

Santa Baby: An Analysis of Saint Nick's Sex Appeal

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With his archetypal white beard and belly like a bowl full of jelly, Santa may not be able to compete with the more traditional sex appeal of George Clooney and Brad Pitt, but he certainly has enough going for him to keep Mrs. Claus on his naughty list. Children around the globe go bonkers for his big sack of toys, but what is it that drives his wife wild with desire? The Perception Lab investigates the secret behind Santa's sexiness.

Santa's purported home in the far northern latitudes is necessarily secluded, but his privacy comes at a cost. Staying warm is a problem in this habitat as it can get as nippy as -30°C (-22°F). Santa, however, is well-suited to this environment with his famously chubby cheeks and barrel-sized belly offering insulation against the chill. Mrs. Claus may well have been drawn to such a corpulent chap, despite the health risks associated with increased adiposity. Whilst a slimmer man would perish if he ventured outside in the cold for too long, Santa's tubby tummy not only protects him from the frosty nights, it also keeps the Missus toasty and warm.

Red, Saint Nick's trademark colour, contributes to his allure. Santa's unique sense of fashion is not only festive; it also bolsters his sex appeal. Red attire has been shown to convey amorous meaning; women perceive red on men as a sign of dominance and it has implications of romantic love. Recent studies in the Perception Lab have also found that people choose partners with redder faces, as red skin is indicative of health. The result of increased vasodilation of blood vessels in the face, redness can occur as a result of high levels of physical exercise, such as delivering presents to the children of the world. Not everything is merry about Santa's red cheeks, though. Facial redness also results from high levels of testosterone, a hormone associated with size and dominance. So, although Santa's red cheeks look cuddly and cute, they are a facial warning sign to other men advising them to stay away from Mrs. Claus.

Santa's jelly belly and rosy cheeks are enough to entice the ladies, but there is more to Santa's appeal than meets the eye. Another of Santa's charming traits is his generosity and kindness towards children. Recent research has shown that women swoon over men who like

kids. This could be because an affinity for children suggests that a man is ready to settle down with his partner and invest in some offspring of his own. Santa's charitable nature towards children may let Mrs. Claus know that he is willing to invest heavily in paternal care should she want children, and it also lets her know that he is not about to start seeing any other women when he is on his trips around the globe.

Santa may be a merry old elf who is dedicated to his wife and his job bringing joy to children everywhere, but don't think he doesn't know how to take charge. Indeed, the Father of Christmas is a jolly powerful fellow. Santa heads a worldwide annual holiday economy on which billions are spent. He controls a vast infrastructure of toy assembly workshops and has single-handedly monopolised the magic elf and flying reindeer markets. This abundance of resources is a further carrot to Mrs. Claus's maternal instinct. While men tend to favour more attractive women as potential mates, women find status and high levels of resources more important when considering mating options. Santa clearly blows the competition away in this category, making the wealth of men like Bill Gates and Richard Branson look like pocket change.

Santa may not fit the mould of a traditional Hollywood hunk, but don't tell that to Mrs. Claus. She knows that from his love for children and huge bank account to his belly that shakes like a bowl full of jelly, Saint Nick is a real catch. Other ladies may fantasise about tickling him underneath his beard so snowy white, but Santa is a one-woman man, an all-around family guy, and one who can afford to treat his wife properly, and that is why Mrs. Claus has faithfully remained by his side since 1889.