



# First time in a long time

— ❄️ —  
*Let's make Christmas count!*





# How to Use This **Advent Calendar?**



## **1**

Turn the pages to discover a fun and festive activity for each day of the countdown to Christmas.



## **2**

Each day, try something new! Since the Christmas spirit is made to be shared, you might want to invite some friends or gather the family to join you on the journey. And don't forget to share your Christmas journey with us on your socials.



## **3**

Stay tuned to our weekly email to receive inspirational stories.



**We're counting down to Christmas together!**  
Tag us on Instagram or Facebook with #ChristmasOfFirsts.



### **CELEBRATE THE SUN:**

Whether your Christmas is full of snow or sunshine, we can all celebrate the sun. Make a dried orange garland using two things: orange and twine. It's a tradition in many countries to celebrate long sun-filled days or the end of the winter solstice.





# 2

## **EMBRACE TRADITION:**

In Japan, it's common to eat fried chicken on Christmas Eve. Mongolian children will be waiting for Grandfather Frost and his granddaughter the Snow Maiden to bring them presents, while in Bolivia, people build manger made of mud and sticks to remember baby Jesus. What traditions do your family have? Research Christmas traditions from around the world and start a new tradition today!



# 3

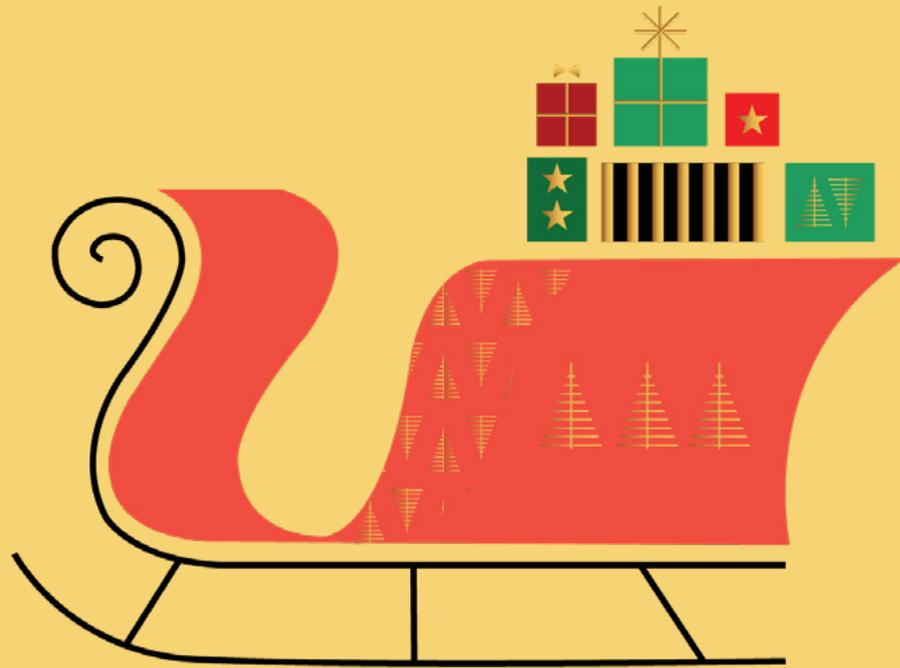


## **MONITO MONITA:**

No Christmas party at any school, house or office in the Philippines is complete without the Monito-Monita. A Filipino adaptation of Kris Kringle, it is a form of exchanging gifts where every participant has his or her own anonymous gift giver. The identities of both the receiver and giver will, later on, be revealed! Think Secret Santa, but with a twist! To play, simply set a budget and let everyone select a name at random out of a bag or jar. Bonus: Set a budget of zero – so everyone has to come up with meaningful but free gifts to surprise each other!



