

[Do You Hear What I Hear? A list of the best Christmas podcasts of all time](#)

Everyone who celebrates Christmas can point to a movie, a TV special or a song that instantly makes them feel like Ebenezer Scrooge at the end of *A Christmas Carol* — goddamn psyched up for Christmas.

If you care about Christmas like I do — you have *something* that hits you right in the heart each year. It might be a tune that puts some holiday pep in your step, it might be a film you watch every year in pajamas with your family, it might even just be a yuletide-themed episode of a television show that brings a few hopeful tears to your normally dead eyes.

But as time goes on, our media landscape continues to expand like Santa's ill-fated midriff. It's no longer just movies, television and music. There are *new* mediums presenting spectacular, modern Christmas projects that reach new audiences and create new Christmas traditions. As much as I'd love to talk about all of the contemporary mediums embracing the holiday (*Dead Rising 4*, anyone?) today I'm shining a green and red spotlight on **Christmas podcasts**.

Not only are podcasts an excellent way to ease the pain of holiday travel and shopping, they're also the perfect way to bring you the warmth of the season — like a mediocre peppermint mocha latte in your lap while you pull away from the drive-thru of Dunkin Donuts (mediocre — *at best*).

All of the best Christmas projects revolve around friendship, family and the harmony that can exist between people who care about each other. Podcasts are so often based on the relationships between the people on mic, and the chemistry they share, that "Christmas" and "podcasts" are a match made in reindeer heaven. So I stand up and present to you — here on a metaphorical stage, with a red-striped shirt, and my favorite blue blanket — my Christmas podcast recommendations:

[This American Life's *Christmas and Commerce*](#) episode is legendary. David Sedaris' "Santaland Diaries" (about working as an elf in Macy's around Christmas) make up the meat of this episode. But for me, the true stand-out moments are the opening of the episode (recorded in a Toys R' Us on Christmas eve), and the closing moments, which were recorded over 50 years ago in a Chicago home on Christmas morning.

[How Did This Get Made \(HDTGM\)](#) is a podcast where Paul Scheer, June Diane Raphael and Jason Mantzoukas watch a terrible movie and hilariously poke holes in every single second of it. They've

covered many Christmas movies, including the *Star Wars Holiday Special*, *Reindeer Games*, and (my favorite) *Jingle All the Way*. Want to find a new way to revisit some holiday classics? HDTGM has got you covered.

[**Stuff You Should Know \(SYSK\)**](#) is exactly what it sounds like. With extremely low-key, well-spoken, sort-of-funny hosts, SYSK's Christmas episodes revolve around the history of Yuletide-related topics like the history of Black Friday, poinsettias' relationship to Christmas, and the great episode, "What Makes a Must-Have Christmas Toy?" Essential listening for those who want to have a casual, informative listen filled with holiday cheer.

My favorite Christmas podcast episodes come from [**Tell 'Em Steve Dave**](#). TESD is made up of Walt and Bryan from AMC's *Comic Book Men* and Brian Quinn from TruTV's *Impractical Jokers*, but this podcast existed way before any of the three hosts had TV shows.

Since 2011, TESD has been serving up a yearly Christmas episode that is absolutely bizarre. Early on it was just friends discussing their specific Christmases through the years — including a heartbreaking story from friend-of-TESD Ming Chen, where his parents refused to even celebrate Christmas when he was a child (and he received a roomful of laughter in response). Eventually their yearly episodes grew to include Christmas games, unavoidable Yuletide arguments, and even a half-scripted / half-improv four hour "radio play" episode where they need to save Christmas with the help of most of the *Impractical Jokers*, Joey Fatone from N*Sync, and entire cast of surrounding characters from the history of the show.

TESD perfectly executes my favorite type of podcast — the kind where it feels like friends sitting around and joking about whatever they want. And their Christmas episodes — no matter how much they attempt to structure them — feel no different, except with a little extra warmth and care.



And finally, for anyone out there saying, “These podcasts are super popular! I already knew about these, I wanted to find something new — something *underground*,” I got something for you. **With Ray and Derek’s** Christmas special — the “[Podmas Castacular](#)” — is an incredible combination of improvisational comedy and vintage Christmas special magic. WRAD is made up of RI-based comedians Ray Harrington and Derek Furtado, but they unfortunately no longer produce new episodes. Their 2015 Christmas episode is modeled after a 1970s variety show, switching between the show as it’s performed live and backstage as things go awry. This is an excellent, modern take on the classic format, repackaged with hilarious banter and commentary from the hosts.

So this year, if you’re tearing out your hair as you’re making your gift list and wrapping presents, or if you’re angrily driving the hour-and-a-half to your racist uncle’s house to see your family — throw on some of these podcasts to cope with the frustration. Take a breath, press play and bask in the spirit of the season.

Find links to all of these podcast episodes at motifri.com/christmaspodcasts