



cdbaby™ presents

CHRISTMAS SONGS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

(And Those That Aren't)

Christmas Songs in the Public Domain

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The holiday season – a time for family, tradition, peace on earth and some of the year's highest music consumption.

Yep, that's right. Between October and December, millions of people are searching for new Christmas songs – and they could be listening to YOUR music!

Recording a few Christmas tunes is one of the best ways to connect with new listeners who might not have otherwise heard your music. But before you choose the song(s) you're going to tackle, you should know ahead of time whether or not you need to pay a publisher/songwriter for the right to record their composition.

To make things a little simpler for you, CD Baby has created these two handy lists of popular Christmas tunes. Is the song in the Public Domain list? Great, it's no longer protected by copyright and you can release it without a license. Want to cover a copyrighted song? You can easily obtain the required mechanical licenses from our friends at [Easy Song Licensing](#).

Popular Christmas Songs in the Public Domain

"Angels We Have Heard
On High"

"Auld Lang Syne"

"Away In A Manger"

"Coventry Carol"

"Deck The Halls"

"For Unto Us"

"Go Tell It On The Mountain"

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

"Good King Wenceslas"

"Hallelujah Chorus"

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

"Here We Come A-Caroling
(Wassail Song)"

"I Heard The Bells On
Christmas Day"

"I Saw Three Ships"

"In The Bleak Midwinter"

"It Came Upon The Midnight
Clear"

"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"

"Jingle Bells"

"Jolly Old St. Nicholas"

"Joy To The World"

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

"O Come O Come Emmanuel"

"O Holy Night"

"O Little Town Of Bethlehem"

"Once In Royal David's City"

"Silent Night"

"The First Noel"

"The Twelve Days of Christmas"

"Up On The Housatop"

"We Three Kings"

"We Wish You A Merry
Christmas"

"What Child is This"

Popular Christmas Songs That Are NOT in the Public Domain

Believe it or not, these songs (as old and ubiquitous as some of them are) have not yet passed into the Public Domain. The rights for these compositions are still administered by publishers, and a mechanical royalty would need to be paid in order to record and release cover versions of these songs.

“A Holly Jolly Christmas” by Johnny Marks

“All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth”
by Donald Yetter Gardner

“Carol Of The Bells” * by Peter J. Wilhousky &
Mykola Leontovich

**The lyrics and title of “Carol of the Bells” are copyrighted. The music, a Ukrainian folk song called “Shchedryk,” is in the PUBLIC DOMAIN. In order to avoid paying a mechanical royalty, your recording would need to be an instrumental version of the composition, and you could NOT call it “Carol of the Bells.”*

“Do You Hear What I Hear?” by Noel Regney &
Gloria Shayne Baker

“Feliz Navidad” by Jose Feliciano

“Frosty The Snowman” by Steve Nelson &
Walter E. Rollins

“Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas”
by Ralph Blane & Hugh Martin

“Here Comes Santa Claus (Right Down Santa
Claus Lane)” by Gene Autry & Oakley Haldeman

“I’ll Be Home For Christmas” by Walter Kent,
Kim Gannon, & Buck Ram

“The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year”
by Edward Pola & George Wyle

“Jingle Bell Rock” by Joseph Carleton Beal &
James Ross Boothe

“Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!”
by Sammy Cahn & Jule Styne

“The Little Drummer Boy” by Katherine K. Davis,
Henry V. Onorati, & Harry Simeone

“Rockin’ Around The Christmas Tree”
by Johnny Marks

“Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer”
by Johnny Marks

“Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” by Fred Coots &
Haven Gillespie

“Silver Bells” by Jay Livingston & Ray Evans

“Sleigh Ride” by Leroy Anderson &
Mitchell Parish

“The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting On
An Open Fire)” by Mel Tormé & Robert Wells

“White Christmas” by Irving Berlin

“Winter Wonderland” by Felix Bernard &
Richard B. Smith

Please note: This information is correct to the best of our knowledge, but you are ultimately responsible for securing the rights for any copyrighted material you cover. In other words – this isn’t legal advice, so make sure you do your homework before selling songs you didn’t write.

Sources: <http://www.pdinfo.com/>

<http://www.copyrightsolver.com/>

About CD Baby

CD Baby, the world's largest digital distributor of independent music, is a company run BY musicians FOR musicians. We've paid out hundreds of millions of dollars to DIY artists all over the world. From our humble beginnings in 1998 as a small, one-man operation in a garage, to our current standing as one of the most trusted names in independent music, we've developed a host of services to help artists, including physical and digital music distribution, warehousing and shipping of CDs and vinyl, YouTube monetization, worldwide publishing administration, and more.

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