

'Twas the night *before* Christmas, when all through the house  
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

*As you know,* The day *before* Christmas is celebrated and honored as Christmas Eve. Then, of course, comes Christmas Day, one of the high holy days of the Christian faith, when Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Christ, their Lord and Founder. The Day *after* is not so noteworthy, at least not in the US. What do we call the Day after Christmas? Well, in America it's just the Day after Christmas! Or maybe, a day to lounge around and watch bowl games, ~~or~~ *or go exchange the gift from auntie 'Em tho did nt fit.* In Great Britain, and much of the British Commonwealth, the day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. It's almost <sup>as</sup> celebrated as Christmas. Not because the Brits puts on boxing gloves and punch each other ~~on~~ <sup>the</sup> day after Christmas, but because they gather their boxes of presents, take them over to friends, or employees, or people who serve during the year, like the mailman or local constable--and they exchange gifts.

*Dec. 26th*  
Here's how it works: Boxing Day traditionally ~~the day after Christmas~~ began as the day, when servants and tradesmen would receive gifts from their bosses or employers, known as a "Christmas box".

*my Collee is terrible!*  
In South Africa, Boxing Day was renamed ~~to~~ Day of Goodwill in 1994. In Ireland, the day is known as St. Stephen's Day (Irish: Lá Fhéile Stiofáin) or the Day of the Wren (Irish: Lá an Dreoilín). In many European countries, including Germany, Poland, Scandinavia and the Netherlands, 26<sup>th</sup> December is celebrated as the Second Christmas Day, all of which serves to remind us that Christmas is really a season not a single day. You've heard of the 12 days of Christmas—on the Christian calendar, traditionally ~~extending~~ <sup>it extend</sup> from Christmas Day to Epiphany.

*So dont mourn or mope! there's more Christmas to come!*  
The exact etymology of the term "boxing day" is unclear. The European tradition, which has long included giving money and other gifts to those who were needy and in service positions, has been dated to the Middle Ages. It is believed to be in reference to the Alms Box <sup>found</sup> placed in places of worship in order to collect donations ~~for~~ the poor. In ancient, pre-Christian Rome, Saturnalia was a Roman celebration during which slave owners would switch roles with their slaves. *CEO's CFO's should flip burgers at Mac Donalds & vice versa!*

Also, it may come from a custom in the late Roman/early Christian era, wherein metal boxes placed outside churches were used to collect special offerings tied to the Feast of Saint Stephen, which in the Western Church falls on the same day as Boxing Day.

At any rate, if someone has given you good service, or needs a bit of help during this time of year, Boxing Day, December 26<sup>th</sup> would be a great time to say "Thank you in word and deed."

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment