



## Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells!

Recently, I traveled to a Caribbean Island. The resort where I stayed was already decorated for Christmas with pink flamingo statues wearing Christmas coats and hats and a magnificent Christmas tree in the entrance hall! Although this was all quite festive, I must say I prefer spending Christmas in my hometown (Quebec City) where there is snow, and I can go downhill skiing 😊. What about you

## Origins of Christmas<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Christmas is a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus. The English term Christmas (“mass on Christ’s day”) is relatively recent. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christmas has been a family holiday observed by Christians and non-Christians alike and marked by an exchange of gifts.

December 25 was first identified as the date of Jesus’ birth by Sextus Julius Africanus in 221 and later became the universally accepted date. One explanation for the origin of this date is that December 25 was the Christianizing of the *dies solis invicti nati*, a popular holiday in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice. Not all Christians celebrate Christmas on the same day though. In countries with large populations of Orthodox Christians, such as Ukraine and Romania, Christmas Day is on January 7.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christmas festivities and services became widespread with the rise of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England along with authors like Washington Irving and Charles Dickens emphasizing family, children, kind-heartedness, gift-giving, and Santa Claus (for Irving) or Father Christmas (for Dickens). In America, interest in Christmas was revived in the 1820s by several short stories by Irving depicting the warm-hearted English Christmas festivities he attended while staying in Aston Hall (England). Decorated trees date back to Germany in the Middle Ages, with German and other European settlers popularizing Christmas trees in America by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

During World War I, a series of informal truces took place for Christmas between opposing armies, ranging from promises not to shoot, to friendly socializing, gift giving and even sport between enemies. These incidents became a well-known part of popular memory. They have been described as a symbol of common humanity even in the darkest situations and used to demonstrate the ideals of Christmas.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas>

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christmas>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/history/general-history/facts-about-christmas/>

## Fun facts<sup>5</sup>

- Yule logs were part of ancient winter solstice celebrations, but it was Americans who turned the wood burning into must-see TV. Back in 1966, WPIX-TV in New York City aired a continuous 17-second loop of a fireplace for three hours along with holiday music.
- Candy canes date back to 1670 in Germany. The red and white sticks arrived in the US in 1847, when a German-Swedish immigrant living in Ohio hanged them on a tree.
- From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and lawbreakers were fined five shillings.
- Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870.
- The first official Christmas card was printed in 1843 in England with the message "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." The idea of a mailed winter holiday greeting gradually caught on in both Britain and the U.S., with Kansas City-based Hall Brothers (now Hallmark) creating a folded card sold with an envelope in 1915.
- Poinsettias, America's Christmas flower, are native to Central America and were brought to the US (and given their name) by the country's first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, botanist Joel Roberts Poinsett, in the 1820s.
- Each year, 25-30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the US alone. There are about 15,000 Christmas tree farms in the US, and trees usually grow 4 to 15 years before being sold.
- "Silent Night" is the most-recorded Christmas song in history. Since 1978, more than 733 versions have been copyrighted<sup>6</sup>.

## Hotels going over the top for Christmas<sup>7,8,9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas/g2972/surprising-christmas-facts/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=arb\\_ga\\_ghk\\_md\\_pmx\\_ca\\_urlx\\_20310565167&gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQIAj\\_CrBhD-ARIsAliMxT8O7X0nk3aU5IiiUc3NaNF3L1zd9-Zm07vtqm4JCPY3m-wWAYI6nuMaAm3MEALw\\_wcB](https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas/g2972/surprising-christmas-facts/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=arb_ga_ghk_md_pmx_ca_urlx_20310565167&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQIAj_CrBhD-ARIsAliMxT8O7X0nk3aU5IiiUc3NaNF3L1zd9-Zm07vtqm4JCPY3m-wWAYI6nuMaAm3MEALw_wcB)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.visitpa.com/article/10-iconic-hotels-making-holidays-merry-and-bright>

<sup>8</sup> <https://matadornetwork.com/read/holiday-hotels-america/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.familiesgotravel.com/2018/11/top-hotel-christmas-decorations/>

- The Historic Hotel Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) showcases more than 35,000 twinkling lights, 7-foot toy soldiers, life-size Nutcrackers, a model of the hotel made of gingerbread, and countless decorated Christmas trees and wreaths!
- Each year, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess (Arizona) turns the Sonoran Desert into a winter wonderland. The conversion involves over six million LED lights, 6,000 square feet of actual ice in the shape of a desert skating rink, an alpine skate track and 120-foot sledding hill and, a s'mores-ready campfire in the Christmas tree forest.
- The Ritz-Carlton on Amelia Island (Florida) is docking a giant gingerbread pirate ship in its lobby (open to the public). The ship is made with more than 600 cookie pieces and is crewed by fondant pirates armed with chocolate cannons.

Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year for hotels. What better way for guests to show their gratitude to staff than giving a nice tip? Unfortunately, nowadays, very few of us carry cash around. This is why offering an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go** is a win-win for guests and employees alike.

**Tip&Go**: the face behind your comfort 😊!

**Francis Léonard CEO**



**[www-tip-go.com](http://www-tip-go.com)**