

# How Christmas carols originated

The first carols were dance songs sung by villagers around a Maypole, or to celebrate other festive occasions throughout the year, during the Middle Ages. Later they became more exclusively associated with Christmas.

The word "carol" derives from the Greek and Latin word "chorautes" meaning "chorus." The phrase, "Christmas Carols" first appeared during the 16th century in England in little songbooks printed by Wynken de Worde and Richard Kele.

**DANCE CAROLS** — Best examples of these rounds or ring dances are still to be found in Sweden where people dance around the tree singing many rollicking songs. Elsewhere, dance carols are merely sung, although many of the tunes are known to inspire dancing feet.

**SHEPHERD CAROLS**, of and about the shepherds to whom the angels appeared, and their coming to the stable with humble gifts are the most human and appealing accounts of Christ's birth. They were sung to accompany the vivid portrayals of this scene in the medieval "mystery" plays which were common in England as well as all other European countries. Best known today is the traditional English carol, "While Shepherds Watched."

**LULLABY CAROLS** were among the earliest Christmas songs and like all cradle songs have a rocking, lulling rhythm and a simple melody. "Cradle rocking" carols or "Kindelwiegen" were a part of the church ritual in Germany and Austria.

A good example of this type of carol is the 16th century English carol, "What Child Is This?" which was sung to the 16th century dance tune, "Greensleeves." Another is the 19th century American anonymous carol, "Away in a Manger."

One of the most beautiful of all lullaby carols is the "Coventry Carol" which was a part of one of the English medieval "mysteries." It is sung by a group of women,

portraying Bethlehem mothers just before Herod's soldiers slaughter their babies.

**CAROLS OF THE MAGI** — The arrival of the Magi with precious gifts for the Christ Child is the most picturesque and colorful part of all Christmas pageants. The Magi songs all tell this rich, spiritual story. Among the most familiar of these to Americans is "We Three Kings," the words and music for which were written by John Henry Hopkins, Jr., in the 19th century.

**NATIVITY CAROLS** — There are many varieties of these. The first hymns in honor of the Nativity were written in Latin during the 5th century, when Christmas was fully established as one of the great church feasts. It was not until the 13th century, when St. Francis of Assisi inspired his friends to write in their native tongue, that Nativity Songs were written for the people to sing. From Italy, these Nativity Songs spread throughout all Europe.

Two of the most familiar of these to us are: "Joy To The World," written by Isaac Watts in the 17th century and the 18th century German "Stille Nacht" (Silent Night) by Joseph Mohr. The original musical called for a guitar accompaniment.

**LEGENDARY CAROLS** spring from the folklore of people throughout the world inspired by superstitions and pre-Christian beliefs. One thing they have in common is that they all tell a story.

Most well known of these is the traditional English "I Saw Three Ships," "The Boar's Head Carol" both from the Middle Ages, the latter of which is still sung at Christmas dinner at Queens College, Oxford, as the boar's head is ceremoniously brought in. "Good King Wenceslas," written by J.M. Neale in the 19th century is about a fervent Christian Duke of Bohemia.



The four faces of Christmas seem to say, left to right: I don't like it here, I wanna go home; This is all kinda neat, whatever it is; Who are these kids anyway?; Ma... I reckon it's time for a diaper change. (Times photo by Ron Pozzer)

"Ho! Ho! Ho! look at my new sled!"

Season's Greetings

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## New Year's buffet

Everyone enjoys a good New Year's Eve Party, even the hostess. The hostess shouldn't be tied to the kitchen while the guests are having fun and if the party is well planned she shouldn't be left out.

This is a buffet menu for 20 or more persons prepared entirely in advance. The only work the hostess need do during the party is to pop something in the oven to reheat about half an hour before serving time, and about two minutes to toss a salad of already prepared ingredients.

**Buffet Menu**

**HORS D'OURVES**  
Mushroom puffs  
tuna balls  
chicken livers

**MAIN COURSE**  
Sweet and sour meatballs  
Sausage Rolls  
Cabbage Rolls  
Potato Salad  
Cucumber Salad  
Tossed Salad  
Rolls

**DESSERT**  
Assorted Squares and Tarts  
Tea and Coffee  
Wine

**Party Countdown**  
Day before — make mushroom puffs, tuna balls, meatballs, sausage rolls, and cabbage rolls. Freeze. Hopefully the rolls will be bought and frozen and the squares made ahead and frozen.

That morning — Make centrepiece. A simple, but effective centrepiece could be Christmas balls and pinecones piled in a punchbowl. Another idea is a single large pinecone on a plate ringed with holly. Buy potato salad. Make it if you like, bought salad piled in a bowl and topped with a few sliced hard cooked eggs is just as good and a lot easier.

Late afternoon—Slice cucumbers and tomatoes for salad. Butter rolls and put in plastic bag in bread box or leave on counter. Remove all frozen foods from freezer. Spread cream cheese on crackers, dip in simulated bacon bits and put on tray. Wrap chicken livers with bacon, impale on a toothpick and refrigerate.

Make sweet and sour sauce. Set buffet table. Take an aspirin, a bath and a rest, in that order.

When guests arrive, put mushroom puffs, tuna balls and chicken livers in oven for about 10 minutes and serve with crackers.

Half hour before serving — heat oven and put in meatballs, sausage rolls and cabbage rolls. If you run out of oven space put a cookie sheet on top of meatballs and cook something else on top of that. 10 minutes before serving — toss salad, put food on table.

**Tuna Balls**

2 cans tuna  
1 beaten egg  
1 tsp. minced onion  
1/2 cup consomme  
1/4 cup chopped parsley  
1-3 cup mayonaise  
1/4 cup chopped almonds or sesame seeds  
1 tsp. mustard  
1 cup fine breadcrumbs  
1 tsp. poultry seasoning  
cornflake crumbs

Combine all ingredients except cornflake crumbs. Shape into 3/4 inch balls and roll in cornflake crumbs. Arrange in one layer in greased bake pan and bake in 450 oven until lightly browned. Cool and freeze. To reheat, heat in a 375 oven for 15 minutes and serve with tartar sauce.

**Mushroom Puffs**

1 cup water  
1/2 cup butter  
1/4 tsp salt  
1 cup flour  
4 eggs  
1/4 cup grated cheddar cheese  
mushroom filling

Preheat oven to 400. Place water and butter in a heavy saucepan and bring to a boil. Add salt and flour all at once. Stirring constantly, cook until mixture is smooth and forms a ball. Remove from heat and add eggs one at a time, beating well. Stir in cheese. Drop from teaspoon onto a buttered baking sheet. Bake 10 minutes. Reduce oven to 325 and bake 20 to 25 minute longer. Cool. Slice off tops and fill with mushroom filling. Replace tops. Continued on Page 28

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