

# CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter December, 2019

## 10 Unusual Christmas Traditions

### 10 unusual traditions from around the world:

From tinsel to Brussels sprouts, Christmas is just one wacky tradition after another. In celebration of these festive eccentricities, I've rounded up ten of the most unusual customs from across the globe...

#### 1) Germany and Austria

The star of a new Hollywood horror film, the Krampus is Father Christmas' scary friend, a devilish creature who punishes naughty children throughout the festive period.



The mythical beast, which stems from Austro-Bavarian German-speaking Alpine folklore, is hairy with hooves and large horns.

#### 2) Catalonia

There are a couple of strange Catalan traditions, one of which is the caga tió or "defecating log". In the fortnight leading up to Christmas, a grinning creature is created out of a small log and placed on the dining room table. The log must be fed every day with fruit, nuts, and sweets, before – on Christmas Eve – it's beaten with sticks, excreting its goodies.

#### 3) Caracas

In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, revellers travel to early-morning church services on roller skates throughout the festive period. The roads are even closed off specially.

#### 4) Japan

Christmas isn't a national holiday in Japan but that doesn't stop a large number of people celebrating the festival. Santa Claus, or Santa Kurohsu, is said to have eyes in the back of his head to keep an eye on naughty children, while Japanese Christmas cake is usually made up of sponge, whipped cream, and strawberries.

#### 5) Portugal

In Portugal, families set extra places at the dining table on Christmas morning for deceased relatives. The practice is called "consoda" and is thought to bring the family good luck.

#### 6) Czech Republic

Over Christmas, Czech women use a clever trick to predict their love lives for the coming year. Unmarried women stand with their backs to their front doors and toss shoes over their shoulders. If a shoe lands with its toe pointing towards the door, the woman will get hitched within the next 12 months.

#### 7) Norway

In Norway, it's thought Christmas Eve coincides with the arrival of evil spirits and witches. To protect themselves, families hide all their brooms before they go to bed.

#### 8) Ukraine

Ukrainian Christmas trees are traditionally decorated with a fake spider and web. The custom, which is said to bring good luck, stems from an old wives' tale about a poor woman who could not afford to decorate her tree. She woke up on Christmas morning to find a spider had covered it in a glittering web.

#### 9) Greenland

If you think sprouts are bad, you should try one of Greenland's Christmas delicacies. Mattak - raw whale skin with blubber - is one. Another is kiviak, which is when an auk (a small bird) is wrapped in seal skin, buried for several months, and then eaten once decomposed.

#### 10) India

Only about 2.3 per cent of the population of India is Christians, but that still works out as about 25 million people. The day is celebrated with midnight mass and present-giving, but in the absence of fir trees or pine trees, banana trees and mango tree are decorated instead.

*Article by Kevin*

## Net News

**NET LESSONS:** Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

For more Christmas traditions from around the world go here: <https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/>

# Some Thoughts for the Month



**Joshua Says:** Time flies, too quickly sometimes. It's been a year since Kevin joined us, and he's already moving onto his next assignment in January, in China. He has done a great job teaching with us for the past year and we, his students and colleagues, wish him the greatest success. "All the best, Kevin and thanks for a job well done. Who knows, we may yet see you again some day in the future."

**Junko Says:** We think rice, which contains a lot of sugar, makes us fat and is bad for our health. But recently Dr. Dominy found that the cause for gaining weight depends on the amount of amylase in your saliva. If you have more amylase, you have less chance of gaining weight. He also says that you can increase the amount of amylase in your saliva by chewing more. So if you chew well, you can still enjoy the delicate sweetness of rice and other grains, and not worry about gaining weight!



**Kevin Says:** Sometimes it's easier to express feelings in written form, so here goes – It's my last month in Matsuyama before I go to China. Can I just say this, that it's been a privilege to have had the chance to listen to you all share some of your lives and country's culture with me. It's definitely not something I'll ever forget. Thank you, farewell and ki o tsukete.

**Darrin Says:** After looking forward to the RWC for so long and the excitement of the matches, I feel a big sense of emptiness now the rugby has finished. Four more years to wait until the next one! My main hope is that the Japanese team can continue to build momentum and become a major rugby power and that my beloved Wallabies rebuild and become strong once more.



**Mandcy dit:** En regardant la télévision japonaise, j'ai été très étonnée de constater que les enfants japonais font des bonhommes de neige avec trois grosses boules de neige. En effet, les petits français n'utilisent que deux grosses boules de neiges. Une pour la tête et une pour le ventre!! En tous cas, je suis très contente d'enseigner à Crossroads. J'ai passé une merveilleuse année auprès de vous. Je vous remercie du fond du cœur. Je vous souhaite très sincèrement un merveilleux Noël et une très bonne année. J'ai hâte de vous revoir l'année prochaine.

