



Christmas in Japan

Welcome to the land of the rising sun!

Christmas is a fun celebration in Japan. Instead of a religious holiday, people see it as a time to spread good cheer.

Most people celebrate at home with their families. They enjoy throwing small parties where they eat fried chicken and strawberry shortcake.

Want to listen to some Japanese Christmas music? Listen to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and it's the final act, "Ode to Joy." The music is so popular they call it "daiku," meaning nine in Japanese.

Celebrate by listening to some Beethoven and frying up some chicken!

Ingredients



8 boneless chicken thighs with the skin on
(or cut the bones out of chicken thighs)

2 cloves garlic crushed

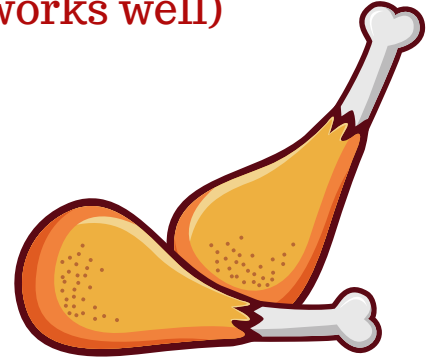
2-3 tsp ginger grated (a micro-plane works well)

4 tbsp soy sauce

2 tbsp mirin

1/2 tsp kosher salt

1/2 cup potato starch



Instructions

Cut each chicken thigh into 3-4 pieces. You are going for large bite-sized pieces.

Mix the soy, mirin, salt, ginger, and garlic in with the chicken. Let sit for 20 minutes.

Lightly dredge each piece.

Preheat 1 inch of oil to 350 degrees.

Working in batches, deep fry the chicken until it reaches an internal temperature of 170 degrees.

Serve with fresh lemon and optionally Japanese (kewpie) mayonnaise.

What does your family serve on Christmas?

Would you serve fried chicken for
Christmas?



Christmas in Russia

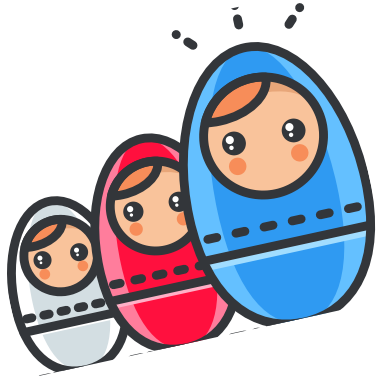
Welcome to the cold land of Russia!

In Russia, the Advent season begins November 28th and runs till January 6th. Then they celebrate Christmas on January 7th; this is because most people in Russia belong to the Orthodox Church that uses the old Julian calendar.

Here Santa is called Father Frost. He does not even visit at Christmas but visits children on New Year's Eve! Instead of reindeer, his sled is pulled by beautiful white horses.

Kids in some parts of Russia go caroling. Their neighbors give out sweets and drinks to the carolers! Isn't that a fun thing to do?

Bake up some of the traditional Russian Tea Cake for a taste of a Russian Christmas.



Ingredients

1/2 cup butter softened
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour



1/4 cup almond flour or ground pecans or walnuts
Powdered sugar

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper or a silicone mat.

Beat together butter and powdered sugar.

Add in vanilla extract, all-purpose flour, and almond flour.

Continue to mix until the dough comes together.

Using a cookie scoop or a spoon to make 1 inch balls of dough.

Cook in oven for 8-10 minutes or until the bottoms of the cookies barely brown.

Once the cookies are removed from the oven, roll in powdered sugar and let cool.

What Russian traditions seem similar to your own?

What Christmas carol would you teach to a friend that came from Russia?



Christmas in Australia

Hey mate! Welcome to Australia!

Christmas falls at the beginning of summer here. That means instead of a white Christmas; they get ready for beach parties and BBQs.

It is so hot at Christmas that Santa ditches his suit for surf shorts. His reindeer also get a rest. Kangaroos fill in for the reindeer while he makes his stops in Australia.

People celebrate with family on December 25th. They decorate their gardens with Christmas decorations, exchange gifts, and sing Christmas carols.

