

Historical Holidays Boredom Busters! Candy Cane Bead Ornament

Historical Context

The candy cane is a popular holiday candy. The most common flavor is peppermint but grocery stores carry many different flavors. During the holidays, this candy can be used in baking, in a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, in a chocolate bar, etc. The popular peppermint candy cane scent can also be found in holiday hand soaps, candles, etc. Candy canes are used for decoration as well! We have so many uses for this delicious treat but where did it come from and why is it so popular?



Photo credit: Louisa County Historical Society

Like the decorated christmas tree and the traditional candle in the window, the candy cane tradition is rumored to have come from Germany. It is said that in 1670 the German choirmaster Cologne Cathedral handed out sugar sticks to keep his choir boys quiet during the **Living Creche** ceremony. Some people thought sweets had no place in the church so he started to bend the sugar sticks to make them resemble a **shepherd's staff**. There is also a rumor that the candy cane hook came from German people wanting to hang sugar sticks from their trees.

The choirmaster handed out candy canes that were white and unflavored. The common candy cane that we are familiar with today became popular at the turn of the 19th century when candy masters decided to add red stripes and the peppermint flavor. In the 1950s, the candy cane became very popular when a machine was invented that was able to **mass produce** candy canes. Before this invention, candy canes were very hard to make and took a lot of time. This meant they were a delicious luxury only the wealthy could eat.



A 1920s christmas card featuring Santa Claus and a reindeer licking a candy cane.
Photo credit: Getty Images/History.com

Key Words

Living creche ceremony - A story from the Bible; the nativity scene when baby Jesus, Saint Joseph, Mary, the three wise men, and animals are in the manger.

Shepherd's staff - a long sturdy stick with a curve on the end. This stick was used to manage flocks of sheep and has a biblical connection.

Mass produce - to produce large quantities of an item by an automated mechanical process.

Activity: Beaded Candy Cane Ornament!

Supplies

- Pipe cleaners (cut in half)
- Beads (in red and white)

Instructions

1. String ONE bead through the pipe cleaner on one end.



2. Fold the pipe cleaner over that bead to secure it.



3. Then start adding beads alternating between white and red.
4. Wrap the pipe cleaner around the last bead to secure it.
5. Bend the beaded pipe cleaner into a candy cane shape.

