

It's JINGLE BELLS... CHRISTMAS time



Poinsettias

The 'Flower of the Holy Night' follows an enchanting tale. A child on the way to a nativity play, had gathered weeds off the road to offer a gift to baby Jesus. The child was teased by the other children for this humble gift. Yet once the child placed the green blooms on the manger, they turned into beautiful, red, star-shaped flowers. It was named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first United States Ambassador to Mexico.

Christmas tree

The first mention of a tree decorated for Christmas was in Latvia in 1510. An Oak tree was being felled to make a stake for a human sacrifice. Boniface, a missionary, was passing that way. Seeing what was about to happen he intervened. Thereafter, he felled the tree in one blow. To everyone's amazement, a new fir tree sprung from the centre. It was a holy tree, the tree of the Christ Child and a symbol of Christ's promise of eternal life. After listening to Boniface, everyone started to take a tree to their homes, decorate it and place gifts around the tree. This has now become a Christmas tradition and symbolises life.



Christmas cake

The Christmas cake is also called Rice cake in Sri Lanka. Its shape, colours and texture is different around the world. The Christmas cake was created by the English. Initially, it was a plum porridge eaten on the eve of Christmas. When dry fruits and spices were added, the mixture thickened. In time, eggs, butter and flour were added too. Once baked, the soggy porridge became a cake. According to legend, the spices are added in remembrance of the spices the wise men gave to Jesus.



Santa Claus

The jolly old man with rosy cheeks will never disappoint whether you're naughty or nice. He comes all the way from the North Pole on his gift laden sleigh drawn by the reindeers. However, Santa Claus is believed to be Saint Nicholas who lived in Turkey. He was a Bishop and is remembered as a kind and generous person, who went out at night gifting presents to those in need. There is an interesting story of Nicholas helping a father to give his three daughters in marriage. Having received a bag of gold for the eldest and second daughters when they reached the age of marriage, their father wanted to see who was helping them. Keeping watch one night, Nicholas was found and his identity revealed to all.

Source: 'Serendib' magazine graphic: Mahil Wijesinghe



Candy cane

What would restless children need, to sit through Christmas eve service? A Candy cane. That's what a choirmaster in the 17th century thought. The kind-hearted choirmaster had made sugar sticks in the shape of the letter 'J' and shape of a shepherd's staff. It symbolises Jesus, the Good Shepherd and the shepherds who visited baby Jesus after his birth. The peppermint flavoured sweet has red and white stripes. White is for purity and red is for his healing sacrifice.

