusiasm by involving kids when decorating around the house this holiday season.

- Make homemade ornaments. The options are limitless when making holiday ornaments with children. From simple ornaments made from pine cones picked up outside to more complex projects designed for children nearing adolescence, parents can look to the internet to find design ideas and directions for hundreds of ornaments.

- Let kids lead the way when deco-



rating the tree. Families that celebrate Christmas can let kids lead the way when decorating their Christmas tree. Kids are likely to spend the weeks leading up to Santa's arrival gazing in awe at the tree, and knowing they decided where to place the various ornaments on it might make the season even more special for youngsters.

- Take kids along when choosing lawn ornaments. It's not safe to involve children when installing lighting displays, but kids will get a kick out of choosing inflatable lawn decorations and other items to place around the yard. Take kids along when buying new items and then seek their input when placing Frosty, Santa and his reindeer friends around the yard.

- Include kids in culinary decor. Many celebrants cannot imagine a holiday season without gingerbread houses and cookies. These traditions provide another great opportunity to involve children in holiday decorating. Set aside some time to make homemade gingerbread houses, which can be used as decorations before they're ultimately eaten. Cookies may not have the shelf life of a typical gingerbread house, but kids can pitch in and decorate cookies prior to a holiday party or family meal.

The spirit of the holiday season can be seen on the faces of children each December. Inviting kids to pitch in when decorating for the holidays can make the season even more special for its youngest celebrants.

Happy Holidays



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*For unto us
a child is born,
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN
Isaiah 9:6*

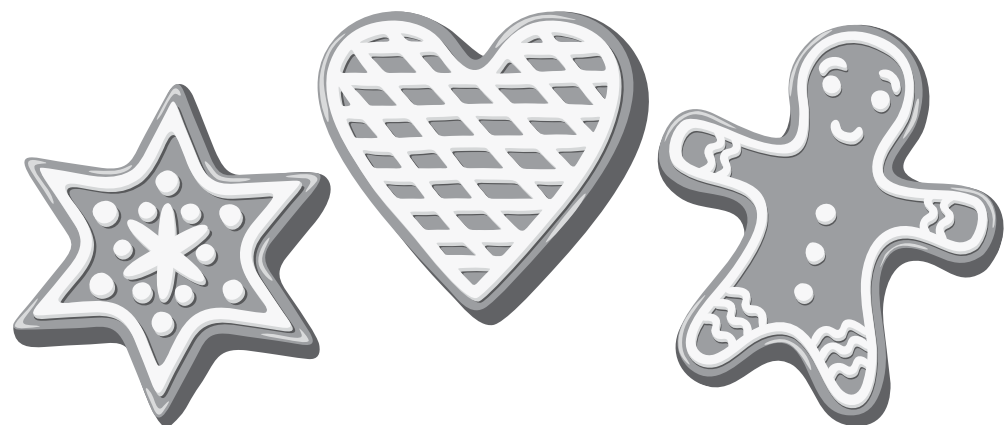


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Christian holiday season traditions

Many adjectives can be used to describe the holiday season, including festive, jolly and religious. Another word that may come to mind is tradition. Traditions factor heavily into holiday celebrations of faith and family.

According to The Public Religion Research Institute's "2020 Census of American Religion," 70 percent of Americans identify as Christian. Data from the Pew Research Center indicates that 55 percent of Canadians identified as Christians in 2018. Millions of Christians will be celebrating Christmas this year, and many of those celebrations will feature cherished traditions. Here are some popular Christian traditions during the holiday season.

Advent calendars and wreaths

The word "Advent" is derived from Latin and means "coming forward." Advent is the

four-week period preceding the Christmas celebration. Advent wreaths and calendars typically are part of Christmas in Christian households. Advent calendars are sold in stores or can be made as craft projects. Most of them contain small prizes like chocolate treats or other trinkets behind each date on the calendar. Advent wreaths have four candles (three purple and one pink). One is lit each Sunday of Advent. The evergreen wreath signifies continuous life.

Nativity scene

Another popular religious tradition is setting up a nativity scene. A nativity scene places the focus on Jesus Christ. One tradition involves moving nativity figurines closer to the manger leading up to Christmas, and placing the infant Jesus in the manger on Christmas Day.

Some churches and towns

also put on living nativity scenes, in which adults and children dress up, and together with live animals, depict the manger scene.