They also celebrate Boxing Day on December 26th. On this day you visit and celebrate with friends! Which is a great time to share treats. Bake up pavlova to share with a friend.



Ingredients

4 egg whites
1 1/4 cup white sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tsp lemon juice
2 tsp cornstarch
1 pint heavy cream
6 kiwis, peeled and sliced



Instructions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Draw a 9-inch circle on the parchment paper.

In a large bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form.
Careful to not overbeat.

Gradually add in the sugar, about 1 tablespoon at a time,
beat well after each tablespoon.

Beat until thick and glossy.

Gently fold in vanilla extract, lemon juice, and cornstarch.





Spoon mixture inside the circle drawn on the parchment paper.

Start in the center and spread it out. Make it thicker on the edges to leave a dip in the center.

Bake for 1 hour.

Cool on a wire rack till cool to the touch.

Beat heavy cream until stiff peaks form and set aside.

Place the baked meringue on a serving plate.

Fill the center of the meringue with whipped cream, and top with kiwifruit slice.

Serve immediately.

How would you like to celebrate Christmas in the summer? What do you think your family would do?

Have you ever celebrated Boxing Day? What plans would you make with friends?





Christmas in South Africa

Greetings from Africa!

Just like Australia, South Africa is in the southern hemisphere. So it is the beginning of the summer season at Christmas. Lots of families choose to go on holiday during this time. A favorite getaway is camping. Lots of the national parks are filled with Christmas campers.

South Africans speak a Dutch-based language called Afrikaans. So instead of saying Santa Clause, they say, "Sinterklaas." Dutch is also where we get the name Santa Clause from! It's just the English version of the name.

Their celebrations look similar to ours because we have a lot of Dutch traditions in our celebrations. They decorate for Christmas, exchange gifts, and sing songs. They also have big Christmas dinners. Turkey or duck with all the fixings is served. For dessert Malva Pudding is considered the favorite! Enjoy a taste of Africa!



Ingredients

3/4 cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 tbsp unsalted butter room temperature
4 tbsp Apricot jam
1 1/2 tsp grated orange zest
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp vinegar
3/4 cup milk

Chocolate Sauce

1 cup evaporated milk
1/4 - 1/3 cup brown sugar
6 tbsp butter
2 ounces milk
2 ounces semi-sweet chocolate
1/2 tsp almond extract
1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract





Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease an 8 inch pan generously with cooking spray and set aside.

In a large bowl beat eggs, orange zest, sugar, butter, and apricot jam, until light and fluffy.

Add the vinegar and milk to the egg mixture.

In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, and salt.

Gradually, fold the flour mixture into the egg mixture. The mixture might appear runny.

Pour batter into the greased cake pan.

Bake at 350 until a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 25-30 minutes

While the cake is baking, heat the evaporated milk, chocolate, butter, sugar, almond, and vanilla extract, in a saucepan over medium heat until the sugar has dissolved and the butter has melted.

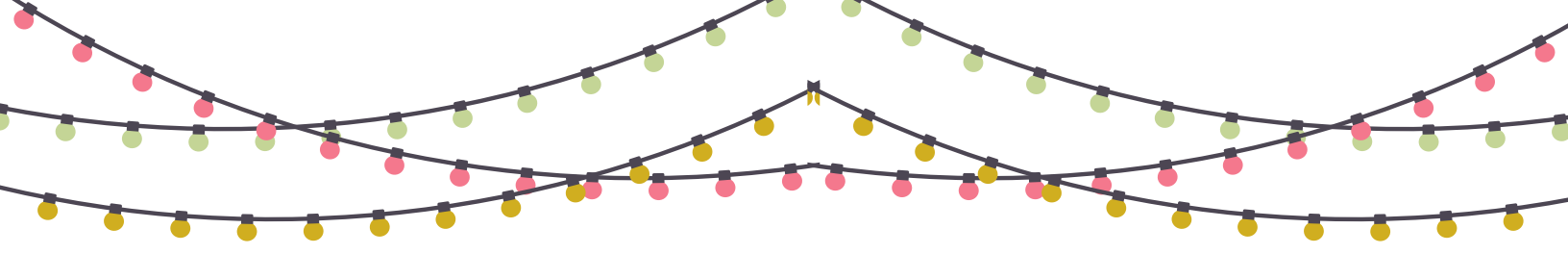
Remove from heat.

