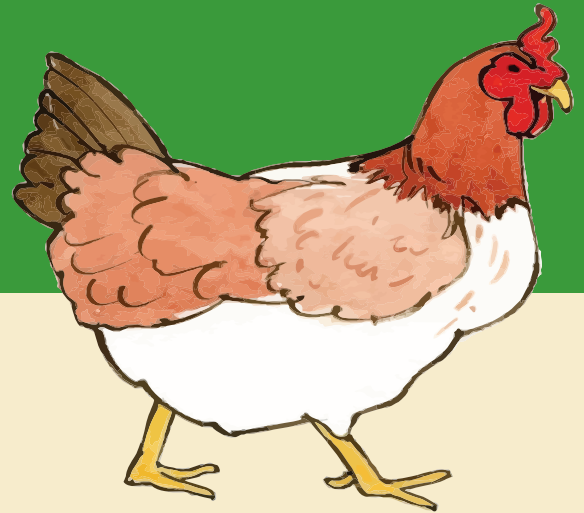


12 The Hidden Meaning of the Days of Christmas

On The Third Day of Christmas ...
My True Love Gave To Me ...

December 27



Three French hens
Faith, Hope and Love

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The 12 days of Christmas are the 12 days that separate Christmas Day on December 25 and ends on January 5, with the next day being Epiphany, which is celebrated January 6. Depending on the church, January 6 may mark Christ's baptism (in the Catholic tradition), or it may mark the day that the wise men (or the Magi) visited Jesus with their gifts. The Day of Epiphany is when the church celebrates the revelation of Christ as the light of the world and recalls the journey of the Magi. Magi means wise men. From 1558 until 1829 Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During that era someone wrote 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' as a kind of secret catechism that could be sung in public without risk of persecution. The song has two levels of interpretation: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the church. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality. Some beliefs believe that the day after Christmas started the 12 Days of Christmas. You also hear some people think its the 12 days that lead up to Christmas. But reality, it starts on December 25, that is the first day.

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