Christmas caroling

Caroling has a long history and was originally tied to winter solstice celebrations. Christians started singing carols to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many of the songs carolers sing are traditional religious hymns. During Advent, carols will herald the coming of Jesus. After Christmas, carols are even more joyous in nature.

The three masses

Midnight Mass is a special celebration that takes place in the late hours of the evening on Christmas Eve. It is the first liturgy of Christmas that begins at midnight. It originated in 430 AD under Pope Sixtus III in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The



popularity of Midnight Mass grew by the 12th century, when the celebration of three Masses on Christmas day was granted to all priests. Midnight Mass is treated as a solemn High Mass, which involves singing and praying by the light of candles. A Mass at dawn is the second

Christmas mass, followed by Mass of the Day, which is the midmorning Mass of the Christmas celebration.

Christmas is steeped in tradition. While the secular traditions are well known, Christians also embrace various religious traditions at this time of year.

Open Up To Christmas!

As we wrap up another year, We're filled with gratitude and cheer. For the gift of your friendship and goodwill, too. We're deeply grateful to each one of you!

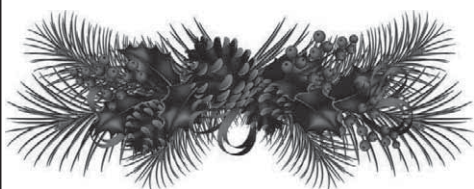


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But the angel said to them,

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11

May this glorious season fill your heart with hope, renew your faith and comfort your spirit. We greatly appreciate everything you have done to make our year special. **From our family to yours, best wishes for a blessed and merry Christmas.**



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Luke 2:11



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Tasty tidbits about eggnog

Eggnog is a rich and delicious beverage that has become synonymous with the most festive time of year. This milk-and egg-based concoction is tasty on its own, or it can be dressed up with other flavors and spiked with a favorite spirit when celebrating the holiday season with other adult partygoers.

December is National Eggnog Month, and December 24 is National Eggnog Day. There is no more perfect time of year to learn everything you can about eggnog — all the while sipping a cup of this creamy concoction. Indulge in these festive facts about the beverage, courtesy of Mental Floss, The Fact Site and Tastemade.

- Eggnog likely originated in the medieval period and was known as “posset,” a hot, milk-based drink made of spices and wine. Even though posset could be a cocktail, it also was used as a

remedy for colds and flu for its soothing properties.

- Milk, eggs and sherry used in the early recipes were difficult to come by, so when eggnog first appeared it was a drink only the wealthy could enjoy. That changed when eggnog was popularized in the American colonies, where dairy products and liquor were more readily available.

- Entymologists believe “eggnog” stems from the word “noggin,” which refers to small wooden mugs often used to serve strong ale, known by the slang word “nog.”

- In the Medieval period, it was risky to drink milk straight because it wasn’t pasteurized. Eggnog contained alcohol so that it would kill off any harmful bacteria in the milk.

- A typical homemade version of eggnog has roughly one egg per serving. However, commercial eggnog is regulated by the FDA and can only contain 1 percent of the product’s final weight in egg yolk solids. That stems from fear of raw egg and salmonella.

- President George Washington apparently enjoyed serving eggnog at Christmas, and even had his own special recipe (see below), according to the Old Farmer’s Almanac.

- There is no right or wrong alcohol to use when preparing eggnog. Distilled spirits like rum, sherry, cognac, and whiskey all have produced suitable eggnogs.

- Puerto Rican coquito is a traditional drink that is very similar to eggnog.

- Individuals concerned about eggs or milk in eggnog can enjoy a vegan recipe made from nut milk instead. Commercially produced vegan eggnog offerings are now more widely available.

- One of the more notable flavors in eggnog comes from the use of nutmeg. Nutmeg is a fragrant spice made from grinding the seed of the nutmeg tree.

Now that you’ve learned about eggnog, whip up a batch of George Washington’s original recipe this holiday season.

Eggnog

(George Washington’s original interpretation)

- 1 quart cream
- 1 quart milk
- 1 dozen tablespoons sugar
- 1 pint brandy
- 1/2 pint rye whiskey
- 1/2 pint Jamaican rum
- 1/4 pint sherry

Eggs (Washington forgot to include the number of eggs, so home chefs can improvise or use six, which seems to be the standard in traditional recipes)

Mix liquor first, then separate yolks and whites of eggs, add sugar to beaten yolks, mix well. Add milk and cream, slowly beating. Beat whites of eggs until stiff and fold slowly into mixture. Let sit in cool place for several days. Taste frequently.

