Christmas

History books refer to the United States as "the melting pot" where all nations and traditions blend together. Indeed, our Christmas celebrations would indicate just that. Each regions of the U.S. has its own peculiarity. From ancient times, American has held religious dances to coincide with the winter solstice. Franciscan monks succeeded in bringing this Indian celebration and the Christmas Holy Day together. In the San Felipe Pueblo, is held one of the most unique Christmas Eve dances. Birdcalls burst from the loft, shortly after the priest has delivered his Christmas Eve sermon and departed. Dancers move into the blazing light of the altar as an insistent drum takes over. Dressed in masks, animal skins, feathers, coral, shells, turquoise and head dresses with real antlers, they perform the deer, turtle, eagle and buffalo dances. One of today's most popular Christmas songs, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" came from the Appalachian Mountains. This was originally a "counting song" of magical or pagan origin. No one seems to know what it originally meant. Today, however it has become the theme of many Christmas cards and displays.

In Hawaii, downtown shopping centers display Santa's helpers as "menehunes." They are legendary little people who are supposed to have been the first inhabitants of Hawaii. Palm trees are decorated with lights and fragrant flowers are hung in leis around the indoor Christmas tree. Pennsylvania's Moravian population embraces Christmas with a "Love-Fest." These are musical services where the choir sings appropriate hymns and anthems while the congregation partakes of simple food. Usually, the congregation must be served sweet buns and coffee in the time it takes to sing three hymns. Candles are distributed, made of beeswax, and as the final anthem is sung, all raise their lighted candles to "Praise to Our Heavenly King."

Some of the unique holiday treats of most American families have the traditional stuffed turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, pumpkin pie, and more for Christmas.