

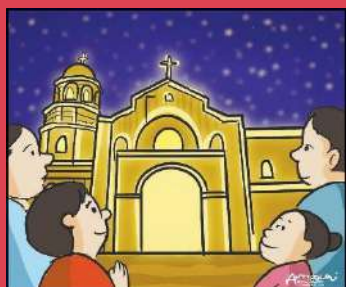
December

LANGUAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 09



December is finally here, and you know what that means — the holiday season is in full swing! Whether you enjoy the Christmas lights and holiday treats or feel busy with end-of-year exams and homework, let's enjoy this season and make December a fun and productive month!

* **be in full swing** = If an event is in full swing, everything has started and there is a lot of activity.



LONGEST CHRISTMAS SEASON

TRIVIA: Which country has the **longest Christmas season in the world**?

If you answered the country where four Seirinkan ALTs come from, you are correct. It's the Philippines!

So, for this month's newsletter, we want to showcase what Christmas is like in the Philippines. The international course students go to the Philippines in summer, but the country feels totally different during the Christmas season.

Filipinos actually start celebrating Christmas as early as September. We call September to December the "Ber months." From the first day of September, you can already see **Christmas decorations**—especially the *parol*, a star-shaped lantern typically made of bamboo and paper—and hear **Christmas songs** everywhere. Two favorites are Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas Is You* and Jose Mari Chan's *Christmas in Our Hearts*.

Music is a big part of the season. Aside from the songs played in homes, malls, and streets, Filipinos enjoy **caroling** in the neighborhood. After the carolers perform, residents usually give them money and/or snacks.

Christmas in the Philippines is a **family-centered celebration**, so it's a time for huge family reunions. People often travel long distances to come home, and even those who live abroad return to the Philippines for Christmas.

Filipinos have **special traditions** like *Simbang Gabi* (nine early-morning church masses before Christmas) and *Noche Buena* (a big meal at midnight on Christmas Eve), which are enjoyed by both Catholics and non-Catholics.

Popular **Christmas foods** include *lechon* (roast pig), *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* (rice cakes), *hamón* (ham), and *queso de bola* (cheese with a red rind).

Christmas is also a **gift-giving season**: kids receive presents from relatives, Christmas parties include gift exchanges, and many people join charity events to help others in need.

Colorful decorations, music, food, and family—Christmas in the Philippines has it all. People celebrate together, share gifts, and spread joy.

It is truly the most wonderful time of the year!

Secret Santa



Gift Traditions Around the World

After learning about Christmas in the Philippines, let's explore how different countries celebrate with gifts. Every culture has its own fun way of sharing joy during the holidays!

In the **USA**, families exchange presents on Christmas morning, and many enjoy Secret Santa, where gifts are given anonymously. In **the UK**, children hang stockings to receive small presents, and Secret Santa is also popular in schools and offices. In **Iceland**, people celebrate *Jólabókaflóð*, or the "Christmas Book Flood," by giving books on Christmas Eve and spending the night reading them. In **Italy**, some children receive gifts from La Befana, a friendly witch who delivers presents on January 6 instead of Christmas Day. In **South Korea**, Christmas is often celebrated by couples and friends, who exchange small gifts, cards, and chocolates to show appreciation and affection.

A Fun Gift Trend

There's a popular trend among groups of friends where each person brings multiple gifts of the same kind. Everyone exchanges their gifts, and by the end, each person has several similar gifts from different friends. It's a fun and simple way to celebrate together, share surprises (and laughs), and make the gift-giving experience feel cheerful and abundant. Do you want to try it with your friends?



Scan the QR code to watch a video of this fun gift-exchange on Instagram!



2025年11月24日にシェアされたリール
作成: JORDANFAIRON

Balancing Holiday Fun and Study Time

The holidays are a fun time to celebrate with friends and family, but schoolwork doesn't take a break!

Here are some tips to enjoy the season without falling behind:

Make a Simple Plan – Write down your assignments and deadlines, then plan your holiday activities around them.

Set Short Study Sessions – Even 25–30 minutes of focused study can help a lot.

Use a "Reward System" – Finish a task, then treat yourself with a holiday activity or snack.

Stay Organized – Keep your notes, schedule, and materials in one place so you don't waste time looking for them.

Take Care of Yourself – Rest, eat well, and enjoy breaks. A refreshed mind works better!

By planning a little and staying organized, you can enjoy the holidays and still keep up with your studies.

Christmas Idioms and Phrases

The holiday season isn't just about decorations and gifts. English is full of fun Christmas idioms and phrases! Here are some common ones you might hear during the holidays:

White Christmas – A Christmas with snow, or a nostalgic, ideal holiday.

Example: "I hope we have a white Christmas this year—it looks so magical in the movies!"

Deck the halls – To decorate for Christmas, especially with festive lights or ornaments.

Example: "We spent the afternoon decking the halls with tinsel and lights."

The more, the merrier – The more people involved, the more fun it is.

Example: "We invited extra friends to our Christmas party—the more, the merrier!"

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth – Don't be ungrateful when you receive a gift, even if it's not perfect.

Example: "She gave me her old books for Christmas—I shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth!"