# 4

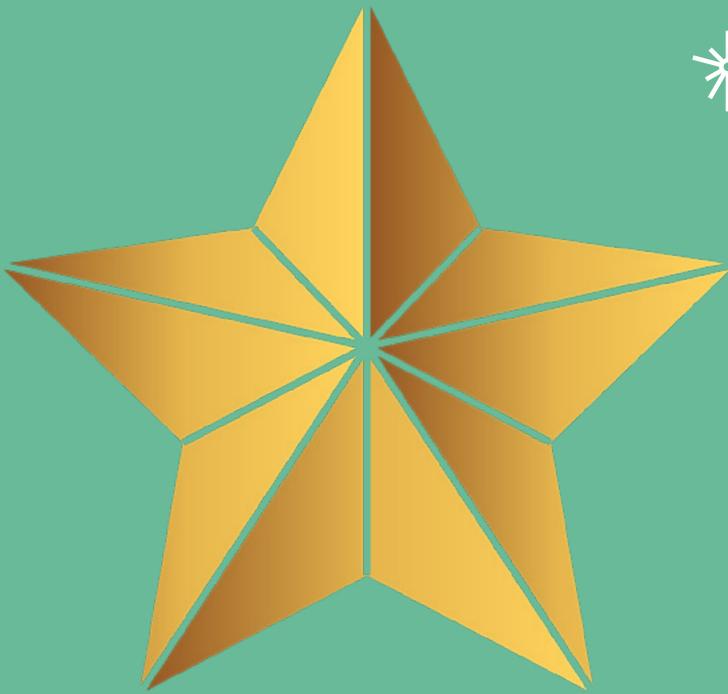


## HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

Christmas is celebrated by people all over the world. Today, teach your family how to say “Merry Christmas” in three new languages. Here are some festive greetings to choose from! : Feliz navidad [fe-lis-na-βi-ðãð] (Spanish), Joyeux Noël [zhwa-yeu-noh-eh] (French), Feliz natal [fi.liZ.nv.`ta] (Portuguese), Crăciun fericit [craw-ch-oon fair-ee-cheat] (Romanian), Maligayang pasko! (Tagalog), สุขสันต์วันคริสต์มาส / Suksan wan Christmas! (Thai), عيد ميلاد سعيد / Aiyeed milad sayeed! (Arabic), Selamat Hari Natal (Indonesian), Heri ya Krismasi (Swahili).



# 5



## **A CAROL PILGRIMAGE:**

In many Latin countries, people celebrate the nine days leading up to Christmas, or la Navidad, with posadas or 'novenas', which are meant to simulate the pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph as they look for a place to sleep. People go carolling from house to house, where the neighbours also join in the procession. What's your favourite Christmas carol? Get your loved ones and the lyrics ready for a sing-along at home or even over Zoom with far-flung relatives!



# 6

## GET CRAFTY:

Make homemade ornaments using [this recipe](#) with just three ingredients: salt, flour, and water! Drop the finished products in the mail to surprise someone you love or hang them from a neighbour's door! Did you know Chapati is one of the most common foods eaten in many parts of Africa? It is made using the same basic ingredients!



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**PENPALS:**

Since the late 19th century, children across the globe have written letters to Santa. Some leave letters in their shoes, others stuff them in Christmas stockings, and some even send letters to Santa's Workshop. You're never too old to write to Santa (or perhaps a childhood friend you've since lost touch with) – just pick up a pen and start writing or send a quick email/text!



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### **APPLE UP:**

Christmas hasn't been a part of Chinese culture for long, but it's fast becoming a popular celebration in the biggest cities. Young people send apples as presents to their friends, because Christmas Eve is translated as 'Ping'an Ye', which means 'peaceful'. The word for apple, which is pronounced 'Ping guo', sounds similar to the word for 'peace'. It is said that eating an apple will bring a peaceful and safe new year. Embrace the new tradition. Get the apples ready!



# 9



## **TRIM THE TREE:**

The tradition of decorating trees at Christmas comes from Germany, with trees covered in bright red apples, dolls, strings of popcorn and sweet treats. This year, make trimming the tree a family event, with everyone hanging up their favourite baubles and ornaments together. Why not try and make some popcorn or lolly strings too?





# 10

## LUCKY FOODS:

In Armenia, the locals typically serve fish, pilaf, wine, raisins and dried apricots for their scrumptious Christmas Eve dinner. They also bake Gata - a type of traditional Armenian sweet cookie which has a lucky coin or bean placed within. Whoever finds it first is said to have a lucky and successful year ahead! Make Gata at home using this [easy recipe](#), hide a bean in one of them, and turn this into a game for your loved ones!



# 11



## **CHRISTMAS CRAFTS:**

Learn how people around the world make Christmas decorations – from yarn ball ornaments in Armenia to pop-up Christmas trees in Cambodia, and from felt Christmas flowers in the Dominican Republic to recycled drink bottle trees in the Philippines. Which one will you try? [\*\*Click here for ideas!\*\*](#)





# 12



## **SUGARY SHOES:**

Generous and giving, Saint Nicholas is dear to the hearts of Dutch children. On 5 December, families traditionally celebrate St Nicholas Day by leaving small gifts in children's shoes, which they will find the next day. Take some Dutch inspiration and surprise some children (or even friends, coworkers or neighbours) you know by leaving anything from lollies to toys in their shoes today!





