

December is the end of the year, and it's about to enter the new year. During this time, people have two important festivals in year, Christmas & New year. I am Lee, your tour guide. Next, let me take you on a trip around the world, experiencing the different customs in Christmas and New year of each country.



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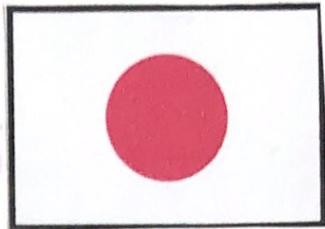
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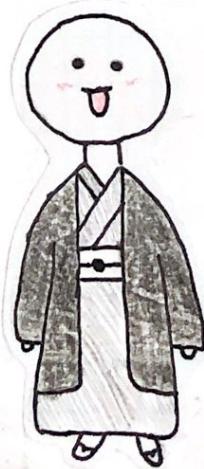
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Asia — Japan



For the first stop, choose Japan, which is closer to us! Although Japan has been greatly influenced by China in terms of culture and other aspects and many festivals use the lunar calendar to calculate dates, but Japan stopped using the lunar calendar on January 1st in 1873 and switched to the Western calendar. Since then, the New Year in Japan has become January 1st in the Western calendar.

The New Year in Japan can be prepared as early as mid-December. The first general preparatory task is cleaning. It means cleaning the house once and sweeping out all bad luck. And finish the New Year decorations before 12/29. Then, time quickly came to New Year's Eve. On the New Year's Eve dinner this day, Japanese would eat "mochi soup", "soba noodles" and "rice cakes" with the whole family around the table. At midnight, many temples hold bell ringing. However, it is very particular about ringing the bell a few times, a total of 108 times, in order to drive away bad luck and pray for the blessing of the gods.

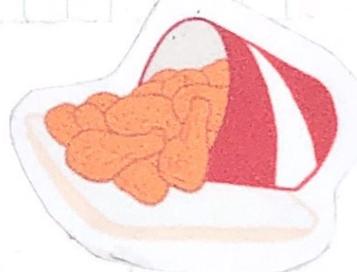
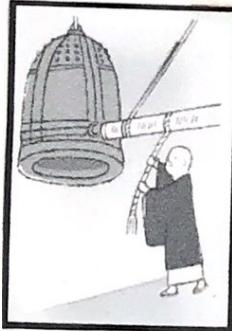


明けましておめでとうございます!





In Japan, Christmas is a good opportunity for businessmen to make money! Now, let's take a look at the activities of Christmas in Japan. On December 25th, many markets will be held in many places, and most of them will sell dark beer, sweet (red) wine, German sausages, handmade products and so on. It adds a lot of joy to Christmas! When it's time for dinner, they will go to KFC to buy a Christmas turkey dinner. I think these are all happy! After dinner, of course, they can't miss the dessert after dinner. They will buy (or make their own) a strawberry sponge cake for dessert. After eating dessert, you have to go to the streets to feel the Christmas atmosphere! The streets are full of romantic Christmas decorations, playing beautiful Christmas songs. It is a very suitable time for couples to date.



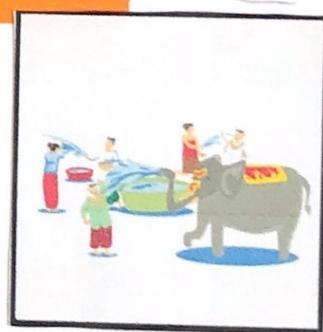
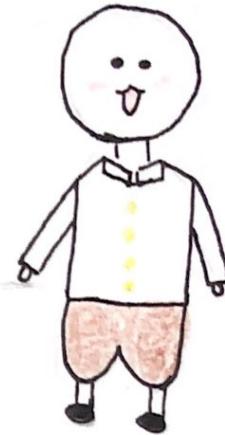
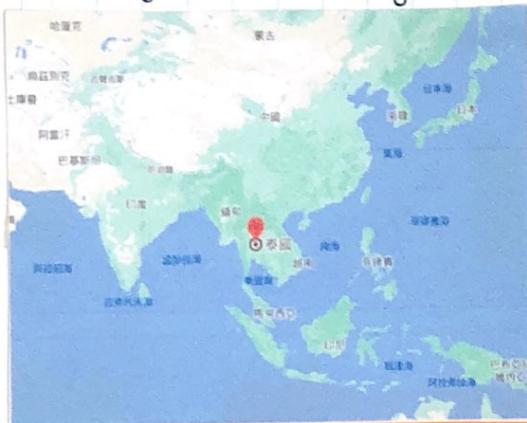