Using a skewer poke holes in the cake extending all the way to the bottom of the cake.

Pour the chocolate butter sauce on the cake.

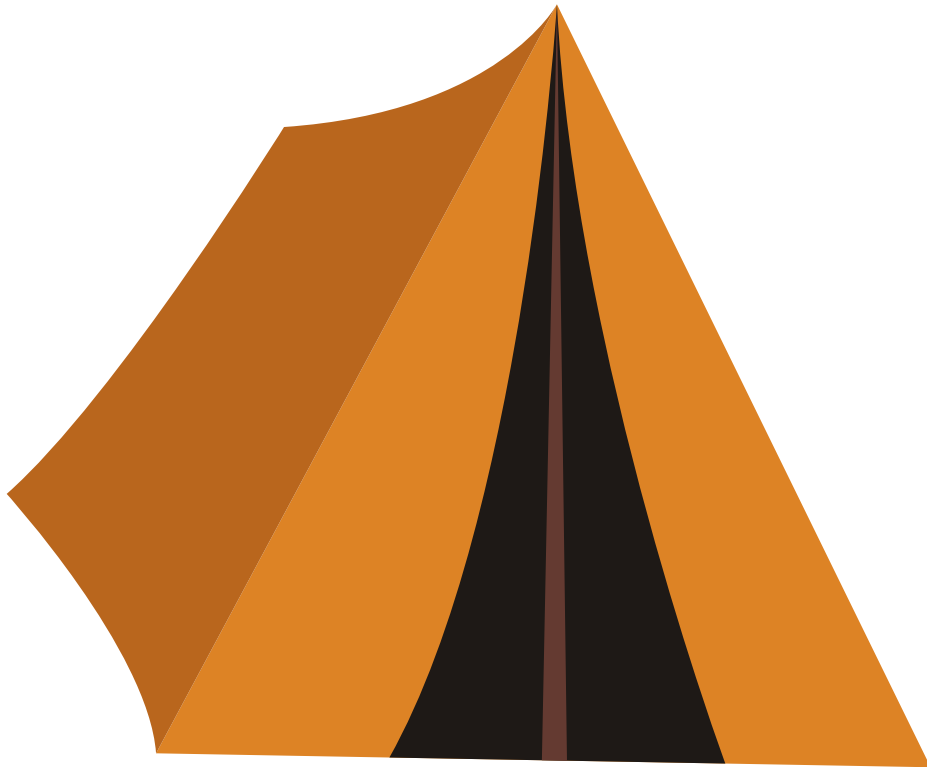
Serve immediately or set aside in the fridge until ready to serve.





When you heard the word pudding did you think of
cake?

Would you go camping on Christmas?





Christmas in Italy Benvenuta!

Here celebrations center around Catholic traditions. Christmas is celebrated over many weeks from early December to Epiphany, January 6th.

Nativity scenes are prevalent in Italy. Towns display large scenes in the town squares. Families also put up nativity scenes in their homes.

Many families celebrate St. Nicholas Day on December 6th. Children leave out letters and their stockings hoping for goodies. Good children get fruits, nuts, and sweets, and naughty children get coal and maybe some sweets.

Instead of exchanging gifts on December 25th, most families give gifts on the day of Epiphany. Children leave out their stockings for "la Befana," the old lady. She fills it with goodies!

They leave out goodies for "la Befana" just like we do Santa Clause. Cook up these Italian cookies for a different treat!



Ingredients

Cookies

4 eggs
1 cup sugar
½ cup butter
2 tsp vanilla
3½ cup flour
4 tsp baking powder

Icing

2 cup sifted confectioner's sugar
2 tsp vanilla
6 tsp water



Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

In a bowl sift together the flour and baking powder, set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar.
Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well.

Mix in the vanilla.