Tip: Today’s recipe makers may want to set the eggnog in the refrigerator as the “cool place” of choice.

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Up on the Houssetop

The beloved Christmas song "Up on the Houssetop" is believed to have been inspired by another popular piece of holiday writing. Written by American composer Benjamin Hanby in 1864, "Up on the Houssetop" was at least in part inspired by Clement C. Moore's 1822 poem, "A Visit From St. Nicholas" (now more widely referred to as "The Night Before Christmas"). Since Hanby wrote the song nearly two centuries ago, it has been performed by countless artists. Two of the more notable renditions were performed by famed singing cowboy Gene Autry in 1953 and television personality Kimberley Locke in 2005. That those two renditions were performed more than half a century apart is a testament to the enduring popularity of "Up on the Houssetop," which can be heard in department stores and at holiday parties throughout December.

"Up on the Houssetop"

Up on the houssetop reindeer paws, out jumps good old Santa Claus

Down through the chimney with lots of toys
All for the little ones, Christmas joys
Ho, ho ho! Who wouldn't go? Ho, ho ho! Who wouldn't go?

Up on the houssetop, click, click, click
Down through the chimney with old Saint Nick

First comes the stocking of little Nell
Oh, dear Santa fill it well
Give her a dolly that laughs and cries
One that can open and shut her eyes
Ho, ho, ho! Who wouldn't go? Ho, ho, ho! Who wouldn't go?

Up on the houssetop, click, click, click
Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick

Look in the stocking of little Bill
Oh, just see what a glorious fill
Here's a hammer and lots of tacks
Whistling ball and a whip that cracks

Ho, ho ho! Who wouldn't go? Ho, ho, ho! Who wouldn't go?

Up on the houssetop, click, click, click
Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick



Oh Holy Night

*The Stars are Brightly
Shining, it is the Night of Our
Dear Savior's Birth.*



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O, Christmas Tree

Despite its title, the popular carol "O, Christmas Tree" was not originally a Christmas song. According to the University Libraries at The Ohio State University, the modern lyrics to the song referenced the evergreen tree as a symbol of constancy and faithfulness. Also sung and often referred to as "O Tannenbaum" ("tannenbaum" is the German word for "fir tree"), "O, Christmas Tree" is based on a traditional German folk song that can be traced back several centuries, though the modern lyrics have been credited to German composer Ernst Anschütz, who wrote the now widely recognizable words in 1824.

"O, Christmas Tree"

O Christmas Tree O, Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
They're green when summer days are
bright;

They're green when winter snow is
white.

O, Christmas Tree, O, Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
You give us so much pleasure!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
You give us so much pleasure!
How oft at Christmas tide the sight,
O green fir tree, gives us delight!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
You give us so much pleasure!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
They're green when summer days are
bright;
They're green when winter snow is
white.

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us!

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will toward men
— Luke 2:14



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wish you and your family all the
blessings of this holy season.

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Fireplace safety during the holiday season

Gatherings with family and friends are an integral component of the holiday season. Certain rooms in the house are on display more than others, with kitchens, dining rooms and living areas serving as popular places to congregate. Of course, fireplaces also serve as popular gathering spots in homes that feature them.

Lighting a fire in the hearth can make any space more cozy, but doing so comes with some hazards. Consider these fireplace safety tips in advance of the holiday entertaining season.

- Have the fireplace inspected and swept professionally. Prior to lighting the first fire of the season, ensure that a professional inspects the fireplace, chimney and venting to ensure everything is in good condition. The chimney also should be swept to remove excess

debris and buildup that could pose a fire hazard.

- Keep items away from the fireplace. Wrapping paper, rugs, clothing, magazines, and the like should be kept at least three feet away from the flames, suggests the American Red Cross. Also, make sure decorations are hung securely and a safe distance away from the fire.

- Check your smoke alarms. Be sure the home has working smoke alarms on every level of the house. And keep a fire extinguisher close to the fireplace.

- Never burn wrapping paper. Wrapping paper contains additives, like dyes, that make it burn extremely hot. Do not think of discarding wrapping paper by burning it in the fireplace.

- Keep the tree a safe distance away. Although it makes for the perfect Christmas photo backdrop, Christ-




mas trees and fireplaces should not be near each other. Also, the Christmas tree is not safe to burn in the fireplace after the season, as the wood has not been properly dried or seasoned.

