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Where Does Christmas Come From

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mon candies to resemble a spray of holly, or green gumdrops may be sliced and cut into the shape of leaves with candied cherries cut to simulate berries. Other Christmas cakes are made by frosting little rounded cup cakes on all sides with boiled frosting. Roll at once in shredded cocoanut to look like snowballs.

Individual pies, the crust baked over the bottom of gem pans, then filled with the prepared mixture, are good topped with whipped cream or ice cream. These are most festive if into each pie is stuck a gay little cardboard Santa Claus, Christmas tree, lighted candle, or other favor.

The old-time Christmas plum pudding was often brought to the table ablaze with burning brandy. But since this is no longer possible, we may use Fourth of July sparklers. Stick several into the pudding and light just before entering the room, as they burn out quickly. The plum pudding should be placed on a round plate or tray and garnished with sprays of holly, mistletoe or festoons of pop-corn and cranberries.

Plum Pudding

1 lb. suet, powdered
1 lb. raisins
1 lb. currants
½ lb. citron
¼ lb. lemon peel
1 glass currant jelly
1½ tsp. mace
10 eggs
½ cup fruit juice
¼ lb. almonds
2 tsp. salt
2½ cups brown sugar
1¼ cups bread flour
2 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. nutmeg
1½ tsp. soda

Clean, cut and chop fruit. Combine dry ingredients and fruit. Beat eggs and add liquid and jelly. Combine wet and dry ingredients. Steam in covered greased molds 6 hours. This makes four pound coffee tins almost full. These may

be best stored in the coffee tins, as the fat hardens when cold. To serve, reheat in the tins in boiling water. The pudding will be very soft and very rich.

Meringues

Meringues make pretty little Christmas sweets that are not too filling.

1 cup egg whites
¼ tsp. salt
2 cups gr. sugar
½ tsp. vanilla

Beat egg whites with a wire whisk until very stiff. Add 2 tbsp. sugar. Beat well, add 4 tbsp. sugar, beat until mixture leaves an opening when cut with a knife. Fold in the rest of the sugar lightly. Drop by teaspoonsful onto un-buttered dampened wrapping paper fitted over the bottom of an inverted dripping pan. Press half a red or green maraschino cherry on the top of each. Set into a cool oven and let dry out slowly for one hour. Avoid too much heat as they burn and stick to the paper. When correctly baked, the meringues will be a delicate brown and can be easily lifted from the paper. These may be made larger and used as cases to hold fresh fruit or berries and whipped cream. This recipe makes three dozen big shells.

Of course, no Christmas dinner is complete without candies and nuts. One of the easiest ways to salt nuts is to use fresh fat or cooking oil. Fry the nuts like doughnuts, using a wire basket of small mesh so that the nuts may be quickly raised out of the hot fat. Care should be taken to avoid over-browning. If mixed nuts are desired, fry each kind separately as their time of browning varies. Pecans must be very closely watched. To salt filberts, fry with the skins on, then roll between towels and the skins come off easily.

Stuffed Prunes or Dates

Remove stones from prunes and dates. Fill the cavities made in each with the

stoned dates. Press into shape and roll in powdered sugar.

Deviled Raisins

Clean and stem large raisins, cook in hot olive oil until plump. Drain on paper. Sprinkle with salt and paprika.

Christmas Mints

Christmas mints are quickly made by melting fondant over hot water until it is of a creamy consistency. Color one-third red and flavor with oil of clove; color one-third green and flavor with wintergreen, and the last one-third leave white and flavor with peppermint. To make a pointed bag, cut an 8-inch square of heavy muslin or ticking into two triangular pieces. Sew the straight edges together, leaving the bias edges at the top. Cut off the point, leaving a quarter-inch opening. Use a metal table top or oiled paper as a working surface. Put the creamy fondant into the bag and squeeze gently. If one is careful, small, uniform patties may be made. Do not overheat the fondant as this causes white spots. Do not fill the bag too full or squeeze too rapidly.

A Fruit Confection

A good confection for children is made by grinding thru the food chopper 1 lb. raisins, 1 lb. figs, 1 lb. dates, ½ lb. nuts, rind of 2 oranges or ¼. candied orange peel. Salt well and add the juice of one lemon. Roll into 1-inch rolls. Press firmly into shape. Let stand one hour. Cut into ¼-inch slices and roll in powdered sugar.

Pop Corn Balls

Pop corn balls make an attractive centerpiece. For an after-dinner sweet, these balls should be not over 2 inches in diameter. To make a festive table, press into some of the balls the end of a streamer of red and green baby ribbon. Pile the pop corn balls in a crystal glass bowl or in a pretty low basket. Stretch the streamers in alternating colors out
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Where Does Christmas Come From

By GERTRUDE MURRAY

"WHY do we have Christmas trees, Aunt Jean?"

Just another of little Billy's "ever and always" questions, but it did start me thinking. Where do we get our mistletoe story, and why do we have Christmas trees?

And so, Aunt Jean, who, though never really having thought about it, supposed that Christmas trees just happened, discovered that behind nearly all of our customs is some interesting old tradition, even the day we celebrate.

Long before the birth of Christ the ancient people celebrated the day which is our Christmas as being the birth of the Sun. It was a time of peace on earth, good will toward men as our own Christmas. Since the exact date of Christ's birth was never recorded, the early Christmas changed the festival from the birthday of the Sun to that of the Son, and thus many of the customs remained the same, except that they came to have a finer significance.

From the English we have obtained many of our present-day customs. Mistletoe had long been a part of Christmas

ceremonies, but the English gave to it the meaning it has today. The custom of feasts on Christmas originated with the early Saxons and the same games which the children of today play after the feast were played in those long-ago days by the fair little Anglo-Saxons.

But to Germany must go the credit for the time-honored Christmas tree. For a week before Christmas thousands of fir trees are hauled to the German cities until one really wonders where they will all be put. If people cannot purchase trees for themselves, societies provide them. They are found not alone in homes, stores, and elsewhere, but on the graves of the dead to keep green the memory of these dead. The Germans have their Kriss Kringle, similar to our Santa Claus, who goes about on Christmas eve to find those children who deserve gifts and those who deserve a birch rod.

From our own early days has come our true happy celebration of today. The early Virginians did much decorating, feasting and merry-making. The first Christmas celebrated in America was in

1620, after the landing of the pilgrims, who, although they had suffered so much, were anxious that Christmas should not die out in the new country.

The Yuletide season has been strangely connected with events in the history of our country. It was on Christmas eve that Washington crossed the Delaware, and a year from that time the soldiers were enveloped at Valley Forge. On Christmas eve, in 1783, General Washington laid aside his military accoutrements for life and took on those of a civilian, and at Christmas time in 1791 the nation was mourning the death of our greatest statesman and leader. Abraham Lincoln made his two famous proclamations on Christmas.

And so Aunt Jean found, rather to her amazement, how closely customs, and countries, and Christmas, and even history, are connected; how really human everything is after all; and that everyone in the world is very much like everyone else in the world even tho we don't think so. Little Billy, you open many vistas for thought.