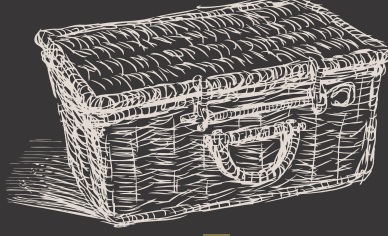


# THE CURIOUS HISTORY OF THE Hamper

Hampers haven't always been used as Christmas gifts. Discover the not so illustrious history of the hamper, from Normandy to the hands of Victorian servants and beyond.



1066

Hampers as we know them were introduced to Britain in the 11th century by William the Conqueror, among other things. They were used as charitable offerings full of food, drinks and clothing, designed to provide families in need with produce that could last them for weeks.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

William the Conqueror's lack of literacy and his failing to master the English language resulted in infused Franglais developing in the UK.

1200<sup>s</sup>

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
During the medieval period, hampers were also known by the Latin "hanaperium".

Aside from food, hampers or "hanapers" were also used to store important documents. From 1244 until 1832 the Clerk of the Hanaper was a Government official responsible for certain fees and fines related to the Chancery.

1700<sup>s</sup>

The first stage company was formed in 1706, making travel by stage coach easier and more popular. Alongside this development, hampers became a popular choice for travellers to dine en route.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 1754 it took 4½ days to travel from Manchester to London. No wonder a well-stocked hamper was needed!

1800<sup>s</sup>

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
The first steam locomotive to run on smooth rails set off in the year 1804.



In conjunction with the railway expansion of the 1800s, the ability to send hampers much further became easier, subsequently marking the start of gift hampers being given to family and loved ones as presents.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Less fortunate servants received hampers of clothing fabric or tools from their more practically-minded employers.

The tradition of gifting Christmas hampers seasonally can be added to the long list of contributions the Victorians bestowed on us. Our wealthier forebears started presenting them to maids and servants as gestures of goodwill to reward them with a feast over the Christmas period.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

"The Christmas hamper went. With a turkey and ham, and a brace of pheasants in it; some bacon and apples to fill up, and sweet herbs and onions."  
(Mrs Henry Wood, 1874)

A typical Victorian food hamper was packed with a variety of meats and poultry, as well as pies and fruit cakes. For picnic hampers, lobsters were also a popular staple.

1900<sup>s</sup>

As motor travel increased in popularity, some hampers began to include tea kettles and burners that would allow motorists to stop for hot refreshments during their journey.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Even Prisoners of War received hampers at Christmas time from the Red Cross.

21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Approximately 4.5m Britons live abroad, making hamper-giving an international affair.

Hampers are a gift good enough for royalty. In 2014 HRH Queen Elizabeth II presented Pope Francis with a hamper of British produce to mark their first meeting at the Vatican.

Developing into the 21st century, gift hampers have progressed much further than charitable offerings alone, and have evolved to encapsulate fine ingredients from around the world.



So, what are today's traditions, and what makes a great modern hamper?

1

## QUALITY CONTENTS

Today, a good Christmas hamper should offer a variety of high quality, luxury contents. From chocolates and savoury snacks to alcohol and even skincare.

2

## SURPRISE DELIVERY

Unlike traditional purchases where you have to do all the wrapping yourself and deliver the gift by hand, luxury Christmas hampers should allow you to arrange delivery at a specific workplace or home address.

3

## HIGH-GRADE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Just as much attention should be paid to the hamper enclosing the contents as the goods that sit inside. Quality food and drink is a must, but so too is a well-constructed hamper that can be re-used once the contents have been consumed.

4

## DETAILED DECORATION

A good Christmas hamper should also feature a flourish of decorative touches. From ribbons and bows to personalisation features - the better the end product, the better the experience.

5

## UNIQUENESS

Catering to typical palates to offer something unique enough to impress - a good hamper will get the balance right between offering familiar, delectable contents while still providing something a cut above the high street offering.

FIND QUALITY CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FOR YOUR LOVED ONE AND SEND A UNIQUE GIFT THIS YEAR WITH REGENCY HAMPERS.



SOURCES  
[www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Food-parcels-for-prisoners-of-war](http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War/Food-parcels-for-prisoners-of-war)  
[www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-william-the-conqueror](http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-william-the-conqueror)  
[museum.wales/articles/2008-12-15/Richard-Trevithicks-steam-locomotive/](http://museum.wales/articles/2008-12-15/Richard-Trevithicks-steam-locomotive/)  
[www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/03/queen-meets-pope-francis-vatican](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/03/queen-meets-pope-francis-vatican)  
[en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hamper](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hamper)  
[www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-Stagecoach/](http://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-Stagecoach/)  
[www.statlife.org.uk](http://www.statlife.org.uk)