



the Original Twelve Days of Christmas

To many, *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is a delightful and nonsensical rhyme set to beautiful music. Considering its historical origins, the song had a very serious purpose when it was written and meant a great deal more than a simple repetitious melody with pretty phrases and a list of very strange gifts.

In England, during the period of 1558 to 1829, Catholics were prohibited from *any* practice of their faith (private or public). To avoid persecution and certain death, Catholic leaders created this musical allegory as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian Faith. The hidden meanings, listed below, were understood by those of the Christian Faith.

- 1 Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus Christ, Son of God
- 2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments
- 3 French Hens = Faith, Hope, and Charity (the Theological Virtues)
- 4 Calling Birds = The Four Gospels Which Sing the Song of Salvation
- 5 Gold Rings = The Five Books of the Old Testament
- 6 Geese a-Laying = The Six Days of Creation
- 7 Swans a-Swimming = The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 Maids a-Milking = The Eight Beatitudes
- 9 Ladies Dancing = The Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- 10 Lords a-Leaping = The Ten Commandments
- 11 Pipers Piping = The Eleven Faithful Apostles
- 12 Drummers Drumming = The Twelve Points of the Doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

the twelve days of Christmas melody

ENGLISH

lively

1. On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, partridge in a pear tree. 2. On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 3. On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 4. On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 5. On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 6. On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 7. On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 8. On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 9. On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 10. On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 11. On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree. 12. On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

Repeat for each verse

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| 4. On the fourth day of Christmas | Four calling birds, three French hens, etc. |
| 5. On the fifth day of Christmas | Five gold rings, four calling birds, etc. |
| 6. On the sixth day of Christmas | Six geese a-laying, five gold rings, etc. |
| 7. On the seventh day of Christmas | Seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, etc. |
| 8. On the eighth day of Christmas | Eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, etc. |
| 9. On the ninth day of Christmas | Nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, etc. |
| 10. On the tenth day of Christmas | Ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, etc. |
| 11. On the eleventh day of Christmas | Eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, etc. |
| 12. On the twelfth day of Christmas | Twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, etc. |