

December

Cheesehead Chat

Happy December! The weather is getting colder, snow has started to fall, and there's only a few more weeks until the new year. For me, personally, I'm looking forward to the new year! However, there is one more thing that I'm looking forward to. Can you guess what that is? It's Christmas of course! This month, I want to talk about the differences between Christmas in Japan and the U.S.

In Japan, when people think about Christmas, they mostly think of a holiday that couples or friends spend together. Another image that people have are Christmas parties where people may exchange gifts or have a Christmas cake. One of the traditions that really surprised me about Christmas in Japan, is that a lot of families eat KFC on Christmas! When I was with my host family in Osaka during Christmas, they ordered a lot of KFC for the family, and we also had strawberry shortcake afterwards. It was delicious!

With all of that being said, Christmas in the U.S. is celebrated waaaay differently. In the U.S., Christmas is a family holiday. During the holiday season, students get a two week vacation that includes Christmas, and a lot of people try to take off work so they can celebrate with their families.



An old Christmas picture of my family



Christmas in Japan

Christmas also includes exchanging presents with family members. Gift giving is a big part of Christmas. I remember that when I was in elementary school, we had an event called "Mouse House" where parents would give their children some money, and then the students were given a chance to buy presents for their families at school. In the U.S., we also have a service called "Angel Trees" where families that don't have enough money to buy presents for Christmas, write down the presents or things they need on a slip of paper, and then someone who does have money, volunteers to buy the things that

are written on the list. It's such a wonderful program.

Along with gift giving, a lot of families like to bring their children to see Santa Claus. Usually, Santa Claus is at a mall or a store, and children line up to sit on Santa's lap to ask him for presents. Isn't that cute?!

As for food, can you guess what most Americans eat for Christmas?

In the U.S., most families eat ham! We also have a lot of the same side dishes that we have during Thanksgiving as well, such as mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, etc. A lot of families eat a lot of food during the holidays.

Another big tradition during Christmas is watching Christmas movies with your family! My family's favorites

are: The Polar Express, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, and Elf. My family watches these movies every year.

A lot of families also decorate their houses during Christmas as well. Many people have either a real or fake tree, and then decorate their houses with lights, nutcrackers, and make gingerbread houses. Actually, my dad really likes nutcrackers. In fact, he probably has more than 50 of them! He likes to put them around the house during the Christmas season.

Overall, I would have to say that Christmas is one of my favorite holidays. I love spending time with my family, and the atmosphere of Christmas is always so splendid, especially if it snows.

Well, that's all from me this month! I hope that you were able to learn a little bit about what Christmas in the U.S. is like!

Happy holidays!

-Brittney

This month's recommended song is:
Bing Crosby- It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas

THIS HOLIDAY, DISCOVER YOUR INNER ELF



A popular Christmas movie



My friend and I made gingerbread houses



My family and I viewing Christmas lights