

# Outlawing Christmas and other Christmas Fun Facts



Posted On November 14, 2014

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## FACT #01

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. The pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. By contrast, in the Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all and passed without incident. After the American Revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. In fact, Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.

But really, isn't Christmas a state of mind? A time when we incorporate the ideals of the Saturnalia, giving to and recognizing those less fortunate, combined with the celebration of belief and the coming Spring.

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## FACT #02

Each year, 30-35 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States alone. There are 21,000 Christmas tree growers in the United States, and trees usually grow for about 15 years before they are sold

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## FACT #03

Today, in the Greek and Russian orthodox churches, Christmas is celebrated 13 days after the 25th, which is also referred to as the Epiphany or Three Kings Day. This is the day it is believed that the three wise men finally found Jesus in the manger.

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## FACT #04

In the [Middle Ages](#), Christmas celebrations were rowdy and raucous—a lot like today’s Mardi Gras parties.

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## FACT #05

The first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in Captain John Smith’s 1607 [Jamestown](#) settlement.

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## FACT #06

Poinsettia plants are named after Joel R. Poinsett, an American minister to [Mexico](#), who brought the red-and-green plant from Mexico to America in 1828.

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## FACT #07

The Salvation Army has been sending [Santa Claus](#)-clad donation collectors into the streets since the 1890s.

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## **FACT #08**

Rudolph, “the most famous reindeer of all,” was the product of Robert L. May’s imagination in 1939. The copywriter wrote a poem about the reindeer to help lure customers into the Montgomery Ward department store. Interesting, right? But those are nothing compared to some very odd traditions around the world.

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## **FACT #09**

In South Africa residents chow down on deep fried caterpillars as part of their Christmas feast.

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## **FACT #10**

In Catalonia Christmas decorations include the small figure of a defecating man – What? Are you serious?

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## **FACT #11**

In Norway cleaning is forbidden, and all brooms are hidden so no one gets the urge to sweep up.

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## **FACT #12**

In Japan it is now a tradition for families to go to KFC on Christmas Eve. Wonder who started that one.

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## **FACT #13**

In Venezuela there is a tradition of going to Christmas mass on roller skates.

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## **FACT #14**

Germans hide a pickle (no snickering please) and the first child to find it gets a gift.

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## **FACT #15**

In the Ukraine they decorate their Christmas trees with artificial spider webs.

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## **FACT #16**

Wales has a tradition where a villager parades through the street holding the skull of a mare on a stick.

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## **FACT #17**

They have the Yule Cat in Iceland, those who don't get new clothes for Christmas are said to be devoured by the cat. If that isn't shopping incentive....

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## **FACT #18**

In Italy they don't have Santa Claus, they have a gift giving witch named Befana

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## **FACT #19**

In South Africa there is the Christmas Ghost.

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## **FACT #20**

In America people get dressed up as Santa Claus and go to parties.