

The Elves Take a Vacation

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

If you were to believe the carols, you would no doubt think that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. And it usually is. But when you are a Christmas elf, the most fantastic, delightful, spectacular time of year is the week *after* Christmas. That's when the hard-working elves who have been busy making toys all year long finally get a holiday of their own.

Where would a Christmas elf go on vacation, you ask? Well, since the Easter Bunny takes its holiday on Easter Island, then, obviously, the elves all head for Christmas Island! Don't believe me? Go and look it up on a map. Go ahead. I'll wait...

Great, you're back! So, now you see I'm telling you the truth. Wait until you hear about the time Santa's elves first left the North Pole and ventured down south for their holidays. Settle in with some hot chocolate and get comfortable. Here we go.

Now, you know that Christmas Island is a small, tropical island in the Indian Ocean hidden away between Indonesia and Australia. There's a big mountain that some say was formed by an underground volcano. Much of it is rainforest. And you can find some fantastic Malaysian food there, too. If you ever go, there's a nice little spot I'd recommend for dinner. Yum!

Anyway, it is a pretty remote area to get to if you don't have your own sleigh and flying reindeer team. Luckily the elves have some great connections when it comes to air transportation. So after I dropped them off, they realized it was slightly warmer than they had expected. But those energetic little fellows didn't let that stop their fun. Boy, were they excited!

They got to the beach and were amazed to see the warm sand and beautiful ocean. They took off their heavy coats and dropped them on the ground. Their curly-toed boots became filled with sand, but when they took them off, they discovered the sand was too hot to walk on.

"Ouch, ouch, ouch!" cried Bongo, hopping up and down on the hot sand.

"Yikes!" yelled Tinsel, as he tried putting his bare foot down. The rest of the elves were also hopping and yelping.

"Now what are we going to do?" asked Mistletoe. He wanted to go down the shore and play in the ocean waves.

"What's that? Looks like someone is rolling out the red carpet for us!" exclaimed Bongo, pointing. Sure enough, coming out of the rainforest and swarming down the craggy rocks toward the beach like a living carpet were hundreds – no, perhaps thousands – of red crabs. It was their annual migration, and they had all come down to the beach to have a party.

“Hop on board, mate,” said a large crab, in a slight Australian accent, eyeing Bongo and his bare feet. “We’re going your way.”

“Really?” replied the elf. He cautiously placed one foot and then the other on the back of the crab and his closest friend. He started traveling swiftly toward the water. “Wow! Try this!” he called to the other elves. With some hesitation, the elves stepped carefully onto the endless stream of crabs flowing down the beach. They laughed and cheered as they rode the graceful scarlet red ribbon of hard-shelled creatures across the sand and to the crashing waves of the Indian Ocean.

The elves jumped into the water and thanked the crabs warmly. With a friendly clacking of their claws, the crabs retreated to make nests and get ready for their migration celebration later that night. The elves swam in the water and snorkeled around the coral reefs for hours.

Later, they built a snowman out of sand and an impressive replica of Santa’s castle. After watching a beautiful sunset, the elves headed back to their hotel for some rest. In their rooms, they found the temperature was far too hot. Mistletoe noticed the thermostat and set the air conditioning to make it as cold as possible. “They don’t have an igloo setting, but it will have to do,” he said.

Tinsel was still too warm to sleep. He went exploring the hotel instead and soon discovered the ice machine. Delighted, he filled several buckets and took them back to the room. He loaded up the bathtub with ice, and climbed in happily. “Ahh,” he sighed, settling in for a long night’s snooze.

The next morning, after a breakfast of snow cones that melted almost immediately, the troupe of elves headed for the mountain in the middle of the island. As they trekked through the rainforest, they were amazed at all the beautiful birds and wildlife around them. Suddenly, several monkeys began chattering and throwing ripe fruit and empty nut shells at them from their high perches. “Salty snowflakes!” exclaimed Picklemitten, as they dodged around the trees, trying to avoid being hit. “Walk faster!”

They had arranged to go ziplining through the rainforest. “Me first, me first!” shouted Noël, pushing her way to the front of the line. Bongo looked at Tinsel and rolled his eyes.

“That Noël. She always wants to be the first.” Tinsel laughed, and they both started to sing, “The first Noël, the angels did say...”

The instructor cut them off. “Okay, boys, who’s the brave elf ready to go next? The line is getting rather long behind you.” He motioned to the trail of elves impatiently waiting.

“Yeah, come on, don’t be scared,” called Mistletoe, smiling. “If Noël can do it, so can you.”

“Right then, I’ll show you how it’s done,” replied Bongo. He elbowed Tinsel. “Watch this.” He was helped into his safety harness and helmet. Soon he was giving the thumbs-up signal to the instructor. “Ready!” He stepped off the platform and into thin air, held up only by the cables attached to his harness. His pointed ears flapped in the wind, and the bell on his cap jingled as he zipped speedily down the line above the treetops and waterfalls of the rainforest. “Sweet sugarpplums!” he cried. “This thing goes nearly as fast as the reindeer team!”

When he arrived at the final landing platform, he was grinning from ear to pointed ear. Noël was waiting for him, and together they cheered on the rest of the elves as they took their turns flying through the jungle canopy.

Snowdrop was the last elf to ride the zip line. As she headed toward the landing platform, the waiting elves were shaken when the earth started rumbling under their feet. “Rioting reindeer!” yelled Picklemitten. “What was that?” They quickly helped Snowdrop out of her gear, and she felt the island shake again, so hard it seemed like it was trying to knock them over.

“I think I know,” said Snowdrop. “I was reading up about this island’s history. That means the sleeping underwater volcano is waking up. This could be a problem.”

“Oh, my jingle bells, I think this vacation is over! Who else wants to go home?!” said Mistletoe. All the elves quickly agreed they had experienced enough adventure for one vacation. It would be nice to get back to the safety of the North Pole and the workshop!

“Somebody call Santa before that volcano erupts!” said Tinsel.

And faster than you could say, “Ho, ho, ho!” I was on my sleigh and flying south to save the elves from their not-so-relaxing vacation!

Questions

1. Who is telling the story?
2. How did the elves get across the hot sand at the beach?
3. Describe two activities the elves enjoyed on Christmas Island.
4. What was the danger on the island?
5. Where in the world would you like to go on a vacation, and why?