



Beyond Borders

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CELEBRATIONS take on many different forms,
but people across the world celebrate for one reason:
to make memories that last a lifetime.

Celebrations are opportunities for families and friends to join together to commemorate special events. Throughout the year we celebrate special days and dates. We look forward to those celebrations every year. We make plans and preparations to make the events special and memorable.

The international students in our English Language Institute invite you to travel with them to their countries to be a part of their celebrations.

We wish you and your family a joyous time as you celebrate the holidays. Thank you for supporting the international students, and enjoy your trip. *Mark Shryock, ELI Coordinator*

Beth Persons, ELI Instructor



**CROWDER
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MAGAL

**Touba, Senegal, West Africa
by Fata Fall**



MAGAL is an event which is celebrated in Touba, Senegal, once every year. People from all over the world come to my country to cele-



brate this holiday. It is marked by the detention and the exile of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba by colonizers in Gabon, Mauritania, in 1895. Ahmadou Bamba was a religious man and friend of God, who guided people to their faith in God and showed them how to cooperate together but also how to become good Muslims. His exile is the reason we celebrate Magal on the 18th of Safar on the lunar or Muslim calendar. According to the solar calendar, the date changes, so this year it is December 11.

For Magal, we pray from 7:00 am until 10:00 am. Before and after prayers, we eat good food all day. Afterwards, we go to the Mosque and visit our neighbors. This is a really good time in my life, and I am always happy because I love Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba so much.

Magal is a great day to spend with our family and friends. On this day, we believe God



closes Hell and all suffering stops. I read in the Qur'an that all saints come down from Heaven to celebrate and enjoy this day with the people because Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba is the savior of humanity according to the Muslim's religion.

JOYEUX NOËL

**Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa
by Olivier Kasangana**



AS A MEMBER of a Christian family and like most people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), I believe in festivities or events that happen in December. Not all families celebrate these holidays if they are members of other religions. Christian Congolese citizens celebrate festivals such as Christmas and New Year's, just like American citizens.

In the DRC, people celebrate Christmas in different ways, but most people start their day by going to church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. However, some families stay at home, have a family prayer, cook food, and watch movies or a documentary about the life of Jesus Christ. Most adults think December 25 is a celebration for kids. Adults help kids to have fun, go out with them to watch a movie, attend a concert, or just stay at home and celebrate the day with the family.

Christmas is not the only festivity that Congolese celebrate with family or friends. In my opinion, the New Year's event is the most celebrated festivity in Congo. Since all Congolese believe in this festivity, everyone takes time to celebrate. Some people start celebrating the day before January 1 by going to church on New Year's Eve night. They stay until midnight to thank God for the good things he has done in their lives. They pray, sing, and dance to the greatness of God and then exchange gifts between each other.

In the early morning, the family starts cooking different types of food and playing music. After the food is ready, the family gets ready to receive the extended family and friends to share dinner and have fun. I like to enjoy New Year's Day by helping the family, having fun with my little brother, or sleeping all day and thanking God for one more year.



**KINSHASA TOZA BA BOSS (Lingala)
(The city of Kinshasa rules)**

FELIZ NAVIDAD

**Aguascalientes, Mexico
by Gricelda Olvera**

CHRISTMAS is the most colorful holiday in Mexico.

Almost everyone's home has a Christmas tree inside or out. Besides the Christmas tree, we put up a *nacimiento*, or crèche of baby Jesus to celebrate his birthday. Every house has Christmas lights and plays Christmas music. From December 16-24, we do *posadas* during the night.

All the children and adults start at one house. We make two lines—one for boys and one for girls from smallest to largest, and everyone holds a candle. As we walk to the next house, we pray the rosary. When we get to the house, the doors are closed until we sing a special song. Then the people inside the house respond to us with singing. When we convince them that we are good people, they open their doors. We go inside, sing a happy song, and blow out our candles, so we can enter the house.

Once we are in the house, we pray the rosary close to the *nacimiento*, and when we finish, two people give us *volos*, or gift bags of homemade candies. Some people give food to everyone instead of *volos*. We do the same at every house until we get to the church on December 24. This is the last day of the *posadas* and, of course, the most important day of December. We have a big celebration this day. We put baby Jesus in the *nacimiento* at the church, close to the Virgin of Guadalupe. After praying the rosary, we make a line to pass by baby Jesus to kiss him. Inside the church, we have a little party with big *volos*, food, and *piñatas*. When this ends, everyone goes home.



CON LA FAMILIA OLVERA—
CHRISTMAS 2013

When families finally arrive home, we prepare to go to one home to celebrate Christmas Day. When we are all there, we eat, dance, talk, and do fun activities all evening. My family makes a little campfire to roast marshmallows for the kids. The kids go to sleep early because the baby Jesus will bring them their gifts. Prior to this day, they put a list under the Christmas tree. At midnight, the church bells sound to indicate that it is midnight of *Noche Buena* or Christmas Eve.

Everyone who is awake hugs each other saying, “*Feliz Navidad*” or “*Feliz Noche Buena*.” Then we do a gift exchange and when we are done, we continue with the party until the morning. The next morning, Christmas Day, the kids find their gifts and go out to play with them and with their friends. In the afternoon, we return to the house to finish eating the leftover food called *recalentado*, which means reheated.

Traditionally, food prepared for December’s holidays is tasty and delicious. One of the most common foods we prepare for Christmas is *tamales*. First, a thin layer of cornmeal mush is spread on dry corn shucks. Then they are filled with shredded beef, rolled up, and steamed. We add red sauce on top.

