

# Some of our most beloved holiday traditions have interesting origins

Christmastime is upon us. The presents are purchased and wrapped. The stockings will soon be hung on the fireplace mantle. Mistletoe is pinned above the front entryway, and poinsettias add rich color to home decor.

Tradition is integral come the holiday season. Throughout the month of December, traditions fill people's days and comprise the many reasons why we decorate, celebrate and dine the way we do this time of year. But few may know the origins of some of the most beloved holiday traditions.

## Christmas tree

Christmas Trees are almost everywhere this time of year. The use of evergreen trees predates Christmas and is associated with the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which celebrated the agricultural god Saturn with partying and gift-giving. During the winter solstice, green branches served as a reminder that spring would arrive anew. Germans are credited with first bringing evergreens into their homes and decorating them.

## Mistletoe

Mistletoe is hung in doorways, and couples who stand beneath are encouraged to share a kiss. The tradition of

hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. Mistletoe was thought to bring good luck to a household and ward off evil spirits. The custom of kissing under mistletoe can be traced to England. Originally, a berry was picked from the sprig of mistletoe before the person could be kissed. When all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing.

## Christmas stockings

The Christmas stockings of today may be a byproduct of various traditions. One such tradition dates back to a Dutch custom in which children would leave shoes full of food to feed St. Nicholas' donkeys, and then St. Nicholas would leave small gifts in return.

Another origin story of Christmas stockings can be traced to the 12th century, when nuns would leave socks full of nuts, fruit and tangerines for the poor. This is why some people still put tangerines in Christmas stockings.

## Christmas bells

Church bells ring for many special services, including Christmas mass. During Christmas midnight mass in



the Catholic Church, the altar bells may be rung while the priest says the "Gloria." Bells are part of caroling, and jingling bells are associated with sleighs and Santa's reindeer.

Christmas is rife with traditions that date back ages.



Satisfy everyone's sweet tooth with this creamy chocolate dessert.

## Classic chocolate truffles

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan, bring the cream to a boil. Meanwhile, chop the chocolate into small, uniform pieces.
2. Once the cream starts to bubble, turn off the heat and stir in the chocolate and butter. Whisk in the chocolate until it's completely melted and smooth. In a large bowl, pour the mixture and cover it with

- plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.
  3. Using a melon baller, shape 24 small chocolate balls and carefully put them on a plate. Place them in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes.
  4. In a small bowl, sift together the cocoa powder and powdered sugar. Coat each truffle in the mixture.
- You can easily modify this recipe to your liking. For example, you could add a small amount of almond extract, orange zest or your favourite liqueur. Alternatively, you may want to coat your truffles with slivered nuts, chopped coconut or even crushed candy canes. Feel free to be creative.

Wishing You a Merry

# CHRISTMAS

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

At this Most Wonderful Time of the Year  
I wanted to once again express how blessed I feel  
for the honor of representing the great people of  
Senate District 43 and the Great State of Mississippi.

Thank You for this Opportunity to Serve  
and for Your Support & Friendship

**Dennis DeBar, Jr.**  
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## Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

— At this special time of year, we offer our gratitude and best wishes to all our friends and neighbors. Your friendship means the world to us. Thanks.

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