ASIA - Thailand

ສະວັນດີປິໄກນີ້

Next Stop, follow in our footsteps to the hospitable country — Thailand.

Have you heard of the Songkran Festival? Did you know that Songkran is equivalent to the New Year in Thailand? It is usually held in mid-April every year and lasts 3-4 days. The first day of the celebration is called "WandoShanghan" in Thailand, which means New Year's Eve. In the early morning of this day, people will go to the Buddhist temple to build sand towers, bathe the Buddha and listen to the scriptures after bathing and dressing. Then, the highlight of the celebration — splashing water. During this period, young men and women will splash each other with water to pray for washing away the problems of the old year and start again in the new year.



In Thailand, although Christmas is not a legal public holiday, so it cannot be a holiday, there are still many people celebrating Christmas! Because more than 90% of Thais are Buddhist (can participate in other religious festivals), they celebrate many festivals.

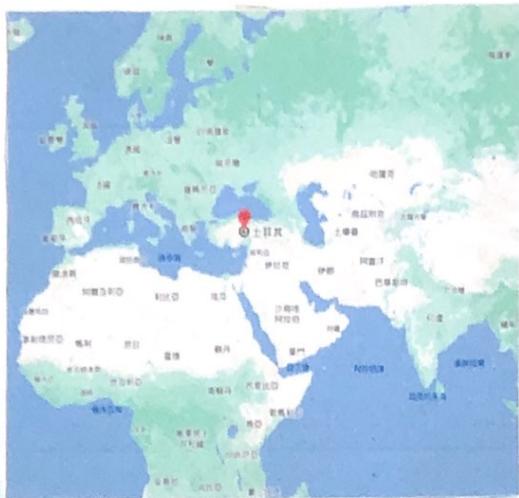
On Christmas Day, you will see staff in bars or restaurants wearing red and white Christmas hats. On the street, you will see vendors selling novel (Thai style) goods (Januk makmok).



At school, you will see elephants wearing Santa Claus costumes to distribute gifts! Isn't it interesting?



Asia - Turkey



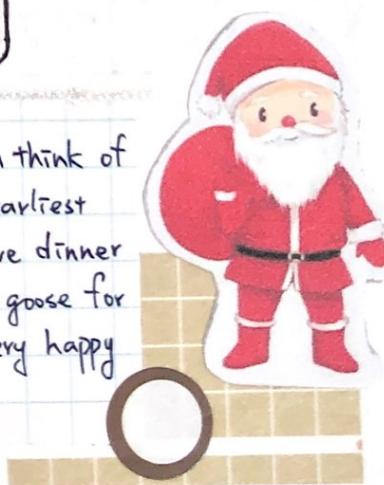
Now, let us turn our attention to the junction of Asia and Europe - Turkey



In Turkey, New Year has many peculiar New Year customs. On the night of December 31st, Turkish families will eat roast turkey (turkey with raisins, acorns and rice) around the table. On that day, Turkey will put on red underwear to pray for good luck and welcome a good harvest. Of course, on this day, the local people's custom of praying for different things is very dissimilar, let's take a look! If you want to pray for success, then you have to smash a red pomegranate in front of the gate. For a good harvest, turn on the faucet in middle of the night to let the water flow; If you want to ask for money, unlock the padlock in the middle of the night. Finally, the biggest highlight - New Year's fireworks, at 12 o'clock, the city center will be released on time to welcome the new year.

