

Christmas issue
December
2023

Health & Views

Merry
Christmas! Here's to
love and
laughter! Warmest
Christmas wishes to
you and your
family! Sending you
joy, peace, and all the
Christmas cheer!
Editor

December 3rd issue 2023

Compiled & edited by Dr Harold Gunatillake OAM, FRCS, FICS, FIACS,
AM(Sing), MBBS(Cey)

Dr. Suzanne Port has provided a list of foods that should be avoided to maintain a healthy diet. During the Christmas season, it is important to avoid hard candies like candy canes and sticky foods like caramel corn. Sugary holiday beverages should also be avoided. Instead of these unhealthy foods, it is recommended to opt for healthier alternatives.

What foods to eat during Christmas?



They cover the savoury side of Christmas dinner, from prime rib, baked ham, and roast turkey to scalloped potatoes, green bean casserole, and cranberry sauce. For a taste of the sweet side, check out our Top 12 Christmas Desserts.

Christmas message from our Sri Lankan Archbishop in Sydney

The promise of 2023 seemed to offer a 'fresh start' as we continued our post-covid recovery.

Yet, as the year unfolded, the cost of living rose beyond the means of many; we witnessed grief and horror, artificial calamity in war and conflict, as well as natural disasters, tragic accidents and terrible crimes.

What can we say when people come face to face with evil? How are we to make sense of this desperate world? We need a word from God, which is exactly what Christmas is.

God has spoken through his Son, Jesus.

The Bible describes Jesus as God's Word— God's word to us in good times and in bad.

Rising costs may have forced a stripped-down Christmas this year, yet when you strip away the tinsel; you have the simple message of Christmas, so simple a child can believe and yet so substantial that its wonders and glories can fill our hearts and sustain us through all of life's challenges.

At its heart, the message of Christmas is nothing other than Jesus and nothing better than Jesus.

**Kanishka Raffel
Archbishop of Sydney
Christmas 2023**

—
Kanishka and Cailey Raffel
157 St Johns Road
Glebe NSW 2037

Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God... 1 Corinthians 1:24b



Is it OK to eat unhealthy at Christmas?



And we—and many registered dietitians—don't think anyone should feel guilty for filling up on extra hearty and yes, fattening, foods one day out of the year. Or two. Seriously, whatever. As long as you can get back on track the next day, indulging one day really isn't a problem, Isabel K

How can I eat healthy on Christmas?

Five Healthy Eating Tips for the Holidays

1. Start the day right with a healthy breakfast. ...
2. Make fruits and vegetables part of your holiday plate. ...
3. Choose nutritious cooking methods. ...
4. Add exercise to the calendar. ...
5. Remember to hydrate.

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

What is the most important Christmas food?



Turkey. Why so popular? Well, it is the most festive meat of all the meats, the crowning glory of Christmas dinner tables up and down the land. While most of us don't regularly tuck into a turkey dinner, come December 25th, 76% of households get stuck in to one of the 10 million birds sold

A typical American Christmas dinner usually consists of the following food items:



- Turkey: This is the main dish that is both affordable and can serve a large number of people.
- Stuffing: Also known as dressing, this dish is a common side served with the turkey.
- Mashed potatoes: These are boiled potatoes that are mashed and usually served with gravy.
- Gravy: It is a sauce made from the juices of the cooked meat that is poured over the meat or potatoes.
- Cranberry sauce: This is a sweet and sour sauce made from cranberries that is typically served with turkey.
- Christmas ham: Some families may also serve ham as another main dish option.
- Beef tenderloin: This is a juicy and tender cut of beef that can be served as an alternative to turkey.
- Rack of lamb: This is another meat option that is flavorful and tender and can be served as an alternative to turkey or ham.



Media releases 13 December 2023

Diabetes Australia Honours Dr Steven James with the Charles Campbell Coghlan OAM Emerging Researcher Award

Diabetes Australia has announced University of the Sunshine Coast diabetes researcher, Dr Steven James, is the recipient of the 2024 Charles Campbell Coghlan OAM Emerging Researcher Award.