## ACROSS

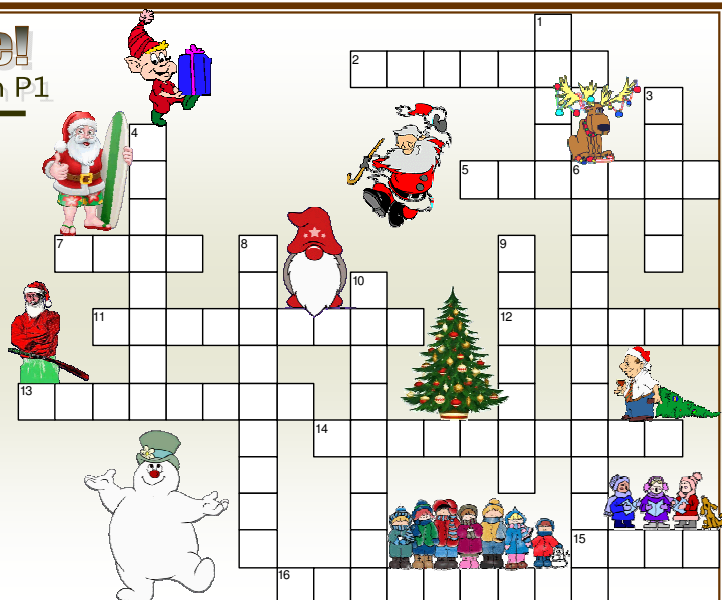
- 2 bad behavior
- 5 not being there
- 7 not genuine, not real
- 11 go or happens with
- 12 valueless decoration
- 13 no longer living
- 14 flashing, shining
- 15 throw in a casual, careless manner
- 16 offering fun and gaiety

## DOWN

- 1 grows out of or from
- 3 foolish, strange
- 4 unwritten stories, proverbs of a culture
- 6 strange, unconventional behavior
- 8 discharging bodily waste matter
- 9 get married
- 10 people celebrating in a noisy party

## Play A Game!

Find the answers on P1



([print version here](#))



## Critic's corner with S(a)3's Taro:

### The movie, Stagecoach

If you like western movies (or even if you don't), you will like *Stagecoach*, an American monochrome film released in 1939. In the story, seven strangers board a stagecoach and traveled together. The party consisted of two ladies (a pregnant woman and a prostitute) and six gentlemen (a doctor, a banker, a gambler, a whiskey salesman, a sheriff, and a driver). On their way from Arizona to New Mexico, they pick a man up, Ringo Kid (John Wayne), a fugitive who had escaped from a prison to take revenge on a gang who had murdered his father and brother.



Ringo(Wayne) and Dallas(Trevor)

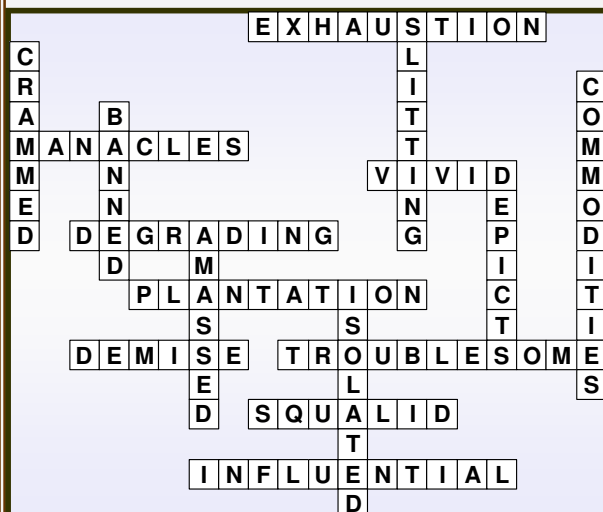
When they arrived at Mesa, Mrs. Mallory (Louise Platt) went into labor. Dr. Boone (Thomas Mitchell) helped her to deliver the baby. Dallas (Claire Trevor) worked as a midwife. Although the other passengers had looked down on Dallas because she was a hooker, she got their respects because of her dedication. Ringo fell in love with her, and she also fell in love with him. When they reached a river, they found the ferry had been destroyed by apaches. They attached logs to their stagecoach so that it could float on the water. Just after they passed the river, apaches attacked them. The gentlemen fought to protect the ladies and the newborn baby. During the battle, the driver was injured and couldn't use his right arm. So, Ringo jumped from the stagecoach onto the horses to control them himself. Although the gambler died, they reached Roseburg in New Mexico.

In Roseburg, Ringo asked sheriff Curley (George Bancroft) to give him ten minutes so he could do battle against the gang's brothers. It was three against one, but the tough guy won. Ringo was then arrested. He had to go back to jail. He got on a wagon and said goodbye to Dallas. However, Curley and Dr. Boone let Dallas board the wagon with him and they escaped together.



Ringo Kid jumps onto the horses

The film has many highlights. Although I selected some of them, you can enjoy it from a variety of viewpoints. I want you to watch it yourself. Have a good trip on a *Stagecoach*!



## Last Month's puzzle Solution

### ACROSS

- 1 extreme loss of energy
- 6 similar to handcuffs
- 7 clear, bright colorful
- 9 harmful to mind or morals
- 11 where cash crops are grown on a large scale
- 13 the time for something to end
- 14 difficult to deal with
- 15 foul, unpleasant, offensive
- 16 power to effect events

### DOWN

- 2 making a clear cut through something
- 3 crowded, packed to capacity
- 4 products bought and sold
- 5 outlawed, forbidden
- 8 shows or describes in a picture
- 10 a large number collected in one place
- 12 kept apart



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