Another traditional food that we like very much is *posole*, which is made from hominy. First, hominy corn is boiled. Then the meat is cooked, and *chili guajillos* are roasted. When the *chilis* are ready, they are ground with a little bit of salt and garlic. When ready, we mix the meat and the hominy corn with water and set it back on the stove to let it steam for two hours. When it is ready to eat, we add chopped cabbage, chopped onion, and lemon juice. The *posole* is served with chips and, if wanted, radishes. The traditional holiday celebrations for almost all Mexicans are the same in each town; however, the *tamales* and *posole* are cooked many different ways.

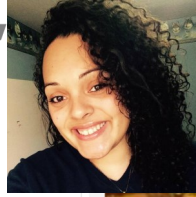


POSOLE

On January 6 we go to the church to take the baby Jesus out of the *nacimiento*. It is also the *Día de los Santos Reyes* or Day of the Holy Kings. It commemorates the three kings who brought gifts to the baby Jesus. The next day children receive more gifts. By the end of all our traditions, we are tired and full, but happy to end another good year. Mexican food and traditions are a very special part of our culture, especially at Christmas time. Friends and families join together to celebrate the holiday season and make good memories.

BOM NATAL

**São José dos Campos, Brazil
by Mariana Silva**



CHRISTMAS is my favorite time with my family. When Brazilians talk about the most important holiday, we are always talking about Christmas. On December 25, family and friends all come together to celebrate. In Brazil, we have lunch with all our family which includes our famous barbecue. It is very different from other countries. In my opinion, it is the best barbecue in the world. The meat preparations are what make our barbecue unique, and we also use different types of meat in our barbecue.



Brazil's barbecue, *Churrasco* or *Rodizio*, is the best-tasting meat you will ever eat. First, the meat is marinated in lime juice mixed with garlic. Then the outside is completely covered with rock salt. Next, the meat is cooked slowly, high above the charcoal until the out-

side is hard. The salt is taken off and the meat is cooked closer to the fire until it is done.

I never celebrated Christmas in my city, São José dos Campos; I always went to a different city called Jacareí to celebrate at my grandmother's house. I love spending Christmas in Brazil because it is the one time that I can see all my family and have a lot of fun. We always play some games, like video games, listen to all kinds of music, watch movies, and talk about everything, such as work, school or, in my case, basketball. We also decorate the tree with Christmas ornaments, which is very fun.

あけましておめでとうございます

Yokohama, Japan
by Yae Takahashi

Akimashite Omedetto Gozaimasu (Happy New Year)



SHOGATSU 正月 is one of the few holidays still celebrated in the Japanese traditional culture. The changing of our lifestyles these days has been accompanied by the disappearance of the traditional cultures in Japan. Sadly, the present generation is losing its customs. However, there are three characteristics of the way we celebrate: the special dishes, the reason for celebrating, and the special event itself.

We eat special dishes called “Osechi” and “Ozouni.” These dishes are so special that we seldom eat them. We usually cook Osechi お節料理 before New Year’s Day. Osechi is made with kelp, bamboo shoots, herring roe, steamed fish paste, burdock, and crab. These dishes are seasoned with soy sauce and cooked in the traditional way.



Ozouni 雑煮 is rice cakes boiled with different vegetables, depending on

OSECHI (お節料理)



OZOUNI (雑煮)

which part of the country. For example, the people who live in Eastern Japan mix chicken into it, and those who live in Western Japan mix seaweed and dried bonitoes into it. We eat these special dishes for three days to show our thanks for our mother’s hard work every day; therefore, she does not need to cook these days.

We share the time with our close relatives during these days. We prepare banquets, drink alcohol called “Sake,” 酒 and enjoy the conversation. New Year’s Day is an invaluable holiday in which people gather in one place one time a year to cultivate family bonds .

The most pleasant event for children is the New Year’s gift. We have a custom in which adults give children money called “Otoshidama” 御年玉 It goes without saying that I used to wait expectantly and help my parents with extra household chores a few days before the New Year to up my gift.

Although many traditional customs are disappearing, we continue to follow the traditions of the New Year, which shows how important this holiday is for us.

새해 복 많이 받으세요

(Happy New Year)

Incheon, South Korea

by Ju Hyeog Lee

SEOLLAL celebrates the first day of the first month in the lunar calendar. In Korea, there are two New Year's celebrations in one year. We use both the lunar calendar and the solar calendar, and the celebrations are not the same. For the solar calendar, a lot of people just hang around with their lover or friends on the street and play until 11:59 pm on December 31. When it is 11:59 pm, they watch the TV or go to the square at the center of the capital, Seoul. For the New Year, the President rings the bell to announce the beginning of the New Year. After ringing the bell, there are parties everywhere. The funny thing is that, in Korea, the drinking and smoking age is 18, so plenty of 17-year-old students form long lines in front of shops or bars to buy alcohol or cigarettes, so they can join the parties.

January 1 on the lunar calendar is a national holiday, so whole families gather at the eldest son's house. They conduct a memorial service to honor ancestors. For the memorial service, they prepare special food and fruit. When preparing the food, only women cook because a long time ago, Koreans practiced Confucianism, so men were not accepted in the kitchen. After cooking the food, it is put on the table, and only the men bow three times to their ancestors. After the memorial service, children bow to the adults to wish them good fortune for the New Year, and then the adults give the children money. After all of these ceremonies, we start eating the food that was just made for the memorial service.

We eat two traditional foods on New Year's. First of all, 떡국 *tteokguk* (white rice cake soup) because the color white symbolizes the fresh New Year. When the women make rice cake, they use long rice cakes because they symbolize long life. The second food 식혜 is made of boiled rice and sugar and creates a thick, sweet syrup. We drink this for dessert after our meal.