Add in the flour mixture a little at a time.

Knead until dough is firm and not sticky, adding more flour if
necessary.

Refrigerate 1 hour.

Cut off a small amount of dough and roll on a floured surface into 6-
inch strips.



Twirl into shape and place on greased cookie sheets.

Bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes (the bottom should be lightly browned, but the tops should remain light).

Remove cookies to wire rack and cool completely before glazing.

Icing

Combine the icing ingredients in a bowl until just smooth. You want it more thick than thin, but still runny.

Dip the tops of the cooled cookies into the glaze, then return to the wire rack, allowing the glaze to drip down the sides of the cookie.

Top with sprinkles, while glaze is still wet.

Do you write to Santa Clause too? What do you do with the letter you write to him?

If an Italian friend was visiting your house for Christmas, what would they get in their stocking?





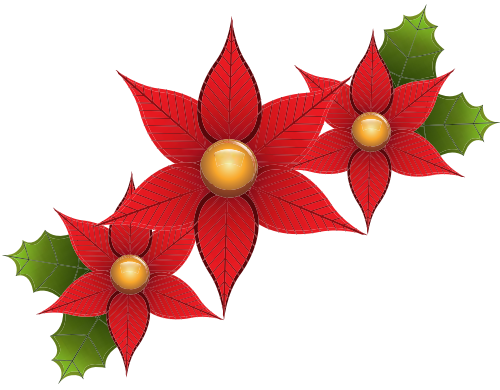
Argentina is in South America and near the equator. That means it is pretty warm all year round! So they do lots of celebrating outdoors.

Celebrations here center on Catholic traditions as well! A big part of the festivities includes attending Mass on Christmas Eve. The Mass starts late, and runs very late. So their main meal isn't eaten till late at night. Sometimes it is as late as 11 pm before they begin to eat dinner!

Families get together and spend it talking and enjoying each other's company. Then at midnight, they might set off fireworks!

Another fun tradition is lighting globos; they are similar to Chinese lanterns. The sky must look beautiful with all the fireworks and lights!

Enjoy the Alfajores. Share them with your family!



Ingredients

1 3/4 cup cornstarch
1 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 cup butter
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 to 2 tbsp Pisco (or Brandy)*
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup dulce de leche*
1/2 cup toasted coconut (finely chopped)
*the Pisco is optional, but it is part of the original recipe
*Store-bought is fine



Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place the cornstarch, flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl and mix briefly.

Cut the butter into small pieces and add to the flour mixture, blending with your fingers until the mixture is smooth.

Add the powdered sugar, vanilla, and Pisco, and mix with your hands until the dough is combined and smoothed. (Add extra Pisco or a tsp. of milk to achieve a smooth dough).

Let the dough rest in the refrigerator for 3 hours or overnight.





Roll out dough to 3/8" thickness, and cut into 2-inch circles.

Place cookies on baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake cookies for 10 to 15 minutes, until they are barely golden brown.

Let cookies cool 5 minutes, then transfer to rack to cool completely.

To fill the cookies, spread one cookie with dulce de leche and top with a second cookie.

Roll the edges in the coconut.