Yen Yılıınız
mutlu olsun

When thinking of Turkey, although the first thing you think of is not Christmas, the Turkish Santa Claus is the earliest one! The way Turkey celebrates Christmas is to have dinner with family and friends, kill turkey, roast pig and goose for dinner, and exchange gifts after dinner. It's a very happy day!



Europe - Finland

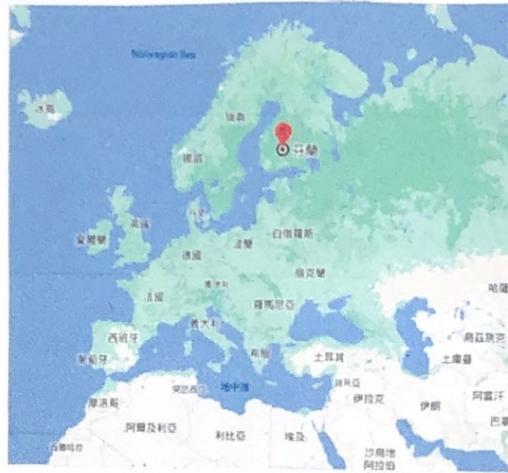


There are not too many customs in the Finnish New Year.

On December 31st, people will conduct an activity called "melting tin" to predict the future, including health, wealth and happiness. This custom originated in ancient Greece. In addition to tin, lead, beeswax and egg white were used in some places. First, they melt the miniature tin horse in a pan, and then pour a bucket of cold water. After that, the tin in the pot will solidify again. Afterwards, the random solidified shape of tin was projected on the wall to interpret it. In addition, most of the New Year's activities in Finland tend to be modern. For example, in Helsinki, people will enjoy various performances such as magic and circus in the square of the Senate. Finally, the most important thing is to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks at midnight, at this moment people will exchange blessings, hugs and kisses.

hyvää uutta vuotta





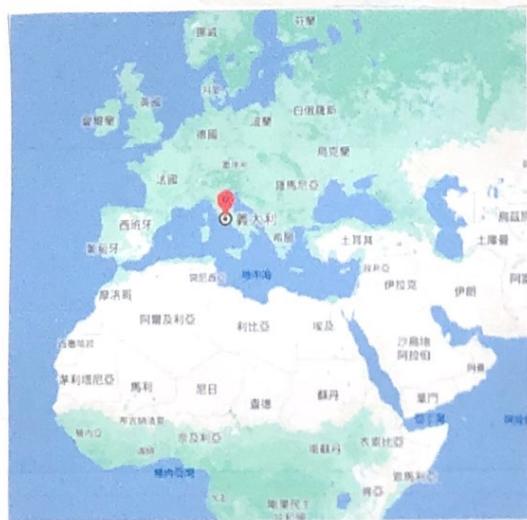
The Advent Calendar is a calendar used to count the days when Christmas is coming. Usually count from December 1st. Most calendars are made of paper boxes. There are >4 small compartments or pockets on it that correspond to >4 days. You can open one of them every day and take out gifts (usually chocolates, Christmas biscuits, candles) from them. They look forward to the next day's gift every day! And Finns will light Christmas candles on 4 Sundays before Christmas, and 1 candle a week. When 4 candles are lit at the same time, it means that Christmas is coming! On Christmas Eve, Finns will go in front of the gravestones of the deceased relatives to burn and place candles to cherish the memory of the departed relatives. On Christmas Day, eating pinwheel crisps and dipping plum jam and making Christmas gingerbread houses are things that Finns must do. In the evening, eat a traditional Christmas meal with the family (rice porridge, pickled salmon, Rosolli salad, roasted ham) is the happiest thing.



