



Mrs Claus explains Christmas traditions

Video zone

Hi BTN. My name is Kevin and my question is, 'Why do we have Christmas traditions?'

Oh, Santa. Santa. Oh, what a surprise, another one for Santa. Santa. Nobody ever wants anything from Mrs Claus, do they? Oh, hang on a minute, what's this?



'Dear Mrs Claus, I normally write to Santa ...' Oh, typical. '... but I hear you're a bit of a history buff.' Oh, oh, well, I am! 'And I was wondering if you could tell me all about Christmas traditions.' Oh, this is so exciting. I am just the person!

Well, some people say that Christmas actually started out as an ancient pagan midwinter festival called Saturnalia. But for the past couple of thousand years, Christmas has been all about celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Lots of people still celebrate Christmas even if they aren't Christian by getting together with family, giving each other gifts, preparing special meals and getting into the Christmas spirit.

The festive season usually kicks off with the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree. But it's a bit strange really, isn't it? Having a tree in your house and putting things on it! Well, it's believed the idea of modern Christmas trees started in Germany in the 16th century by this man, Martin Luther, who decorated a tree with small candles to remind him of the stars shining through the trees in the woods.

Then there's the Christmas stocking tradition! A stocking is usually put out on Christmas Eve so my husband can come and fill it with presents. If you've been good, that is. But legend has it that it all started when Saint Nicholas put gold coins in the stockings of three poor sisters one night when they were left drying over a fireplace.

On Christmas Day it's also tradition to pull Christmas crackers or bonbons. This all started back in the 1800s when English lolly maker, Tom Smith, added a love message into his bonbon lollies and found a way to make them pop when they were opened. Over time, they've evolved into the crackers we all know and love, with fun party hats ... oh, and jokes inside!



'What did Mrs Claus say to Santa Claus when she looked up into the sky?'

'Looks like rain, dear!'

Oh, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. 'Rain, dear' – 'reindeer'. Get it? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

In Australia, you might have noticed that a lot of your traditions are a little bit European and that's because when Europeans settled there they brought Christmas with them.

But I hear it's usually a bit too hot down under for things like snowmen, one-horse open sleighs and even those delightful Christmas sweaters. So it's nice to see some of you Aussies have put your own twist on Christmas.

All these traditions are what makes Christmas the most wonderful time of the year! Oh. Anyway, I'd better get back to the toy factory and feed the reindeer. But remember to have yourself a merry little Christmas!

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