

## The December 2019 Issue

### What is in this issue:

### Our Christmas & New Year Traditions



Since it is summer all year round in Singapore, Christmas feels more like hot, sweaty and sticky rather than white, cold and perhaps snowy! Hot summery Christmas does not feel much like Christmas, does it? ;)



#### How I celebrate Christmas in Singapore

Since my family has no religion and we are all freethinkers, we do not celebrate Christmas in a religious manner. Every year, we would gather at my cousin's place for a homely Christmas celebration. Her family is Catholic. They always have a Christmas tree put up at home, and prepare a feast for their guests. We would have the more traditional Christmas food like Turkey with gravy and sauce, Christmas log cake, and wine, as well as the local Singaporean food fare like curry chicken and potatoes, fried rice and beehoon (thin rice noodles). We would have a Christmas "Secret Santa" gift exchange at the end to wrap up the party!

#### How I celebrated Christmas in Hong Kong

I LOVED being at work over the Christmas season the 5 years I was in Hong Kong. Working at Disneyland on Christmas Day and Christmas Eve was so much fun! Even though I was alone in Hong Kong, it felt like all the guests at Disneyland were celebrating Christmas with me! It was so much joy, fun and a lovely sight of happy faces! :) After work, we would gather at a colleague's place to have dinner and exchange Christmas gifts the "Secret Santa" way as well.

#### How I celebrate New Year in Singapore

We would usually gather at my uncle's place on New Year Eve for a sumptuous homemade dinner, a few games of Bingo, followed by the countdown to a new year. I have a really close extended family, so we have been welcoming the new year together, year after year, for as long as I can remember.

## **My favourite way of celebrating Christmas**

At Disneyland (of course!), with everyone I love. I love the very magical, romantic and festive vibe at Disneyland during the Christmas season!

## **My favourite Christmas tradition**

Receiving Christmas gifts maybe? Hahaha! Just kidding! I love the warmth of being surrounded by people I love... So, family gathering!

## **My favourite Christmas food**

Hmmm... Everything? :P

## **My favourite Christmas drink**

In 2012, I celebrated Christmas in Europe with my family and extended family, and the Christmas markets there were amazing like they were straight out of a storybook! I remember drinking mulled wine from a mug at the Christmas markets, and it has got to be my favourite Christmas drink to date!



## **My favourite Christmas movie**

I do not have one at the moment, but I have a feeling it is going to be the latest Christmas movie, *Last Christmas*, which I will be going to catch sometime soon. Very excited to watch it at the theatre! I saw the trailer on Youtube, and fell in love with it.

## **My favourite Christmas song**

"Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and also Disney's "Welcome to Christmas"!

How do you celebrate Christmas? I have always been curious about how Christmas is celebrated in Japan. I have yet to make plans for Christmas, but since I am here in Tokyo, I am very excited to experience firsthand what it is like here on Christmas and Christmas eve!

Have a Merry Christmas everyone! <3



**With love,  
June**

## Sheila's Holiday Season!

### How I celebrate Christmas in the U.S.A.

In the United States, Christmas is a time for family, so I always see as many of my family members as possible. On Christmas morning, my family rushes downstairs to open presents together. Afterwards, we eat a coffee cake for breakfast and then get ready to go to my aunt's house for an early Christmas dinner. My aunt is an amazing cook and she makes many fancy dishes.



### How I celebrate Christmas in Japan

I usually spend Christmas with my host family from my time studying abroad at Waseda University. We follow the Japanese traditions of eating Kentucky Fried Chicken for dinner then a strawberry shortcake for dessert.



### How I celebrate New Year's in the U.S.A.

In the U.S., New Year's is a time for friends and parties. I usually go to my cousins' house to drink sparkling juice or champagne and watch the famous New Year's Eve performances on TV. There is a huge event in Times Square in New York City every year where many famous artists perform. Then, at midnight we all watch `the ball drop` to celebrate the start of a new year. My cousins live on the water and there are beautiful fireworks at midnight that reflect off the bay. On New Year's Day, I sleep in late after staying up all night.



### How I celebrate New Year's in Japan

In Japan, I usually spend New Year's Eve with my host family again or my friend from Waseda and her family. We watch **Kouhaku Uta Gassen**, the red and white singing contest program, on New Year's Eve while eating traditional Japanese food together. On New Year's Day, I try to make my first shrine visit of the new year with friends.

### My favorite way of celebrating Christmas

My favorite way of celebrating is watching a Christmas movie from my childhood with my sisters every night of December until Christmas. There is a program on TV called "**The 25 Days of Christmas**" that is just that. I also love to listen to my favorite Washington D.C. radio station (97.1 WASH FM) that plays around-the-clock Christmas music. My mother and I often sing the songs together.



## My favorite Christmas tradition

My favorite tradition is decorating the Christmas tree with my family. We always drive to nearby tree lot to pick the best tree together. We buy a new tree every year because we use a real tree, not a plastic one, in our home. My father puts the tree on our car, drives it home, sets it up in our house, then puts the rainbow lights on it.

My mother has a large Christmas ornament collection, so my sisters and I take turns picking one ornament at a time to hang on the tree. It is a sign of good luck to whoever finds our favorites in the box first. Lastly, my youngest sister puts our angel on top of the tree. Many families use a star on top, but my family has an angel.



## My favorite Christmas food

My favorite Christmas foods are **candy canes** and **Christmas cookies**. Candy canes are red (sometimes green) and white striped peppermint sticks. Some people hang them on their Christmas tree, but my family never did because my dogs or I would eat them right away.

There are many types of cookies that are popular for Christmas, but my favorites are sugar cookies, chocolate chip cookies, gingerbread cookies, and snickerdoodles. Every Christmas Eve, we make sure to leave out a plate of milk and cookies for Santa Claus to eat and some carrots for the reindeer.



## My favorite Christmas drink

My favorite Christmas drink is **eggnog**. It is a creamy drink made of eggs and milk. It can be warm or cold and can have alcohol in it. I like it with nutmeg sprinkled on top. It is a classic drink, but it is divisive. People either love it or hate it.



## My favorite Christmas movie

I have many favorite holiday movies but my top few are **A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)**, **Santa Clause is Comin` to Town (1970)**, **Eloise At Christmastime (2003)**, and **Elf (2003)**. I highly recommend them!



## My favorite Christmas song

I know and love so many Christmas songs, but my favorites are classics like **"White Christmas"** by Bing Crosby, **"The Christmas Song"** by Nat King Cole, and **"Blue Christmas"** by Elvis Presley.



**With love,**

**Sheila**