

American Christmas Traditions for a Very American Christmas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjFiHvGtHTo>

Hey, there, and welcome to Speak English with Christina, where you'll have fun becoming fluent in American English.

I'm your English coach Christina and today, jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.

We're getting into the holiday spirit because it's almost Christmas and it's a huge holiday in the US.

Probably because it's very commercial, but, but anyway, we have so many Christmas traditions and today I want to share the holiday joy with you in case you want to bring an American touch to your own celebrations.

Ho, ho, ho, let's go!

I want to thank the site, Back to the States, for the inspiration for today's episode back in September.

They wrote an article in French whose title translates to "how to prepare a real American Christmas".

Their article hit the nail on the head, meaning it was absolutely right about how we celebrate Christmas in the US.

So I asked if I could make an episode based on their article and they kindly said "Oui".

Thank you, Back to the States.

Oh, and I'll put a link to their site and to that article below this video if you want to check it out.

Oh Christmas tree, Oh Christmas tree, how lovely are your branches, sorry.

Of course, we have a Christmas tree decorated with Christmas ornaments, not Christmas balls, nope, careful, candy canes, candy canes, garland and lights, some people even get a flocked tree.

A flocked tree that is covered in artificial snow, or maybe they take care to use the same colors in all their decorations so the tree looks perfect.

You've got to look good for all those family pictures in front of the tree!

And one popular decoration is popcorn garland, popcorn garland, and it's simple to make!

You only need popcorn a needle and some string.

Oh, and time.

But it's a fun Christmas decoration that you can make with your kids.

And I'll try to find a tutorial to put in the links below this video so you can make one.

It's very easy though.

What popular Christmas Carol starts with deck the halls with boughs of holly
fa-la-la-la-la la-la-la-la?

Decking the halls or just decorating in everyday English is super important at Christmas.

Americans go all out, meaning they do it big.

Every room in the house might be transformed with Christmas magic.

Or at least the kitchen, the living room, and maybe even the bathrooms!

In the living room we put maybe a wreath, a wreath above the fireplace and a wreath is often made with pine branches, decorated with things like ribbons, jingle bells, pine cones, maybe some artificial snow and we definitely put one on the front door of the house to welcome visitors with a festive spirit.

Inside, we might also put pine garlands, pine garlands, on the mantel above the chimney or above the fireplace or maybe on the rails of the stairway.

And of course, Christmas stockings are a must!

Every member of the family, especially children, have their own Christmas stocking hung by the fireplace or on the stairway and when Santa comes to visit on the night of Christmas Eve he fills the stockings with small gifts, candy and maybe even some money.

If you've been good all year of course!

And, as a thank you, and to make sure that Santa has enough energy to continue his Christmas Eve journey all around the world, it's nice to leave some Christmas cookies, Christmas cookies and a glass of milk for the jolly old elf. (Americans often bake their own cookies and sometimes they bake huge numbers of Christmas cookies. They are decorated in all sorts of colorful ways.)

There will also be statues of Santa Claus, Santa Claus, the big fat man who brings presents.

Or statues of a snowman, a snowman.

Back home in Mississippi, the only snowman we ever saw were statues!

There's no snow in Mississippi!

And nutcrackers, nutcrackers are a symbol of Christmas too, and back in the US I had an entire collection of maybe 10 different nutcrackers.

Speaking of which, the ballet, The Nutcracker, by Tchaikovsky, is a big Christmas tradition.

Local ballet companies and big theaters do productions of the Nutcracker and I tried to see it every year! (Lima does not have a world-class ballet company but they did do the Nutcracker. We saw it last year and it was really nice. Highly recommended.)

Another Christmas tradition, the story A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens is in theaters all over the US.

This is a popular story of a mean, cold, bitter old man named Ebenezer Scrooge who only loves money.

Then, on Christmas Eve, he's visited by three Christmas spirits who show him the joy of the holidays and the consequences of his greedy behavior.

Overnight, he's transformed into a loving, generous, joyful old man who learns to love others and celebrate life.

It's a beautiful story, one that I watch every year and I recommend the animated version of A Christmas Carol with Jim Carrey.

It's very touching and it's, it's just magical!

This cute little guy is named the Elf on the Shelf and he looks innocent, but he's a spy!

The story says that Santa Claus sends an elf to each home to watch the children.

This way, Santa knows if the children have been naughty or nice.
(Naughty is bad, it is used just for children.)

During the day, the elves can't move but each night they go back to the North Pole to give a report to Santa on everything they observed when the children were naughty or nice.

And each morning, the children find the elf in a different place in the house and it's great fun to see where the elf will be each morning.

Of course, there are many, many other Christmas traditions in the USA.

We didn't even talk about food, or Christmas carols, or how some American houses are decorated with enough lights to decorate an entire village, but I'll save all of that for next year.

These were just a few of the most popular traditions for a very American Christmas.

Now what about you?

How do you celebrate Christmas in your country, or do you celebrate Christmas at all?

I love learning about other cultures and I know that other speak English ambassadors do too, so please share your Christmas traditions with us or tell us about the biggest holiday in your country.

Now, for the next two weeks, we're taking a break to celebrate, so let me wish you lots of joy lots and happiness and lots of love for the holiday season and I'll see you in the new year!

Happy holidays you guys!

How NORAD Tracks Santa Claus

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jQ_Yb-C46U

Let's head over to NORAD command.

This is Lieutenant General Christopher Coates.

He has the very latest on where Santa is.

He's been tracking Santa along with his team all day long.

So, Commander Coates, tell us a little bit about where Santa is now.

Santa is currently over Russia.

He sort of has been in and out of Russia and some of the neighboring countries for the last little while.

Of course Russia is huge and while he's trying to visit all the boys and girls in Russia he's just been doing little detours it seems like, but certainly I guess we would say he's in Russia for the moment.

All right General Coates, I know it's difficult to track weather phenomenon.

I'm a meteorologist here at the Global News and we use radar, we use satellites.

Is it the same tools that you guys use there to track Santa's whereabouts throughout the day today?

Anthony, thanks very much, that's a great question, and yeah, we use the very same tools that we use day in and day out, 365 days a year, to protect North America, to monitor all the aircraft that might be a threat to Canada.

We use those very same tools so we have our radars that are arranged from Alaska all the way over northern Canada to the Atlantic Ocean.

We use satellites, a system of satellites, especially the ones with infrared capability because Rudolph's nose glows pretty bright and we're able to track that with the infrared satellites.

And then for the last couple years we've had Santa cams.

They help us, but then when Santa arrives over North America we use NORAD's fighter aircraft either the F-18s in Canada or other aircraft in the United States to try to escort Santa.

He slows down a little bit for us so we can try and keep up.

All of these together give us a pretty good picture of where he's at and like I said, they're just the tools that we use every day to protect Canada and the United States.

Ok, so noradsanta.org, that is where you can track his whereabouts throughout the day today.

I know you have a full team of volunteers, people working hard to make sure Santa stays safe and delivers all those gifts, now over 2 billion I see as I'm tracking.

So, thank you very much for everything you do and hopefully you and everybody there, have a very merry Christmas this year.

