



The History of Christmas Traditions

Christmas is a time for traditions. Your family might have their own traditions. However, many traditions have been going for years but do we really know how they started?

Going Christmas Crackers!

The sight of a Christmas cracker lying on the dinner table has been a British tradition for many decades.

Crackers began around 1845 with a London sweet maker named Tom Smith. He tried selling sweets in individual wrappers but they did not do very well.

One night, he was sitting in front of his open fire, listening to the crackle of the wooden logs as they burnt. He had the idea to add a snap to the wrappers of his sweets so they would crack when they were pulled apart. This resulted in the early versions of the Christmas cracker.

Did You Know...?

Crackers were originally called 'cosaques' after the Cossack soldiers, known for their love of firing guns into the air when riding their horses at speed.



Christmas Pudding

Christmas puddings began in medieval England. Sausages were stuffed with fruits, grains and spices to preserve the meat for longer. In 1647, Oliver Cromwell was leading England as the king had been removed from the throne. Oliver Cromwell supported Parliament banning carol singing, Christmas puddings, Yule logs and nativity scenes as it was seen as wrong and ungodly. In 1660, there was a king back on the English throne and Christmas was celebrated again.

The Roasted Bird

Many people had goose for their Christmas dinner as they were cheap and easy to come by. Only rich people had turkey. However, by the end of the 1900s, most families had turkey.



The Victorian Christmas

Prince Albert brought some traditions from Germany that we still continue when he married Queen Victoria in 1840.

Queen Victoria was brought up decorating a tree indoors at Christmas. However, her husband was very enthusiastic about the tradition and decorated the tree with wax candles and sugared plums.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made Christmas a time for family. They loved spending the day having feasts, giving presents and playing games. These traditions still form an important part of modern Christmas celebrations.



Questions

1. When were Christmas crackers first made? Tick one.

- ☐ 1845
- ☐ 1945
- ☐ 1854
- ☐ 1954

2. Find and copy one word from the text which is an example of onomatopoeia.

3. Why were crackers originally called **cosaques**?

4. Why did most people have goose for their Christmas meat? Tick one.

- ☐ It was small.
- ☐ It was tastier.
- ☐ It was less expensive.
- ☐ It was more expensive.

5. From which country was Queen Victoria's husband? Tick one.

- ☐ France
- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Spain
- ☐ England

6. Which word closely matches the meaning of **enthusiastic**? Tick one.

- ☐ impatient
- ☐ keen
- ☐ indifferent
- ☐ happy

7. It could be said that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert enjoyed Christmas. How do you know?
