

personal english



Santa Claus



Reindeer



Sleigh/Sled

Semantic Field #31 Christmas



Present/Gift



Christmas Tree



Tinsel



Ribbon



Mistletoe



Christmas/Fairy
Lights



Wreath

Christmas, sometimes spelled **Xmas**, is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed most commonly on **December 25** as a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people worldwide. Although the month and date of Jesus' birth are unknown, by **the mid fourth century CE** the Western Christian Church had placed Christmas on December 25, a date that was later adopted in the East. Although it is not known why December 25 became a date of celebration, there are several factors that may have influenced the choice. December 25 was the date the Romans marked as the **winter solstice**, the shortest and darkest day of the year, and the first day in which the days would begin to elongate and the Sun would have a longer presence in the sky; **Jesus was identified with the Sun** based on an Old Testament verse. Popular modern customs of the holiday include **gift giving**, completing an **Advent calendar** or **Advent wreath**, Christmas music and **caroling**, lighting a **Christingle**, attending **church services**, sharing a **special meal**, and displaying various **Christmas decorations**, including Christmas trees, Christmas lights, nativity scenes, garlands, wreaths, mistletoe, and holly. In addition, several closely related and often interchangeable figures, known as **Santa Claus**, **Father Christmas**, **Saint Nicholas**, and **Christkind**, are associated with **bringing gifts to children** during the Christmas season and have their own body of traditions and lore. Because gift-giving and many other aspects of the Christmas festival involve heightened economic activity, the holiday has become a significant event and a **key sales period** for retailers and businesses. The economic impact of Christmas has grown steadily over the past few centuries in many regions of the world.