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# Monthly Newsletter

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## BEAT THE WINTER BLUES



With shorter days and fewer hours of sunlight available in autumn and winter, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) rears its unpleasant head in up to 20 percent of the American population. Characterized by moodiness, depression, cravings for simple carbohydrates, weight gain, fatigue and melancholy, the condition can range from simple "wintertime blues" to full blown incapacitation. The affliction tends to be more prominent in young people and women.

### Defeating seasonal malaise:

Several natural remedies are helpful in alleviating SAD. Short of traveling south every winter for a hearty dose of sunshine, the methods below offer practical solutions for curbing this distressing syndrome.

**Exercise and fresh air** - Even when the weather is overcast and uninspiring, it's important to spend at least a small amount of time outdoors during the day. Research has found that those with seasonal affective disorder derive the same benefits from spending 30 minutes daily in the open air (regardless of direct sunlight) as individuals who use a light box for several hours per day.

**Full-spectrum light** - When the weather absolutely prohibits venturing outside, a full-spectrum light box is the next best option. Studies have shown blue light to be the most successful in diminishing seasonal depression. A minimum of 45 minutes per day in the morning is recommended to normalize circadian rhythms.

For the full article, please visit:  
[http://www.naturalnews.com/042817\\_winter\\_blues\\_seasonal\\_affective\\_disorder\\_mental\\_health.html#ixzz45BC2ZCNJ](http://www.naturalnews.com/042817_winter_blues_seasonal_affective_disorder_mental_health.html#ixzz45BC2ZCNJ)

## ST. NICHOLAS TO SANTA: THE SURPRISING ORIGINS OF MR. CLAUS

Any kid can tell you where Santa Claus is from—the North Pole. But his historical journey is even longer and more fantastic than his annual, one-night circumnavigation of the globe.

The modern American Santa was born in the Mediterranean, evolved across northern Europe, and finally assumed his now-familiar form on the shores of the New World. Who is this Santa, and how did he get here?

How did this St. Nicholas become a North Pole-dwelling bringer of Christmas gifts? The original saint was a Greek born 280 years after Christ who became bishop of Myra, a small Roman town in modern Turkey. Nicholas was neither fat nor jolly but developed a reputation as a fiery, wiry, and defiant defender of church doctrine during the "Great Persecution," when Bibles were put to the torch and priests made to renounce Christianity or face execution.

Nicholas defied these edicts and spent years in prison before Constantine brought Christianity to prominence in his empire. Nicholas's fame lived long after his death (on December 6 of some unknown year in the mid-fourth century) because he was associated with many miracles, and reverence for him continues to this day independent of his Santa Claus connection.

Nicholas rose to prominence among the saints because he was the patron of so many groups, ranging from sailors to entire nations. By about 1200, explained University of Manitoba historian Gerry Bowler, author of *Santa Claus: A Biography*, he became known as a patron of children and magical gift bringer.

For several hundred years, circa 1200 to 1500, St. Nicholas was the unchallenged bringer of gifts and the toast of celebrations centered around his day, December 6. The strict saint took on some aspects of earlier European deities, like the Roman Saturn or the Norse Odin, who appeared as white-bearded men and had magical powers like flight. He also ensured that kids toed the line by saying their prayers and practicing good behavior.

But after the Protestant Reformation, saints like Nicholas fell out of favor across much of northern Europe. "That was problematic," Bowler said. "You still love your kids, but now who is going to bring them the gifts?"

Bowler said that, in many cases, that job fell to baby Jesus, and the date was moved to Christmas rather than December 6. "But the infant's carrying capacity is very limited, and he's not very scary either," Bowler said. "So the Christ child was often given a scary helper to do the lugging of presents and the threatening of kids that doesn't seem appropriate coming from the baby Jesus."

Some of these scary Germanic figures again were based on Nicholas, no longer as a saint but as a threatening sidekick like Ru-klaus (Rough Nicholas), Aschenklas (Ashy Nicholas), and Pelznickel (Furry Nicholas). These figures expected good behavior or forced children to suffer consequences like whippings or kidnappings. Dissimilar as they seem to the jolly man in red, these colorful characters would later figure in the development of Santa himself.

For more on this, please visit:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/12/131219-santa-claus-origin-history-christmas-facts-st-nicholas/>



## ATS SNOW QUOTE

*Christmas waves a magic wand over this world,  
and behold, everything is more beautiful*

*-Norman Vincent Peale*

[www.abouttimesnow.com](http://www.abouttimesnow.com)