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### **DECORATE THE BANANA TREE:**

A relatively small proportion of India's population are Christians, so Christmas isn't celebrated everywhere in India - but where it is, the festivities are a riot of colour and lights. The biggest celebrations are held in Goa in the south. Instead of pine trees, many families decorate banana or mango trees with lights and ornaments, and neighbourhoods and churches compete to see who can decorate the most spectacular nativity scene, known as a Christmas crib. The finishing touch is put on the Christmas crib at midnight on Christmas Eve when a baby Jesus is added to the scene. How do you decorate your home in preparation for Christmas?



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### **FAMILY CELEBRATIONS:**

It's not Christmas as you might know it, but Cambodians also celebrate their biggest and most important traditional festival at the end of each calendar year. For 15 days, Cambodians come together to remember their ancestors through the generations. The first 14 days are called “Kann Ben” or “Dak Ben”, which means offering or giving. Day 15, the last day of the festival, is called “Phchum Ben”, which means to congregate or gather. Who are you gathering with for the holidays?

# 15



## **CHARMING CHARAMICOS:**

There aren't many pine trees in the Dominican Republic, so crafty artisans make their own out of dried branches, vines and twigs. They weave these into different shapes like balls, stars, and cones, then decorate them with paint, glitter and even fairy lights. Now it's your turn. Try making your own charamicos this year.



# 16

## **HOME BEAUTIFUL:**

Many families bake and decorate gingerbread houses at Christmas. Start your own tradition this year! You'll need to bake gingerbread slabs to build your house, then use plenty of sweets, chocolates and icing to decorate your creation. Let your imagination run riot! If you've never tried this before, it's a lot of fun and houses disappear so quickly it doesn't matter if your decorations are a disaster. For seasoned bakers, try competing with family or friends and nominate a judge to keep things interesting.

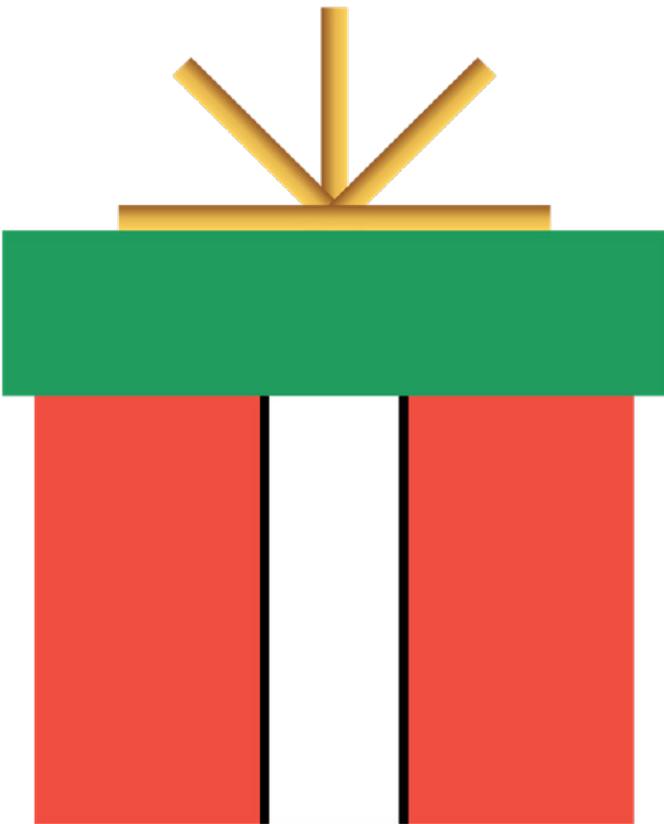


# 17

## **FOLLOW THE STAR:**

In the Philippines, people make paper lanterns called parols at Christmastime to symbolise the star of Bethlehem. Traditionally, they're star-shaped and made with bamboo and rice paper. Try making your own paper lanterns and stringing them up around your house, with LEDs inside to light them up. PS: An easy way to do this is by using paper bags or cardboard and tape. Attach a string to the top and add a candle. Just make sure your base is steady so you don't start a fire!





# 18

## **GRANDFATHER FROST:**

Christmas isn't widely celebrated in Mongolia as most people are Buddhists. However, the week leading up to the New Year is an important event where Mongolians put up trees and decorations, prepare gifts for their loved ones, while Grandfather Frost and Snow Maiden hand out presents to children. Share this story with your loved ones and surprise them with an [online photo](#) of this legendary figure who looks just like Santa!