[Continue Reading](#)

ews 8 December 2023

Promising research uses arthritis drug to halt type 1 diabetes onset



In a ground-breaking Australian study, a commonly prescribed rheumatoid arthritis drug is showing promise to suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes in people newly diagnosed.

[Continue Reading](#)

Dishes to Skip in a Chinese Restaurant



Egg rolls may be filled with veggies, but they're anything but healthy. Start with steamed dumplings instead -- and try these other ordering tips.

[Read More](#)



This Nonalcoholic Punch Is Our Ultimate Party Trick

[READ MORE](#)

6 Ways to Eat Eggs

Even on the busiest day, you've got time for eggs. And yes, they can be part of a healthy diet. Try these recipes for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

[Read More](#)

Foods That Help Slow Down Signs of Aging

The fountain of youth sounds like an urban legend, but what you eat really can improve how you look and feel.

[Watch Video](#)

Ways to Improve Your Health Right Now

You don't have to change everything to reboot your body. Embracing these simple habits can help boost your mental and physical well-being.

[Read More](#)

Have High Blood Pressure? Your Partner May, Too

Why You Should Take More Naps



Studies show that an afternoon nap can boost memory, improve job performance, lift your mood, and provide these other benefits.

[Read More](#)

The Best Diet for Prediabetes



When you've been diagnosed with prediabetes, changes to your diet like these can help you avoid type 2 diabetes.

[Read More](#)

8 Ways Women's Heart Attacks Differ From Men's



Heart disease has a major impact on many women's lives, but awareness about it has typically focused more on men than women.

[Read More](#)

What Is Type 1 Diabetes, Exactly?

Insulin acts like a key to help your body unlock energy from the food you eat. With type 1 diabetes, it's like your body lost that key, so glucose stays in your bloodstream. Here's what else you should know.

[Watch Video](#)

3 Ways to Screen for Diabetes

Blood sugar screening and specialized follow-up tests diagnose the disease in its earliest stages, when treatment to delay the start of diabetes can work well.

[Watch Video](#)

Merry Christmas
and blessings throughout **2024**

To one and all who touched our lives this past year, helped, supported, and made memories we hold so dear. With hearts full we wish you days far into the future filled with light, joy, peace, and love beyond measure.

Photo by Lahiru Supunchandra on Unsplash

VACD
AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIANITY
RESPECTED CURIOSITY

Australia: ✉ vacd.org.au ✉ fstephen@bigpond.net.au
Sri Lanka: ✉ vacdsrilanka@gmail.com 📘 facebook.com/vacdtk



**CHRISTMAS CANCELED
BETHLEHEM FESTIVITIES**



CHRISTMAS IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS IN CEYLON.

By Noel Cruz

The memories of how Christmas was celebrated in the good old days in Sri Lanka come back to mind.

Before the Christmas season, the house was painted, the walls white-washed, and with a low black tar edging.

All around the rooms.

The chairs were re-cushioned. The travelling tailor came to the home, measured the rooms, and made the curtains on our old Singer sewing machine.

Red Mansion polish was applied on the red cement floor, which got a shine by rubbing with a heavy handled brush and then mopping with a soft cloth. It was hard work.

Cake making was a ritual, where the mother laid the rules and the children offered to help.

We ate a good many of the cashew nuts and raisins when no one was looking.

T.G.M. Perera's and we were fitted with the best shoes. Even Jamaliya's Shoe Store in Wellawatta took in orders for boots, the teenage fashion of the thirties. The Japanese toy shop, Ono & Co. had an incredible array of toys from Japan.

The Main Street tailor measured us as we provided Chinese silk for our shirts. The silk, of course, was bought in early November from the Chinese peddlers.

Main Street in Pettah in the early thirties was very narrow. It had to cope with the tram lines and bullock carts.