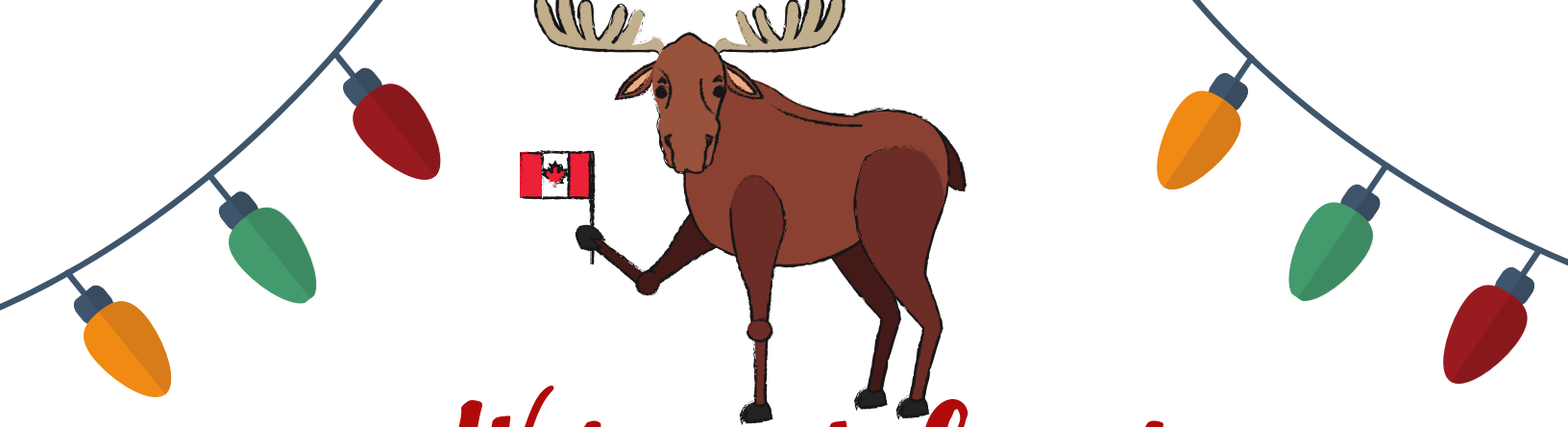
Store any leftovers in an airtight container.

Have you ever set off fireworks for Christmas?

What family activity would you share with a friend from Argentina?

Do you visit family at Christmas? Whose house would you go to if you could to celebrate?





Welcome to Canada

O, Canada! It is the last stop on our Christmas world tour!

Canada is a land of many traditions. Like America, Canada has a diverse population of immigrants. So everyone celebrates in their own way.

Mumming, however, is a uniquely Canadian tradition. Instead of caroling, people dress up in costumes and hide their faces. They go around and knock on doors. When they're invited in, they entertain the family.

Here is the twist! The host who invited them in must guess who is doing the mumming! If they don't, then the host must join the group and go with them to the next house.

Cookies and hot drinks are traditionally served while people are mumming. Since you can't think of Canada without think of maples, here is a Maple Glazed Shortbread to whip up in case you get any Mummers!

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 tsp salt

1 cup unsalted butter, cold and diced into 1 Tbsp pieces

6 tbsp granulated sugar

1/2 tsp maple extract

Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar

3 tbsp real maple syrup

1 1/2 tsp maple extract

*Milk to thin as needed

Sprinkles (optional)

Finely chopped pecans (optional)



Instructions

In a mixing bowl whisk together flour and salt set aside.

In the bowl of a mix together butter and sugar until well combined.
(A stand mixer with a paddle attachment works best)

Mix in maple extract.

With mixer set on low speed, slowly add in flour mixture and mix just until combined.

Divide dough into two portions and shape each into a disk (approximately 5 inches) on a sheet of plastic wrap. Wrap plastic wrap around disks and transfer to the fridge and chill 30 minutes (do not stack them)



Remove one disk of dough from the fridge.

Roll out to even 1/4-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface (also dusting the top lightly with flour).

Cut into shapes using a cookie cutter then transfer leaves to an ungreased baking sheet.

Place the baking sheet to the refrigerator and chill 15 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Transfer from the fridge to preheated oven and bake until edges are lightly golden, about 14 - 16 minutes.

Let cool on baking sheet 5-10 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Repeat with the remaining disk of dough.

Glaze:

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together powdered sugar, maple syrup, and maple extract while adding in milk 1/2 tsp at a time to thin as needed. It should look like thick icing.

Spread glaze over cooled cookies.

Immediately top with sprinkles or pecans if using after icing each cookie (the glaze will set fast).

Rest at room temperature to allow glaze to set.





Have you ever heard of Mumming? Would you go participate if you could?

What Christmas costume would you dress up in to go Mumming?





Merry Christmas

from

Around the World

What recipe was your favorite?

Is there a tradition you learned about that you would like to learn more about?

What recipe would you like to add to your family traditions?

What recipe would you share with someone from another country?

What tradition would you like to add to your family celebrations?