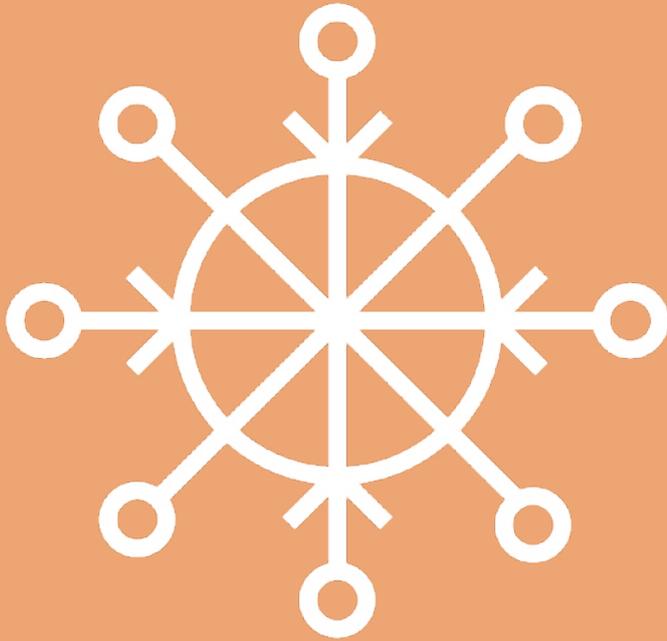


# 19

## A TASTE OF ROMANIA:

On Christmas eve, Romanians bake traditional delights, such as Cozonac – a marbled sponge cake with nuts, cocoa and Turkish delights. Christmas dinner includes roast pork, pickled vegetables, beef salad, and homemade wine. Why not look up a **[Cozonac recipe](#)** and give it a go? If this doesn't sound appetising, what about trying a completely new recipe you think you'll love?





# 20



## **CHRISTMAS HUNT!**

If you are big or small, this is just as much fun. Grab the kids or your crew and ask everyone to collect five items that look, sound, taste, smell and feel like Christmas. Hopefully, your conversations go in fun and unexpected directions.





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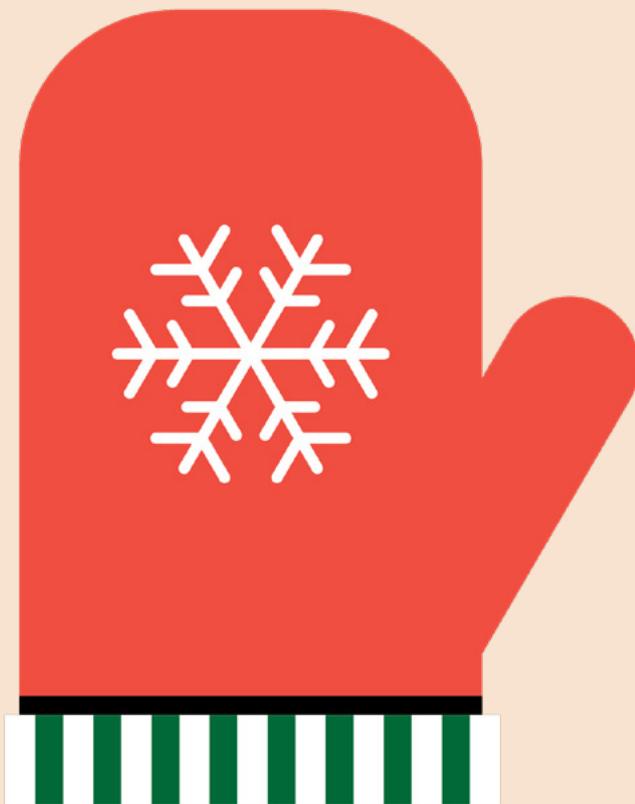
### **DID SOMEONE SAY MARATHON?**

There's nothing better than time to relax with friends and family at Christmas time. Put all your (other) devices aside, sit on the sofa together and watch a Christmas movie with a friend, as a family or with a group of friends. A die-hard movie fan? Make a list of everyone's favourites and watch one every week from now until Christmas. If you can't get together, make it virtual!

P.S. Need to take a break from TV? What about a board game marathon instead?