- Use a screen on the fireplace. Make sure the fireplace is properly covered by a screen to stop embers from escaping when the wood pops and sparks. The screen also can help keep decorations and other objects from


falling into the fire.

- Keep the fireplace clean. Promptly remove any ash and debris from the fireplace after it has cooled to improve indoor air quality and provide greater control over the next fire when it is burned, advises the American Society of Home Inspectors.

Fireplaces bring warmth and add ambiance to a home, particularly during the holidays. But safety must prevail when lighting fireplaces.



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Away In a Manger

“Away In a Manger” is a popular Christmas carol that has endured for well over a century. One of the first known appearances of the song was in the journal *The Christian Cynosure* in 1882, which indicates it is now more than 140 years old. That publication titled the hymn “Luther’s Cradle Song,” and a brief description of the song preceding the lyrics indicates it was written by the German religious reformer Martin Luther. However, the University Libraries at The Ohio State University note that historians have since dispelled that notion, with some suggesting the song was written to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Luther’s birth (the reformer was born in 1483). Regardless of its authorship, the song remains a popular and moving hymn that can be heard far and wide during the holiday season.



“Away In a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven, to live with Thee there.

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Christmas
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Thanks for being a bright spot in our year. We wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2022.

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A Visit from St. Nicholas

By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



Hallelujah!

The Savior is Born.

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Merry Christmas!



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Season's Greetings

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*No matter how you say it,
we hope it's grand!*



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Fun books to read to children this holiday season

The holiday season is a special time of year for people of all ages, but children might be the most enthusiastic celebrants come December. Children spend much of the holiday season anticipating the arrival of the man in the red suit, and that enthusiasm can be contagious.

Families have their own unique traditions during the holiday season, but one popular way to harness kids' enthusiasm between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day is to read them holiday stories. There's no shortage of great holiday books for kids, but here are a handful that kids may remember well into adulthood.

- "The Polar Express," by Chris Van Allsburg: The beloved tale is the story of a young boy who boards a mysterious train bound for the North Pole.

- "The Littlest Elf," by Brandi Dougherty: Part of a series, this story focuses on a tiny elf named Oliver and a series of misadventures as he navigates his way through Santa's workshop.

- "Olive, the Other Reindeer," by Vivian Walsh: Olive is no ordinary rein-

deer. In fact, Olive is a dog who heads to the North Pole believing she is a reindeer. Her decision to join Santa's team ultimately benefits the big man and his trusty reindeer.

- "The Miracle of the First Poinsettia: A Mexican Christmas Story," by Joanne Oppenheim: A little girl named Juanita is the star of this retelling of a traditional Mexican tale with a valuable lesson.

- "Gingerbread Mouse: A Christmas Holiday Book for Kids," by Katy Bratun: A fallen tree branch almost ruins Christmas for Mouse, whose determination and resourcefulness mixed in with a little Christmas magic ensures she finds a place to call home in time for the holidays.

- "A Night in Santa's Great Big Bag," by Kristin Kladstrup: Santa saves the day in this tale starring a young boy's favorite stuffed animal, whose excitement for Christmas compels him to climb into Santa's big bag of presents on Christmas Eve.

- "Santa Claus and the Three Bears," by Maria Modugno: This twist on the

popular tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" finds three unsuspecting bears encountering a familiar fellow in a red suit upon returning home after a nighttime walk.

- "Twas the Night Before Christmas: Edited by Santa Claus for the Benefit of Children of the 21st Century," by Clement C. Moore: Parents will appreciate this updated version of the popular tale that, among other things, has removed the reference to Santa smoking.

- "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" by Dr. Seuss: Children can join generations of fans that came before them as they hear the redemption story of the Grinch who was once determined to ruin Christmas for the happy people of Whoville.

- "The Nutcracker," by the New York City Ballet: The classic story is retold based on famed choreographer George Balanchine's production.

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Reading new and classic holiday stories to children is one tradition any family can embrace.

Blessed Be The Day

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Silent Night

“Silent Night” is one of many Christmas carols that has been around for quite some time. The song reached its 200th anniversary in 2018. Composed by Austrian primary school teacher Franz Xaver Gruber to lyrics written by fellow Austrian and Roman Catholic priest Joseph Mohr in 1818, “Silent Night” was first performed on Christmas Eve at St. Nicholas parish church in the small Austrian village of Oberndorf. The song has since been performed by countless artists, including the legendary actor and singer Bing Crosby.

