

## Boxing Day Activities

Boxing Day, also known as St. Stephen's Day, is celebrated on the day after Christmas, December 26. The holiday has British origins. Most probably, Boxing Day got its name from the medieval custom of preparing boxes of food and gifts to distribute to servants and to poor families on the day after Christmas. Charity is still a part of Boxing Day celebrations, which also include family gatherings, casual meals, music, outdoor recreation, and shopping.

**Gift Boxes** The name of "Boxing Day" is believed to relate to the day when live-in servants would get their Christmas presents (or Christmas box) from their employers. Have your residents create small gift boxes for the staff. Fill the boxes with nuts, candy, or other treats.



**Board Games** Boxing Day is meant to be spent with family. Invite young family members to join your residents for a day of board games. Children today spend more time on electronic devices than they do playing old-fashioned board games, so they might not be familiar with some of the classics. Your residents can introduce those games to their guests.



**Movie Day** Everyone is usually a bit tired after all the hustle and bustle of Christmas. Boxing Day is the perfect day to relax with popcorn and a movie. Be sure to include staff and family members.

**Bake Cookies** Enlist your residents to bake cookies to give to your mail carrier, gardener, newspaper deliverer, local firehouse, and others in the service industry.



**Canned Food** Have your residents organize a canned food drive. They can



decorate boxes for collection, encourage guests to donate canned goods, and decide which charitable organizations receive the food.

**Sporting Events** In England, the Boxing Day fox hunt was traditional, but it is now banned. Today Boxing Day is a popular time for horse racing.

Football (soccer) matches are traditional Boxing Day celebrations in the UK,



Republic of Ireland and Canada. In Australia, where it's summertime, an important test match (cricket tournament) begins on Boxing Day. Check to see if one of these events is televised and invite your residents to cheer for their favorites.

**Serve a Meal** Some of your more active residents might want to volunteer to serve a meal at a soup kitchen or prepare lunch at a local Ronald McDonald house.



**Take a Walk** Depending on the weather, celebrate Boxing Day with an enjoyable walk outdoors. Include family members and staff.

**Potluck** Continuing the Christmas celebrations in a more casual style is the Boxing Day custom. Family meals often comprise a collection of Christmas leftovers. Open houses and potlucks can extend the hospitality to a wider circle of guests. Invite family members and staff to bring a dish to share.



**Roast Beef** In countries where turkey or goose is the main Christmas Day meal, a



formal Boxing Day dinner features roast beef, complete with Yorkshire pudding and other trimmings. Provide your residents with a formal dining experience, including a traditional roast beef carving station.

**Morris Dancing** In England, you might find Morris dancing pageants on Boxing Day. Morris dance is a form of English folk dance usually accompanied by music. It is based on rhythmic stepping by a group of dancers, usually wearing bell pads on their shins. Implements such as sticks and handkerchiefs may also be wielded by the dancers. If possible, invite a local group to perform for your residents. If not, share and discuss this performance:



[Morris Dancing Video](#).

**Good King Wenceslaus** The Christmas carol “Good King Wenceslaus” tells the



story of a king’s act of charity on the Feast of Stephen. Teach your residents the lyrics for “Good King Wenceslaus” and have a sing along.

**Thank You** A simple handwritten, heart-felt thank you note is always greatly appreciated. Have staff and residents take the time to write a thank you note to someone to thank them for a service or kind deed done in the past year.

**Hunting of the Wren** In Irish villages, the Hunting of the Wren is an ancient St. Stephen’s Day custom. Groups of men and boys parade the figure of a

wren on a tall, decorated stick from door to door, begging for donations. The funds collected are used to put on a community dance party. Learn more about this [Irish tradition](#) and create your own Hunting of the Wren or invite a local Irish club or group to join in the fun.



**Shopping** Even though Boxing Day’s origins don’t have anything to do with



packing unwanted Christmas gifts back in their boxes for return, December 26 has become one of the biggest shopping days of the year. If your residents are up for it, take a field trip to a local mall for some bargain shopping or simply people watching. Looking for

bargains online is another option.