



## News Around The Inn

### *Holiday Happenings in the South*

The holidays are quickly approaching and as always there are things to do in and around Atlanta before, during and after the season. Here are just a few to get you into the spirit:

***A Celebration of the Holiday Season (Athens, GA):*** Festivities include a downtown parade, Classic City Christmas Weekend, the Festival of Trees and more. Dec. 1-31. Visit [christmasinathens.org](http://christmasinathens.org).

***Magical Nights of Lights:*** Twinkling displays line the winding six and one-half mile drive through Lake Lanier Islands Resort. The Holiday Village has gifts of the season, bonfires and more. Visit [lakelanierislands.com](http://lakelanierislands.com).

***Christmas Express Train Rides:*** Ride the Christmas Train on the Blue Ridge Scenic railway from Georgia to Tennessee and back. Nov. 27, 28 & 30 and Dec. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20. 1-800-934-1898, [brscenic.com](http://brscenic.com).

***Fantasy in Lights:*** One of the biggest and brightest holiday shows in the South. Christmas Village features holiday entertainment and Santa Claus. Nov. 23-Dec. 30. 1-800-CALLAWAY, [callawaygardens.com](http://callawaygardens.com).

***Stone Mountain Christmas:*** The spirit of the season is reflected in a million lights, and on the face of every child. Nov. 14 - 15, Nov. 21 - 22, Nov. 24 - 29, Dec. 4 - 6, Dec. 11 - 13, Dec. 18 - 23, Dec. 26 - 30.

***The Pink Pig at Macy's (Lenox Mall):*** Benefiting Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, an Atlanta tradition since 1953. Come ride Priscilla, the pink pig, on train tracks through a life-sized storybook that includes the original pink pig and her friends. November 1 through January 4. [www.macys.com/pinkpig](http://www.macys.com/pinkpig) for discount tickets and hours.

### *Holiday Traditions Around the World*



In **Brazil**, Christmas arrives at the beginning of the summer. There is no snow, cold or need to bundle up but in spite of the heat Santa Claus, known here as Papai Noel, wears the traditional costume as seen in countries where it is winter. The celebration runs from December 25 to January 6th (Three Kings' Day) where children place their shoes beside the window or door, hoping to find them filled with treats the next day, supposedly by the three wise men.

The **Greek** tree is without lights. Decorations are taken from nature or are homemade. Nuts and garland berries, olive branch circles, and holy pictures trim the tree. A cardboard star sits on top. Freshly sheered lambs wool drapes around the tree to represent a winter's snow.

**Japan** is not a predominantly Christian country but Christmas has become a secular holiday that many Japanese people enjoy. Homes are decorated with evergreens, special meals prepared, and carols are sung. Santa, called Hoteisho, may visit some of the homes. Children believe that he has eyes on the back of his head so he can see all the good and bad things they do.

In **France**, Christmas eve is for gift giving. Shoes are left by the fire to be filled by Pere Noel. Birch sticks are sometimes left as a reminder to be good.



Perhaps the best Yuletide decoration is being wreathed in smiles.

## Christmas Stockings

Christmas stockings are hung near the chimney on Christmas Eve for Santa Claus to fill it with goodies for the children. It is an empty sock or a bag that is given the shape of a sock. The children in United States and some other countries have been following this tradition of hanging a Christmas stocking, believing that Father Christmas will fill it with sweets and gifts for them.

The tradition of the Christmas stockings began by a story told since ancient time about a kind noble man who had three daughters. The wife of the nobleman expired and the daughters and their father were left in a state of sorrow. The daughters had to do all the work in the house. When the daughters became young and eligible for marriage, the poor father could not afford to give the huge dowries to their husbands.

One evening the daughters, after washing their stockings hung them near the fire place to be dried. Santa Claus being moved by the plight of the daughters came in and put in three bags of gold one in each of the stocking hanging by the chimney. The next morning the family noticed the gold bags and the nobleman had enough for his daughter's marriage. The daughters got married and they lived happily ever after. Since then children have been hanging Christmas stockings.

Christmas stockings are supposed to have the gifts given by Santa Claus. The other gifts are wrapped in present papers and placed near the Christmas tree. It is believed that a child who misbehaves during the year will not get a gift in their Christmas stocking. The Christmas stockings are traditionally hung on the fireplace. But as most of the modern homes do not have a fireplace, any location is suitable for hanging the Christmas stockings. In many traditions the Christmas stocking is to be stuffed by a gift that will stimulate the five sensory organs.



## Last Minute Holiday Tips

**Start vacation a day early.** There is nothing worse than a last minute rush just before you've got to jump in the car or head to the airport. Starting your vacation a day early gives you that extra time you might need to tie up those loose ends.

**Do your shopping during the day.** If you have any last minute shopping to do, it's best to do it during the day. Otherwise you'll have to complete with some seriously stressed and rushed crowds — not to mention all sorts of holiday traffic.

**Do it yourself!** If you've not found that perfect gift and don't have time to brave the mall you might try making something yourself. It may take a bit more time, but could be quite a bit less stressful.

**Get there early.** If you need to get somewhere (the airport, the store, etc.) make sure you get there as early as you can. Leave early and prepare for delays.

**Set aside some alone time.** If you can get away, even for a few minutes, it can be just the thing you need to recover your energy and get back on track.



## Brief History of New Year's



The tradition of the New Year's Resolutions goes all the way back to 153 B.C. Janus, a mythical king of early Rome was placed at the head of the calendar. With two faces, Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. Janus became the ancient symbol for resolutions and many Romans looked for forgiveness from their enemies and also exchanged gifts before the beginning of each year.