Our Christmas shopping included a visit to X.P. Paivas for lunch and ice cream. Round the corner was The Rupee Store, where you could buy many things for one rupee.

Millers, Cargills, Simes, and Whiteways dominated the Fort area shopping. We went to Hunters and Siedles and The Roche Brothers shops for many items.

One must remember the shopping in the golden mile of Colpetty, Bambalapitiya, and Wellawatta. Well-known shops in Wellawatta: M.P. Gomez, A.W. Jansz, J.B. De Pinto, Noorani's, Jamaliya's Boot Works, and many other famous boutiques.

I went with my father to A.W. Jansz's store near High Street as a boy. We bought Dutch Edam Cheese, as an accompaniment for the Christmas breudher.

The shopping spree in Colombo included a visit to Pilawoos for a treat of biriyani. Elephant House played a significant part in booking Christmas cakes.

One last item that was on the shopping list: Fireworks from the Fireworks Palace opposite the Fort Railway Station.

Christmas was on. The cake was made and sent to the bakery. The servants were making string hoppers and pittu, cutting up A.W. Jansz' ham, and making cutlets and Seeni sambol. Churches saw long lines at the Confessional. I remember well the Allied troops celebrating Christmas in Ceylon. The African troops came for Midnight Mass in the Seminary in St. Francis Xavier in Bambalapitiya. The Italian prisoners of war, brought tears when they sang the Adeste Fidelis.

Famous artist, Arthur Van Langenberg helped to stage a massive Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve at St. Lucia's Cathedral Square in Kotahena. There were hundreds in the cast. The beautiful teenager Camille Cramer played Mary, as she was seated astride on a real donkey, led by a young doctor, who played Joseph. As Gerry Paul hit the Police drums, the donkey took off, with Joseph clinging to its tail, and the audience, including Mary in ripples of laughter.

As midnight came, there was a never-ending sound of fireworks and skyrockets, that would surely have awoken the Christ Child. Carol parties came to the doorstep. At Kawdana, children in costume came around singing Sinhala carols.

Returning home from mid-night church service families sat down for a feast of string hoppers, ham, breudher, cheese, mulligatawny, and Christmas cake. There were presents near the family Christmas tree. The church Annavi rala, the postman, the dhobi, the baker, and the fishmonger were the regular Christmas early birds. They all got cash, plus a tot of arrack or gin. Later in the evening when it became dark once more, we lit our fireworks. Saw the servants lighting the big Roman candles and skyrockets. The radio blasted yuletide melodies. Nowhere in the world did I ever experience Christmas, as the Ceylonese prepare and enjoy it. Can still hear the hustle and bustle in Pettah, the cries of the street vendors and the pavement hawkers. The wailing of the mamma-pappa balloon, the rattle of the toy carts, and the delicacies from the gram sellers are unforgettable.

Here I am on the ocean liner THE PACIFIC SKY in the Coral Sea on a pre-Christmas voyage from Sydney to New Caledonia, I was dreaming not of a 'White Christmas', but of the Christmases I spent in Sri Lanka.



Fr. Noel Cruz OMI, the Roman Catholic filmmaker-priest Noel Cruz was born in 1921, and ordained a Roman Catholic priest in the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) in 1948. Finding that 'celibacy is martyrdom', as he wrote, he was dispensed from his vows and returned to lay status in about 1965. He married in 1967, emigrated to Australia and passed away there in 2003.

The famous Australian journalist, the late Alan Gill, writing about Noel Cruz, said "He was at various periods, sometimes concurrently, priest, filmmaker, writer and journalist. Add ventriloquist, puppeteer, broadcaster, catechist, and beloved husband of his wife Tirzah, and you have the measure of the man." Fr. Aloysius Pieris s.j. called him " ... a Catholic priest decades ahead of his country's local Church in appreciating and fostering the catechetical potentialities of Social Media"

Wishing all our readers a fabulous Christmas filled with good cheer, good beer, and memories of a beautiful year.

Editor