



JAPAN INFORMATION  
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TEACHING  
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# CHRISTMAS IN JAPAN

Christmas has been informally celebrated in Japan since the early 1900's, although entirely secular. In fact, Christmas tends to be more like New Year's in Western countries. It is more of a romantic holiday, a time for couples. Christmas Eve is often spent between couples, and presents in Japan are often given to lovers, as on Valentine's Day. Children and family members also sometimes receive small presents though.

Japan also has a fondness for unusual Christmas trees. Some are decorated in origami, but the most famous ones are really unique: powered by electric eels, made out of 12 kilograms of pure gold, or made from 50,000 sardines. Keep an eye out to see what Christmas tree shows up this year!

There is also the tradition of eating KFC fried chicken for Christmas. Turkey is not common in Japan, so in 1974, KFC launched a campaign "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" (Kentucky for Christmas!). Since then, fried chicken has been a staple Christmas food, along with Christmas cakes クリスマスケーキ. These cakes are often a type of a shortcake with whipped cream and strawberries, but green tea, chocolate, and roll cakes are also all very popular.