

Christmas in Japan



Do Japanese people celebrate Christmas? They certainly do! Christmas in Japan is seen as a time for couples to spend a romantic evening together. Younger Japanese people might get together with their friends for a party. Most Japanese don't celebrate the religious part of Christmas but some of the nation's 3 million Christians do attend a church service.

Many Japanese associate Christmas with fried chicken. In the 1970s, fried chicken restaurant chain KFC conducted a popular advertising campaign with the slogan, "Kentucky for Christmas!" In late December, KFC sells a lot of fried chicken. Fried chicken is popular at this time also because Japanese people associate a foreign holiday with foreign food. In Japan, KFC has become such a big part of Christmas that some people mistake the image of KFC's Colonel Sanders as Santa Claus.

Along with KFC, Christmas in Japan also means Christmas cake. This is not like the fruit cake that people eat in many other countries. In Japan, it is a sponge cake with strawberries and whipped cream. A typical Christmas cake costs about 3000 yen (about \$30). After Christmas, you can still buy a Christmas cake in most Japanese supermarkets for about half the price.

Finally, most westerners are surprised at how quickly Japanese stores take down their Christmas decorations. While we tend to see Christmas decorations stay up long past Christmas, the Japanese tend to remove decorations from stores either on December 25th or the very next day. This makes sense if you know about Japanese culture because the most important day of the Japanese year – New Year's Day – is only six days away from Christmas Day!



1. Japanese people celebrate Christmas.
 - a) True
 - b) False

2. About how many Christians are there in Japan?
 - a) 1 million
 - b) 2 million
 - c) 3 million
 - d) 4 million

3. In Japan, some people mistake Colonel Sanders for Santa Claus.
 - a) True
 - b) False

4. How much does a Christmas cake usually cost after Christmas Day in Japan?
 - a) 1500 yen
 - b) 2000 yen
 - c) 2500 yen
 - d) 3000 yen

5. Japanese stores usually do not remove Christmas decorations until after the New Year.
 - a) True
 - b) False

Answers: 1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (a) 5. (b)