Europe - Italy

Buon anno

In the past, on December 31st, everyone would throw the dishes and porcelain on the ground as a general cleaning to destroy bad luck and welcome new fortunes. But now because of the danger, fewer people will do it. The locals stills believe that eating sliced sausages and lentils shaped like ancient gold coins will bring wealth, and giving red underwear to each other can prevent evil spirits and disasters from appearing. The most special thing is the not-on-time fireworks. They think that the unusually loud noise can scare away evil devil. What an interesting and special custom!





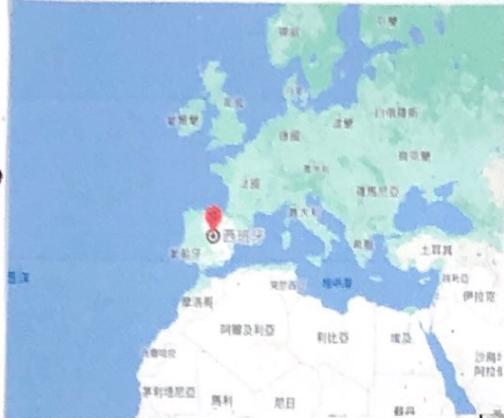
In Italy, it is said that mistletoe should be hung in front of the door during Christmas as a blessing to everyone who enters the door. Lovers kiss under it to avoid all difficulties and problems. It is said that a girl in love does not kiss under it.

It is impossible to get married all year in coming year. The gift letter is usually the letter from an Italian child. It must be sent to Santa Claus, because he is the first mysterious old man who can satisfy your wish. This tradition can be said to start with the three magi bringing gifts to the star of Bethlehem to participate in the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus is a happy day, so family member will prepare gifts for each other, representing love, care and joy. The night of December 24th is a very special night for Italians. You must fast and eat lightly, so you can only have vegetables and seafood on the table instead of high-fat

meat. Panettone or Pandoro cake is the representative of Christmas desserts, and every family must eat it during Christmas. The blessing of the Pope, the Latin "Urbi et Orbi" means "to the city of Rome and all people in the world". At 12 noon on the 25th, the Pope will appear on balcony of St. Peter's Church and give a blessing message to all people in Rome and the world: "Urbi et Orbi"



Europe — Spain



Feliz año nuevo

New Year's Eve in Spain hosts a family dinner, the main meals include prawns, lamb and turkey. The family happily waited for the countdown to New Year's Eve. Midnight is approaching, and the clock tower on Puerta del Sol in Madrid is counting down. Did you know? Spain has a special custom to grapes when the bell rings (one for each ring, 12 in total). This custom began in 1909. Because of the overproduction of grapes, farmers thought about it. This way to consume grapes.). When the bell is over, people will greet each other and celebrate with sparkling wine to welcome the new year.



In Spain, Christmas Eve dinner must be celebrated with the family. Dinner will have a lot of starters, a main course (usually meat, such as lamb or sucking pig), desserts, and finally, there will be many different kinds of Christmas desserts (such as mazapán, mantecado, turron, polvorón).

Christmas Day is usually a celebratory lunch, a sumptuous lunch like Christmas Eve. In many Spanish villages, children will go door-to-door singing traditional villancicos (Christmas songs), and then they can exchange for a gift (candy or other sweets). Usually when children sing, they bring traditional Christmas instruments: panderetas y zambombas tambourine and organ.



Africa — Egypt



The rising water New Year is a special festival in Egypt, which is related to the rising water of the holy river — the Nile. It is said that Sirius and the sun will rise at the same time on this day. The festival is held in autumn, and what we want to pray for is the smooth development of agriculture in the coming year. The Krut people will prepare soybeans, lentils, alfalfa, wheat or other green plants on this festival, which represents abundance. The more things prepared, the more the harvest.



