



Unusual Christmas traditions from around the world.



PHILIPPINES

Every year, the city of San Fernando holds *Ligligan Parul* (or Giant Lantern Festival) featuring dazzling parols (lanterns) that symbolize the Star of Bethlehem. Each parol consists of

thousands of spinning lights that illuminate the night sky. The festival has made San Fernando the "Christmas Capital of the Philippines."



MARTINIQUE

In this French Caribbean island, *la ribote* is a long-standing tradition where families visit their neighbors during Advent and on New Year's Day

bearing holiday food like yams, boudin créole, pâtés salés, and pork stew. They sing Christmas carols together into the early hours of the morning, adding their own creole verses to traditional lyrics.



JAPAN

Although Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan (an estimated one percent of the population is Christian,

according to Smithsonian Magazine), its citizens still find an interesting and delicious way to celebrate. Rather than gathering around the table for a turkey dinner, families head out to their local Kentucky Fried Chicken. The tradition began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "*Kurumasu ni wa kentakkii!*" or "*Kentucky for Christmas!*" The fast food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in two-hour-long lines to get their "finger lickin' good" food.



UKRAINE

Orthodox Christians make up nearly 49 percent of Ukraine's population; they observe Christmas Day on January 7th by dressing in traditional garments and walking through town singing carols. A

dish called kutya, made of cooked wheat mixed with honey, ground poppy seeds, and sometimes nuts, is a popular Christmas Eve treat. Some families throw a spoonful of kutya at the ceiling: If it sticks, there will be a good harvest in the new year.



MEXICO

All across Mexico members of the Church put on Pastorelas (Shepherd's Plays) to retell the Christmas story. The Mexican Christmas season begins early in December with *Las Posadas*, a religious march that re-enacts the

journey of Mary and Joseph. The vibrant red poinsettia flowers are also used in holiday arrangements for decoration throughout the country.

In a Christmas Shopping Promotion, it is now down to 3 finalists. Which one of them has the best chance to take home all the appliances featured?

Elisabeth was a pretty 18 year old girl. In the week just before Christmas she perrused up to the curtain counter, and was trying to decide which of the many types of tinsel she would buy.

Finally, she made her choice and asked the salesperson who was manning the fabric section, "*How much is this gold tinsel garland?*"

The spotty youth pointed to the Christmas mistletoe above the counter and said, "*This week we have a special offer, just one kiss per meter.*"

"*Wow, that's great*", said Julie, "*I'll take 12 meters.*"

With expectation and anticipation written all over his face, the boy measured out the tinsel, wrapped up the garland, and gave it to Julie. She then called to an old man who had been browsing through the Christmas trees and said to the youth, "*My Grandpa will settle the bill.*"

The Santa at the shopping mall was quite surprised when he saw Candice, a woman in her mid-twenties, asking to sit on his lap. We all know Santa doesn't usually take requests from adults, but Candice smiled at him very nicely and he ended up asking her what she wanted for Christmas.

"*Something for my mother, please,*" she replied.

"*Something for your mother? That's very loving and thoughtful of you,*" admitted Santa. "*What would you like me to bring her?*"

Emily answered quickly, "*A son-in-law.*"