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## Christmas Nostalgia

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Christmas has always been my favourite holiday. It has always been a time of indulgence and abundance, full tummies, or quite often sore tummies, and spirit - lots of Christmas spirit. Each family has their own Christmas traditions - this is how my mom and I celebrated Christmas ...

### The Christmas Tree

The first sign of Christmas spirit arrived every year with the purchase of a fresh pine tree. Once the tree was mounted the "Christmas box", full of antique ornaments passed down from my Grandmother, was brought out. After carefully unwrapping each one, and adding a small hook, they would find their place on a tree branch along with the candy canes, Christmas crackers, and of course a vacuum's best friend - the tinsel.

The most important adornment was the angel, which took her place proudly on the top of the tree. With a plastic head delicately balanced on the top of a cardboard cone covered in silver sparkles, crooked golden wings, and pathetic blond hair that would always slip to one side - she was our pride and joy. Many a Christmas she looked down hungrily on our festive feast.

### Christmas gifts, stockings, and "white lies".

I was allowed to open one gift on Christmas Eve. This would follow weeks of shaking the packages to try and guess what was inside, while my mom would lie as best as she could saying "Nope. It's not that." Christmas was the only time we were allowed to tell "white lies", and mom certainly did her best to tell as many as possible, to prolong the excitement till the last moment.

Stockings were even more important than the gifts. They would be filled to the brim with small surprises, sweets and chocolate. I could always count on getting a bag of gold and silver foil-wrapped chocolate coins, a peppermint candy cane and a mandarin orange.

### Christmas Morning

I would always wake up early, sometimes as early as three or four in the morning! My first stop was the Christmas tree to make a quick inventory of gifts. Then, I would run into my mom's bedroom to wake her up - "Christmas is here! Christmas is here! Wake up! Wake up!" I would shout. Unable to resist the youthful jingle of my excitement, she would put on her robe and follow me into the living room where, plastered with an enormous smile, I would be impatiently waiting to attack my stocking and rip open my gifts.

### Christmas Dinner

We would eat Christmas dinner on the evening of December 25<sup>th</sup>, and it was always a big fat stuffed turkey. My job was to help make the stuffing - mom's famous and angelically delicious stuffing! Mashed potatoes with gravy, cranberry jelly, egg nog, and some kind of pie for dessert, all accompanied the beautifully baked bloated brown bird.

**Peace and joy to everyone! La la la la la, la la la la. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

(This article is dedicated to my mom who always made Christmas a special time of year - Merry Christmas Mom!)