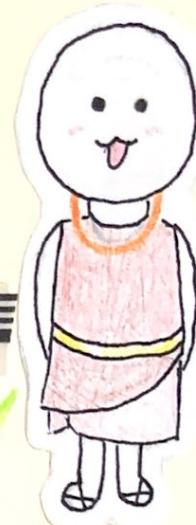
In Egypt, about 15% of the people are Christians, and they are also the only Egyptian celebration of Christmas as a religious holiday. Most Egyptian Christians belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Coptic Orthodox Church follows the Coptic calendar, so Coptic Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on January 7th. The month before Christmas is Kiahk, the fourth month of the Coptic Year. In this month, Coptic Christians sing worship songs on Saturday night before Sunday worship. The 43 days before Christmas, called Advent, lasts from November 25th to January 6th. They practice a special kind of fasting. They adhere to a strict vegan diet called the Nativity Fast. On Christmas Eve, January 6th, they practiced in special service or church service. After the end, they returned to their home for a grand Christmas feast to break their fast. Fatta is a soup consisting of bread, rice, garlic, and cooked lamb, and is a popular dish for this meal. People gather for parties and celebrations. Some people will bring kahk (a special kind of sweet biscuits) as a gift.



In Kenya, New Year's activities are relatively modern, and there are almost no special traditional customs. However, on the night of December 31st, Kenyans will hold parties, play music, and celebrate the last day of the year with relatives and friends. When the countdown was counted down, people would set off fireworks amidst cheers to welcome the arrival of the new year.

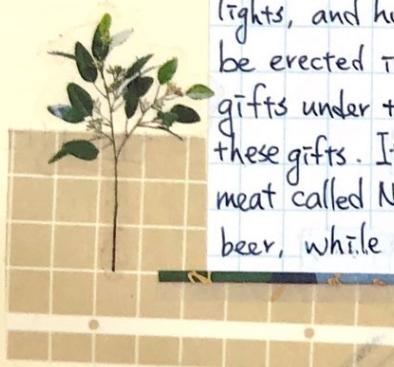


heri ya mwaka mpya



Africa - Kenya

In Kenya, you will find shops full of Christmas decorations, and Christmas trees are everywhere in shopping malls. The streets of the city will be decorated with flowers and colorful lights, and huge Christmas trees and Santa Claus statues will be erected in the malls. People will spontaneously put small gifts under the tree before Christmas, and every child can pick up these gifts. It is popular at Christmas to enjoy a beer and grilled meat called Nyama choma. Men eat nyama choma while drinking beer, while women drink soda.



America - Bolivia



Feliz año nuevo

Bolivia has many traditional customs that pray for different kinds of good luck. For example: wearing underwear of a specific color can ask for wealth (yellow) or love (red); putting coins in a cake can bring good luck to those who eat it; eating 12 grapes can realize 1 wish; Count money to get rich.



In Bolivia, one of the unique traditions of Christmas is to bring two products to the mass market. One product is a small statue of Jesus. Another product reflects one's own profession. For example, the cobber may bring small shoes, or the baker may bring a small piece of bread. Christmas in Bolivia takes place in warm summer months, so families often raise glasses for cold drinks. Dinner includes picana with salad, fruit, roast beef or pork.

The next morning, drink traditional hot chocolate and eat buñuelos pastries. There is also a traditional custom to give a basket of goods provided by the employer to the employees. Every employee's family will receive a gift basket with staple food and Christmas items such as biscuits and candies. Christmas in Bolivia is full of firecrackers. The noise of the celebration can last all night.





