



Christmas Dinner

Starter

Choice Of One

Kings Arms Peanut Soup

Sherry Cream, Spiced Peanuts

Chesapeake Seafood Chowder

Smoked Bacon and Chives

Roasted Beet Salad

Red & Golden Beets, Pecan Crusted Goat Cheese
Tartlet, Winter Greens, Blood Orange Vinaigrette

Entree

Pan Roasted Chicken Breast

Fresh Herb Potato Gratin, Cranberry Golden Raisin
Chutney, Rosemary Scented Jus

Lump Crab Crusted Rock Fish

Fava Bean and Country Ham Ragout, Champagne Butter

Prime Rib of Beef

Herb Whipped Potatoes, Popover, Natural Au Jus, Horseradish

Stout Braised Lamb Shank

Colcannon Potato Gratin, Rosemary Orange Gremolata

Roasted Butternut Squash "Steak"

Root Vegetable Hash, Wild Mushroom "Gravy"

Plum Glazed Braised Lamb Shank

Fresh Herb Potato Gratin, Ginger and Black Pepper Essence

Mrs. Vobe's Sweets

Southern Pecan Pie

Vanilla Whipped Cream, Caramel

Meringue & Berries

Lemon Curd, Vanilla Chantilly, Mint

Jefferson's Bread Pudding

Bourbon Custard Sauce

American Heritage Flour-less Chocolate Torte

Dried Cherry Compote, Red Wine Syrup

18th Century Syllabub

Fresh Fruit, Mint

Yes, Virginia, There Was A SCROOGE!

*A*nd, apparently, not just one! In 1739, a correspondent to the *Virginia Gazette* warned that “too many, who call themselves *Christians*, pass over this *holy time*, without paying any Regard to it at all.” Of course there were others who observed Christmas “in a *pious Way* only”; they were to be “pardoned and Pitied.” The ideal Virginian celebrated the season “in a Mixture of *piety* and *licentiousness*.” On Christmas Day, families journeyed to the parish church for prayers and communion. Afterward they gave themselves over to jollity, socializing, and feasting.

Virginia has a long tradition of hospitality. An 18th-century visitor to the Tidewater pronounced it “the epicure’s Elysium and the very center of freedom and hospitality.” His observation was never more accurate than at year’s end. Winter months brought leisure to agricultural Virginia. Tobacco had been harvested, the winter wheat sown, and, from December through February, the planters were freed from everyday attention to their land. It was the season for visiting, marrying, catching up on gossip. In 1773, the tutor at Nomini Hall noted the household’s anticipation of gala events: “Nothing is now to be heard of in conversation, but the *Balls*, the Fox-hunts, the fine *entertainments*, and the *good fellowship*, which are to be exhibited at the approaching *Christmas*.” It was all for fun and fun for all. The correspondent to the *Virginia Gazette* was willing to wink at “the little Liberties of the old *roman december*, which are taken by the Multitude.” These, he conceded, “ought to be over-looked and excused.”

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