

Christmas Trivia for Adult Gatherings

Play an original Christmas trivia game with familiar customs, music, literature, food, plants, and holiday history.

Host guide / Letter / holiday trivia / 15–25 minutes

Read the guide privately first if this activity has hidden answers. Print single-sided at Actual size / 100%. Cut only sheets marked CARDS. Keep answer keys with the host.

What you need

- Printed question cards or a host screen
- Pens and score sheet
- A timer (optional)
- One host or a reader for each team

How to run it

1. Choose a host and keep the key out of sight.
2. Make teams of two to five or play individually.
3. Read each prompt and allow 20–30 seconds for discussion.
4. Award one point for a correct answer; accept equivalent wording.
5. Read the explanation after scoring.
6. Play all cards or choose a section for a short round.

Plants and winter symbols

The poinsettia display comes from modified leaves, while holly and evergreen materials give winter decorations their color. These answers follow the sources' descriptions without suggesting that every household uses the same plants.

- Compare seasonal plants guests recognize.
- Keep bracts distinct from true flowers.

Stories and characters

Printed stories and later songs connect holiday traditions across generations. The cards separate Robert May's Rudolph story from Johnny Marks's song and tie the Cratchits' dinner to Dickens's fiction.

- Name the creator requested.
- Use explanations to distinguish source story from adaptation.

Music and radio

Carols, sheet music, radio broadcasts, and party songs give the set several familiar entry points. Questions focus on title and history without quoting lyrics.

- Read song titles clearly.
- Allow team discussion before scoring.

Food across traditions

Panettone, gingerbread, bûche de Noël, goose, and turkey represent different traditions and periods, not a universal menu.

- Invite optional food memories.
- Distinguish documented custom from a fictional scene.

Decorations and public customs

Christmas trees, electric lights, and the National Christmas Tree show how customs take local forms; NORAD adds a modern media story.

- Use a themed mini-round.
- Accept clear equivalent answers.

Host and print notes

Use a host-only key and a separate player sheet. The full set can be split into themed sections or shortened for a casual party.

- Offer no-score play.
- Let guests pass on traditions that do not fit their experience.

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<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-001 / Plants</p> <p>What are the bright red parts of a poinsettia commonly mistaken for petals?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-002 / Plants</p> <p>Where is the poinsettia native?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-003 / Holiday history</p> <p>Who introduced the first recorded Christmas tree to the White House?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-004 / Customs</p> <p>Who created the commercial Christmas card in 1843?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-005 / Literature</p> <p>Which Dickens story was also published in 1843?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-006 / Books</p> <p>Who wrote the Rudolph story distributed by Montgomery Ward in 1939?</p>

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<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-007 / Music</p> <p>Who recorded the 1949 hit recording of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-008 / Music</p> <p>Who wrote the song “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-009 / Music</p> <p>What was the original title printed above “Jingle Bells”?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-010 / Music and games</p> <p>In which 1868 collection was the familiar U.S. version of “The Twelve Days of Christmas” published?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-011 / Music</p> <p>Which seasonal custom saw a revival in U.S. streets and churches in the early 1900s?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-012 / Broadcast history</p> <p>Which carol did NBC feature in Christmas Eve radio broadcasts in the 1930s and 1940s?</p>

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<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-013 / Tree traditions</p> <p>Who introduced Christmas trees to royal residences in Britain by 1800?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-014 / Tree traditions</p> <p>Which royal couple helped revive the Christmas tree custom in Britain in 1841?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-015 / Literature and food</p> <p>What bird do the Cratchits serve in A Christmas Carol?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-016 / Food</p> <p>Which Italian holiday cake is described as a fruitcake variation?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-017 / Food</p> <p>What does a bûche de Noël cake represent?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-018 / Food</p> <p>In which country did gingerbread-house traditions trace back to the 16th century?</p>

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<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-019 / Food and publishing</p> <p>What is the title of Amelia Simmons's 1796 cookbook that contains gingerbread recipes?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-020 / Technology</p> <p>In what year did Edward Johnson display an electrically lit Christmas tree?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-021 / U.S. customs</p> <p>In what year did the first National Christmas Tree lighting on the Ellipse take place?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-022 / Technology</p> <p>Which organization received the 1955 phone call that led to the Santa-tracking tradition?</p>
<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-023 / Animals</p> <p>Do female reindeer grow antlers?</p>	<p>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-024 / Plants and nature</p> <p>What are the greenish-yellow flower clusters at the center of poinsettia bracts called?</p>

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<div>EXT_TRIVIA_CHRISTMAS-025 / Food</div> <div>Which spice gives gingerbread its name?</div>	
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Host answer key

Keep this section separate from player cards. Accept equivalent wording where the meaning matches.

01. Bracts, or modified leaves.

Smithsonian Gardens distinguishes the colorful bracts from the tiny true flowers.

02. Mexico.

Smithsonian Gardens describes this popular holiday plant as native to Mexico and cultivated by the Aztecs.

03. President Benjamin Harrison.

The White House Historical Association says Harrison introduced the first recorded White House Christmas tree during the family's first Christmas there, in 1889.

04. Henry Cole.

The Library of Congress identifies Cole as the British civil servant who created the commercial card.

05. A Christmas Carol.

The Library of Congress notes that the first commercial Christmas card and A Christmas Carol appeared in the same year.

06. Robert L. May.

The Library of Congress recounts how advertising copywriter May created the character for a holiday booklet.

