

# Y Newsletter

LANGUAGE CENTER

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## CHRISTMAS IN JAPAN

The religious holiday (Christmas) is not huge in Japan because Christians are only about one percent of the population. However, Japanese people still recognize and celebrate Christmas in their own way. The celebration is not as big as in other countries, but they do it in a way that even people from other countries would appreciate. Here are some of the Christmas traditions in Japan:



### ROMANTIC HOLIDAY

In Japan, Christmas is more like Valentine's Day. It's considered a romantic occasion, and couples often spend time together on Christmas Eve, enjoying fancy dinners, exchanging gifts, and walking through illuminated streets.



### KFC CHRISTMAS DINNER

A unique and iconic tradition in Japan is eating Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) on Christmas. This custom began as a marketing campaign in the 1970s and has since become a nationwide phenomenon. Many people pre-order KFC meals to avoid long lines.



### CHRISTMAS CAKES

A light, fluffy sponge cake with whipped cream and strawberries, called "クリスマスケーキ" (kurisumasu keiki), is a popular treat during the season. Families and couples enjoy this as a dessert after dinner.



### ILLUMINATIONS

Cities and shopping districts are decorated with beautiful Christmas lights and decorations called "illumination" displays. These attract crowds and are popular spots for dates or family outings.



### EXCHANGING GIFTS

Gift-giving is common, but it's usually only within close friends, couples, or colleagues. Unlike in Western traditions, it doesn't extend to family-wide gift exchanges or Santa Claus visiting homes.

### CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Inspired by European traditions, Christmas markets are held in major cities like Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama. These markets feature interesting and fun foods, crafts, and decorations.



## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

What are these called? Write your answers below the pictures.

Christmas flower / candy cane / gingerbread / eggnog / poinsettia / Santa Claus / reindeer / mistletoe / Christmas tree / sleigh / goat



## DID YOU KNOW?



Shimekazari (しめ飾り) is a traditional Japanese decoration typically used during the New Year to welcome the *kami* (deities) and bring good fortune while warding off evil spirits. Its origin is rooted in Shinto, Japan's national religion, and agricultural customs.

## THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE

2025 is the year of the snake in Chinese zodiac. The snake is known for its *wisdom, charm, elegance, and transformation*. People born in the Year of the Snake are believed to be intuitive, strategic, and intelligent. The year 2025 is a lucky year for people born in the year of the *Horse, Goat, Monkey, Dog, Pig, Rat, and Ox*. Generally, 2025 will be about personal growth and embracing new challenges. People are also advised to be more careful with making decisions that could have terrible consequences and make sure to be very cautious about trusting new people, especially when it comes to romantic relationships.



## NEW YEAR FATIGUE

Have you heard of New Year fatigue? "Fatigue" is another word for exhaustion or being overly tired, and many people experience this during the New Year holidays. It is often caused by a combination of factors, including physical, mental, and lifestyle changes. Busy schedules, shopping, and preparations for various events can all lead to a lack of sleep, often resulting in physical exhaustion. This is also the time when people make New Year's resolutions, and the pressure of new beginnings can feel mentally overwhelming. Additionally, during the holidays, parties are everywhere, and avoiding food and alcohol is almost impossible. Poor diet, lack of exercise, and other lifestyle changes during this period are not particularly healthy either. All of these factors can contribute to New Year fatigue. In order to prevent this, we should be mindful of these changes and take things easy. There's no better way to start the year than by being physically and mentally healthy.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS (FLIP TO SEE)

1. mistletoe 2. candy cane 3. reindeer 4. Christmas tree 5. Santa Claus 6. poinsettia 7. sleigh 8. gingerbread