Attending the church is an important part of the celebrations on Christmas Eve. Peruvians began to participate in Misa de Gallo or Rooster Mass at 10 pm. When the family returned home at midnight, they brought sparkling wine and other beverages to toast the birth of the baby Jesus, and started celebrating Christmas with a large roasted turkey dinner and exchanging gifts. The traditional Peruvian Christmas dinner usually revolves around roast turkey, but some families may sit down and roast lechón. Applesauce and tortillas are common additions to the Christmas table. Another Christmas classic is panetón, a sweet bun of Italian origin filled with raisins and candied fruit. Churches and other community organizations

Feliz año nuevo



During the New Year, yellow becomes the main color of the Peruvian New Year. Peruvians regard yellow as a lucky color, which is said to be related to the worship of the sun by the Peruvian Inca ancestors. Regardless of men and women, young and old, they will use yellow products to welcome the coming of the new year, which indicates that all will be well and lucky in the coming year. In addition, Peruvians have other customs. For example, some people carry suitcases and walk around the streets near their homes in anticipation of a smooth trip in the coming year; they burn down the clothes and old furniture discarded at home in the New Year; before the New Year's bell strikes, 12 grapes are to be eaten to 12 wishes to be fulfilled in the New Year are made.

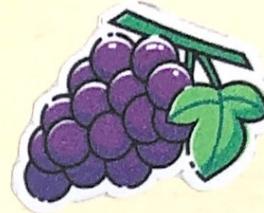
host chocolatadas for poor communities and provide families with free hot chocolate (and panetón) as a charity festival.



America - Peru

America — Cuba

Feliz año nuevo



Before the New Year, Cubans would fill buckets, bowls and jars in their homes with water and pour them out of the windows. I don't understand why they do this, but I think it should be to throw away bad luck. During the New Year, Cubans will use Araucaria as a decorative tree to add a festive atmosphere. When the bell strike at midnight, the locals will eat 12 grapes. It's an interesting tradition.

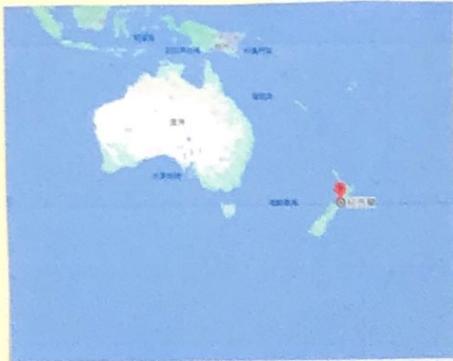


From 1969 to 1998, because the leaders at the time did not want to celebrate any religious activities, Cubans were forbidden to celebrate Christmas. Christmas Eve is also called "Nochebuena", which means good night. The traditional main dish is roast pork, usually with fried plantains, rice and vegetables. Dessert is usually rice pudding or sweet potato pudding. The church bell will ring at 10 pm, and there will be many fireworks and parties to enjoy.



Let us follow the first light and come to New Zealand. New Zealand, located in the southern hemisphere, is different from us. It is summer when people welcome the New Year, wearing short-sleeved shirts, which is in sharp contrast with us. At the same time, New Zealand is also one of the first countries to welcome the new year, and the biggest New Year's Eve event there is the fireworks display at the Sky Tower in Auckland.

Happy New Year!



Because New Zealand is in the southern hemisphere. Christmas in New Zealand is summer Christmas. One of the great joys of Christmas is outdoor activities - enjoy a relaxing barbecue lunch, spend the afternoon leisure time in the blue water, and then spend a pleasant evening with friends and family under the sky full of stars. New Zealand's unique Pōhutukawa (New Zealand Christmas tree) will bloom with red flowers that from a natural Christmas tree with green leaves. Strawberries and cherries, two "red and green" fruit, will also mature during the Christmas season. There is no snow in New Zealand in December, only sunshine. Unlike the traditional indoor dining in the northern hemisphere, people prefer an outdoor barbecue on Christmas. Hangi is a traditional cooking method of the Maori people. Many locals will cook Hangi on Christmas Day to celebrate this Western holiday. People are going to decorate Pavlova (cream meringue) like Christmas. In New Zealand, this dessert is a very popular delicacy, and it is often seen at Christmas dinners.



Oceania - New Zealand

Each country has different ways of celebrating festivals according to different customs. If you have the opportunity, you can experience different cultures in the world. It will be a very interesting experience!