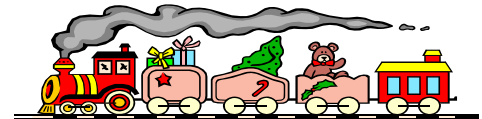
The New Year has not always begun on January 1, and it doesn't begin on that date everywhere today. It begins on that date only for cultures that use a 365-day solar calendar. January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B. C., when Julius Caesar developed a calendar that would more accurately reflect the seasons than previous calendars had. The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances. He was always depicted with two faces, one on the front of his head and one on the back. Thus he could look backward and forward at the same time. At midnight on December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new. The Romans began a tradition of exchanging gifts on New Year's Eve by giving one another branches from sacred trees for good fortune. Later, nuts or coins imprinted with the god Janus became more common New Year's gifts.

In the Middle Ages, Christians changed New Year's Day to December 25, the birth of Jesus. Then they changed it to March 25, a holiday called the Annunciation. In the sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar, and the celebration of the New Year was returned to January 1.

Although the date for New Year's Day is not the same in every culture, it is always a time for celebration and for customs to ensure good luck in the coming year.

A **Gaslight Inn Gift Certificate** is the perfect way to let someone know just how special they are. It can be purchased in any dollar amount or you may choose to specify a room or suite. Personalize it with your own sentiment. Give us a call to order your Gift Certificate in time for the Holidays (they also make great Birthday, Anniversary and Wedding Gifts—or to tell someone how much they are appreciated). It's the right color, right fit and guaranteed to bring a smile to their face.

## Holiday Safety Hints



The Gaslight Inn Staff would like to emphasize to you that during this Holiday Season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, nor pickpockets a chance to do their dirty work. Criminals love the holidays as much as everyone else, mainly because it's a perfect opportunity to commit a crime.

Keep the following tips in mind for a safe and happy holiday season:

### **If You're Shopping . . .**

Don't let your guard down just because you are rushing. Stay alert and be aware of everything around you at all times. Park in well-lighted spaces and as close to the store as possible, lock your car doors, and hide packages in the trunk or under the seats. Do not carry large amounts of cash and pay with a check or credit card if possible. Make sure that you do not carry all your packages at the same time. Carry your purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put your wallet inside your coat or front pants pocket. If you take your children shopping, teach them to go to a police officer or a store Security guard if they get separated or get lost.

### **If You're Traveling . . .**

Set an automatic timer for your lights. Ask your neighbor to watch your home, pick up newspapers, collect mail, and park in the driveway from time to time. Be sure to hide any gifts that may be left in the house while you're gone.

### **If You're Out for the Evening . . .**

Turn on lights and a radio or the TV so that it appears that someone is home. Lock all doors and windows while you're out, even if you'll be gone for just a few minutes. Do not place packages or gifts near windows or in other high-visibility sites.

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## Tradition of the Christmas Tree



In 16th-century Germany fir trees were decorated, both indoors and out, with apples, roses, gilded candies, and colored paper. In the Middle Ages, a popular religious play depicted the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. A fir tree hung with apples was used to symbolize the Garden of Eden -- the Paradise Tree. The play ended with the prophecy of a savior coming, and so was often performed during the Advent season.

It is held that Protestant reformer Martin Luther first adorned trees with light. While coming home one December evening, the beauty of the stars shining through the branches of a fir inspired him to recreate the effect by placing candles on the branches of a small fir tree inside his home.

The Christmas Tree was brought to England by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert from his native Germany. The famous *Illustrated News* etching in 1848, featuring the Royal Family of Victoria, Albert and their children gathered around a Christmas tree in Windsor Castle, popularized the tree throughout Victorian England. Brought to America by the Pennsylvania Germans, the Christmas tree became by the late 19th century.

Even if the first Christmas tree in the USA, perhaps, can be traced all the way back to 1777, Christmas trees did not become popular in the USA until the middle of the 18th century. An image of the English royal family standing in front of a Christmas tree was copied and brought to the USA in 1850. This resulted in the American upper classes embracing the Christmas tree. In the following decades, the tradition of Christmas trees in living rooms became popular among the rest of the population.

Today, the lighting of the United States' National Christmas Tree has become a major event. The tree is located south of the White House in Washington D.C. In fact, it has already become an important symbol for the nation for many years now. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter only lit the top star on the tree in honor of the American hostages in Iran.

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[WWW.GASLIGHTINN.COM](http://WWW.GASLIGHTINN.COM)



## Tips For an Earth Friendly Holiday

'Tis the season to give, celebrate and renew. It only takes a small commitment to protect the environment. Here are some simple ways you can make a difference this holiday season:

**Gift Wrap:** Bows, bags, fabrics, newspaper comics, magazines and decorative boxes can be used for gift wrap. These items can also be used for holiday décor, and reused every year.

**Ornaments:** Make ornaments at home with items you may normally recycle (e.g. paper towel cardboard rolls, toothpicks or popsicle sticks, old calendar pictures, old Christmas wrap). Old holiday cards can also be used as ornaments or for holiday décor.

**Cards:** Save old Christmas cards and create new cards by cutting the picture off. Old Christmas cards also make great ornaments and holiday décor.

**Other Useful Tips:** Use dishes, silverware and cloth napkins instead of disposable utensils and paper products. Avoid wasting food by cooking only the amount of food necessary. Lower your thermostat a bit when you are not home and save energy.

**Trees:** Recycle your Christmas tree. Do not use tinsel or spray your tree with fake snow, as tinsel and white trees cannot be recycled. You can also use a live, uncut tree and replant it after the holidays.