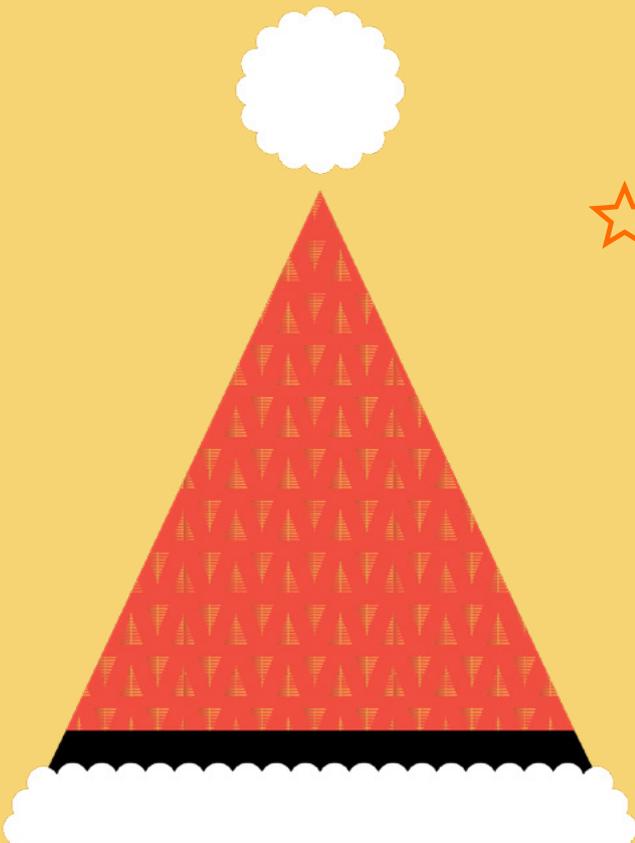
# 22



### **MATCHY MATCHY:**

Make memories with friends or family by creating or source matching Christmas t-shirts, jumpers or pyjamas! Parents, give your kids plain t-shirts and paint and let them create their own. Serious crafters could knit or crochet their own in the lead-up to Christmas.





# 23



## **MAKE A CHRISTMAS GIFT:**

It's the thought that counts, and it can be really rewarding to make a gift for someone instead of buying it. If you're not into craft or cooking and this activity sounds scary, don't fear! Here's an easy but effective idea. Add all the dry ingredients of your favourite Christmas cookie recipe into a glass jar in layers. Then write or print the recipe on a note (including any wet ingredients they may need to add like eggs or milk), and attach the recipe to the lid with string. It's fun, easy and looks great. Don't like cookies? Try protein balls, Christmas slices or homemade muesli.

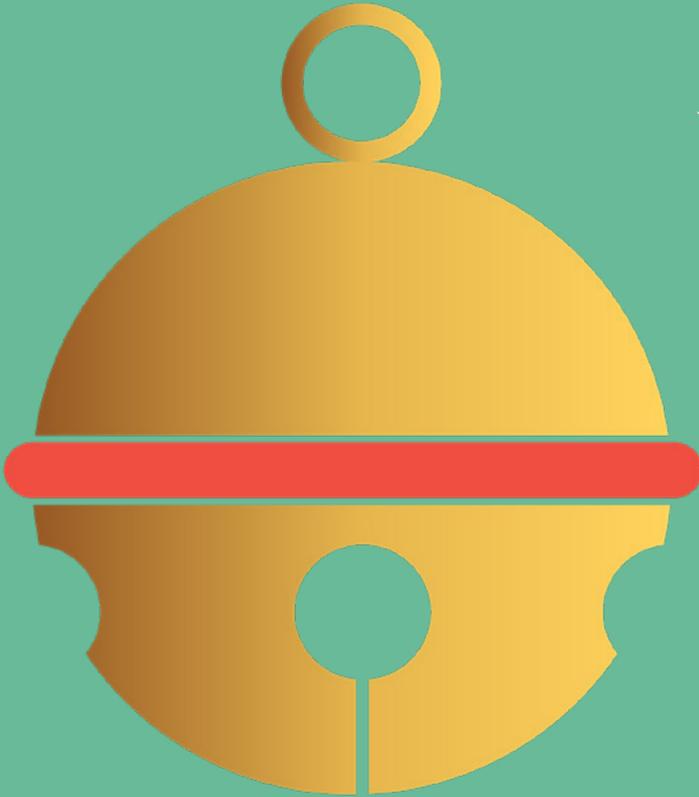




# 24

## **MINI POM POM:**

Give your home a Christmas lift! Little pom poms are quick and easy to make using only two materials. Start by wrapping yarn/wool around a fork until you have a round bundle. Then tie another piece of yarn around the middle of the bundle, slip the bundle off the fork, then cut through the loops either side. Fluff up your pom pom and trim any long pieces. Your pom pom is now ready – make a garland, hang on the tree or decorate a gift.



# 25

## SHOW UP:

Do you love food, feasting and friendship? Spread this joy with others - drop festive food into a local food pantry today, deliver festive goods to a homeless person or grab some friends and volunteer at a local organisation serving holiday meals to people in need, so everyone can celebrate this festive season.



# Let's make this Christmas count!

And do not forget to do good and to share with  
others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.  
Hebrews 13:16 (NIV).

Merry Christmas!"



**Let's make Christmas Count!**