“Silent Night”

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, “Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!”



Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!

Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
“Alleluia” to our King:
“Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born.”



**We're all aglow with happiness
and filled with gratitude too,
as we celebrate the holidays
with ones we cherish, like you!**

We'd like to thank all of our kind friends and neighbors in this community for making us feel at home here. May your holiday be merry, bright and filled with the blessings of friendship, family, peace, health, happiness and love.



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*Merry
Christmas*

**Wishing you many blessings
this holiday season!**

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Full Charge
of Merry*

As we get set to light up another Christmas, we're sending our brightest wishes for a happy and healthy season to everyone in this community.

**We really appreciate
being a part of your
year, and we hope this
holiday season hooks
you up with every
wish on your list.**

*Thank You &
Happy Holidays!*



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**Wishing You a Whole
Lot of Happy**



As the holiday season shifts into gear, we'd like to wish our customers and friends here the very best. Folks like you are the key to our success, and we thank you for your trust and confidence.

We wish you a very magical Christmas and a New Year filled with happiness, health and many long drives.

Happy Holidays!

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As 2023 concludes, The Wells County Foundation, Inc. would like to thank those who have been instrumental in furthering its mission of improving the quality of life in Wells County.



To our donors: If not for faithful supporters like you, we wouldn't exist. So thank you for supplying the funds which allow us to make a difference in the quality of life for Wells County residents.

Thank You for Giving!

To our volunteers: By choosing to labor for our community without a fee, you have proven that your time and talents are priceless.

Thank You for Serving!

To our non-profit agency partners: You make a real difference in the lives of those you serve.

Thank You for Caring!



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Festive facts about oft-misunderstood fruitcake

Certain sights and sounds are ingrained in the holiday season, from twinkling lights to carols piping over retailers' sound systems. Amid the shelves of holiday wares and delicacies, fruitcake makes its annual appearance.

Fruitcake, sometimes referred to as plum cake or Christmas cake, can be prepared in various ways. However, a dense bundt-type cake dotted with dried, candied fruit and often soaked in rum or brandy has become the standard. Loathed or loved, seldom anything in between, fruitcake is typically mocked as the ultimate regift. But just like Charlie Brown's scant Christmas tree, which was initially mocked, it's time to see fruitcake in a new light. Consider these fruitcake fun facts.

- The texture of fruitcake can vary from cake-like to more of a sweet bread like brioche. Italians dig into panettone, Germans delight with stollen and Jamaicans serve black cake.

- The first fruitcakes weren't eaten. According to historians, fruitcakes were initially made by ancient Egyptians, who tucked the desserts into the tombs with their dead so a sweet treat could be enjoyed in the afterlife.

- Fruitcake gained popularity as military rations, as everyone from Roman soldiers to Crusaders found fruitcake provided a diverse array of nutrients and an energy boost in battle. Fruitcake also stores well, which can be beneficial for military personnel in battle.

- Fruitcake seemingly is indestructible. While it likely cannot last forever, Tastemade says if a fruitcake is kept in an airtight container and stored in a dark, cool place, it could be reheated years after being baked. Starch crystals and

dried fruit in the cake will release stored water when warmed, rehydrating the cake.

- Historical accounts indicate Romans were among the first people to eat fruitcake, which they might have enjoyed as early as 100 A.D. A version called "satura" was made by mixing stale bread with pine nuts, pomegranate seeds, raisins, and then soaking it in a barley mash and an alcoholic beverage brewed from honey.

- Fruitcake became a popular dish to serve at British royals' weddings. Queen Victoria, Princess Diana and Prince William served fruitcake at their receptions.

- The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. has a fruitcake on display. It traveled into space on Apollo 11 in 1969, but was never eaten.

- Seth Greenberg, who worked in his family's New York City bakery, attests that fruitcake is delicious when made with the right ingredients. The neon-colored, dry and overly sweet fruit that many bakers use is the problem with poor cakes. But proper ingredients like brandy, glace cherries, apricots, figs, and dates can make for a delicious fruitcake.

- The average fruitcake weighs between two and three pounds. However, the heaviest fruitcake on record, according to "The Guinness Book of World Records," came in at 9,596 pounds. Despite the hefty weight of this cake, it's only around 92 to 160 calories per serving.

Regardless of its unfavorable reputation, fruitcake remains an unwavering holiday tradition. The website Serious Eats reports that more than two million fruitcakes are sold each year.