07. Gene Autry.

The Library of Congress identifies Autry as the singer who recorded Johnny Marks's song in 1949.

08. Johnny Marks.

The Library of Congress identifies Marks as the songwriter; Robert L. May created the earlier story.

09. "The One Horse Open Sleigh."

The Library of Congress sheet-music record gives this title and lists Jingle Bells as a heading.

10. Songs of the Nativity, collected by William Henry Husk.

The Library of Congress traces this version to Husk's collection and notes its use as a party game.

11. Christmas caroling.

The Library of Congress describes an early-20th-century revival of street caroling and church Christmas music.

12. “Silent Night.”

The Library of Congress recounts live broadcasts of the carol followed by bells marking Christmas Day.

13. Queen Charlotte.

The Library of Congress notes that Queen Charlotte introduced trees to royal residences by 1800.

14. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

The Library of Congress notes that Victoria and Albert helped revive the practice at Windsor in 1841.

15. A goose.

The Library of Congress distinguishes the Cratchits’ goose from the turkey Scrooge sends them.

16. Panettone.

The Library of Congress describes panettone as an Italian fruitcake variation enjoyed in Europe and Latin America.

17. A Yule log.

The Library of Congress describes the rolled cake decorated to resemble a log.

18. Germany.

The Library of Congress family guide traces gingerbread-house traditions to 16th-century Germany.

19. American Cookery.

The Library of Congress identifies American Cookery as an early U.S.-printed cookbook with multiple gingerbread recipes.

20. 1882.

The National Museum of American History identifies Johnson’s tree as an early electrically illuminated Christmas tree.

21. 1923.

The National Park Service dates the first named National Christmas Tree lighting on the Ellipse to 1923.

22. CONAD, the Continental Air Defense Command.

NORAD’s account says a child called CONAD after a misprinted advertisement and was given Santa’s location.

23. Yes.

The Smithsonian National Zoo notes that both male and female reindeer grow antlers.

24. Cyathia—the poinsettia’s small flower clusters.

Illinois Extension says the greenish-yellow flowers, called cyathia, cluster at the center of the bracts. The showy colored parts are modified leaves, not one large flower.

25. Ginger.

The Library of Congress guide covers gingerbread recipes that use ginger among traditional spices.

Hosting questions

Can we play without scoring?

Yes. Use the explanations to guide a relaxed group discussion.

Is this made for adults?

Yes. Familiar customs and harder details make it suitable for adult gatherings and clubs.

Can the host verify an answer?

Yes. Each factual card includes a source URL and concise explanation.

How can we shorten the game?

Choose one section and play 8–12 questions.

References

Smithsonian Gardens states poinsettias are native to Mexico and that their colorful parts are modified leaves called bracts.

<https://gardens.si.edu/learn/blog/poinsettias-oh-so-beautiful/>

Library of Congress identifies Henry Cole's 1843 commercial Christmas card and notes A Christmas Carol appeared the same year.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2019/12/dear-whomever-you-are-heres-the-first-christmas-card/>

Library of Congress says Robert L. May created the 1939 story, Johnny Marks wrote the song, and Gene Autry recorded it in 1949.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/12/how-johnny-marks-king-of-christmas-hits-made-rudolph-a-classic/>

Library of Congress record identifies 1857 sheet music title as The One Horse Open Sleigh, with Jingle Bells as heading.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2023812429/>

Library of Congress traces the familiar U.S. version of The Twelve Days of Christmas to a 1868 collection and party-game use.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2017/12/origins-of-four-christmas-songs/?loclr=blogfit>

Library of Congress reports early-20th-century revival of street caroling and church Christmas music.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2018/12/the-merry-tradition-of-christmas-caroling/>

Library of Congress recounts NBC Christmas Eve broadcasts featuring Silent Night and live bells.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/now-see-hear/2021/01/christmas-on-the-radio/>

Library of Congress distinguishes the Cratchits' goose from the long-standing English Christmas turkey custom and reports the royal tree milestones.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2021/12/scrooges-prize-turkey-victorian-christmas-foodways-in-dickenss-a-christmas-carol/>

Library of Congress describes panettone as an Italian fruitcake variation and bûche de Noël as a Yule-log cake.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2023/12/historic-holiday-desserts-from-around-the-world/>

Library of Congress family guide traces gingerbread houses to 16th-century Germany and discusses recipes in Amelia Simmons's 1796 cookbook.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/families/2025/12/gingerbread-a-treat-for-the-holidays/>

National Museum of American History identifies Edward Johnson's 1882 electrically lit tree as an early example.

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/illuminating-thoughts-holidays>

National Park Service dates first National Christmas Tree lighting on the Ellipse to 1923.

<https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/national-christmas-tree-history.htm>

NORAD says a child called CONAD after a misprinted 1955 ad and received Santa's location.

<https://www.norad.mil/Newsroom/Fact-Sheets/Article/578773/norad-tracks-santa/>

Smithsonian National Zoo says both male and female reindeer grow antlers.

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/news/25-days-reindeer>

White House Historical Association says Benjamin Harrison introduced the first recorded White House Christmas tree in 1889.

<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/the-life-and-presidency-of-benjamin-harrison>

Illinois Extension distinguishes the modified-leaf bracts from the greenish-yellow cyathia clustered at their center.

<https://extension.illinois.edu/houseplants/poinsettia>

Original AI-assisted resource with AI editorial review. Independent human playtesting and physical printing have not been completed. Answer, listen, or pass.