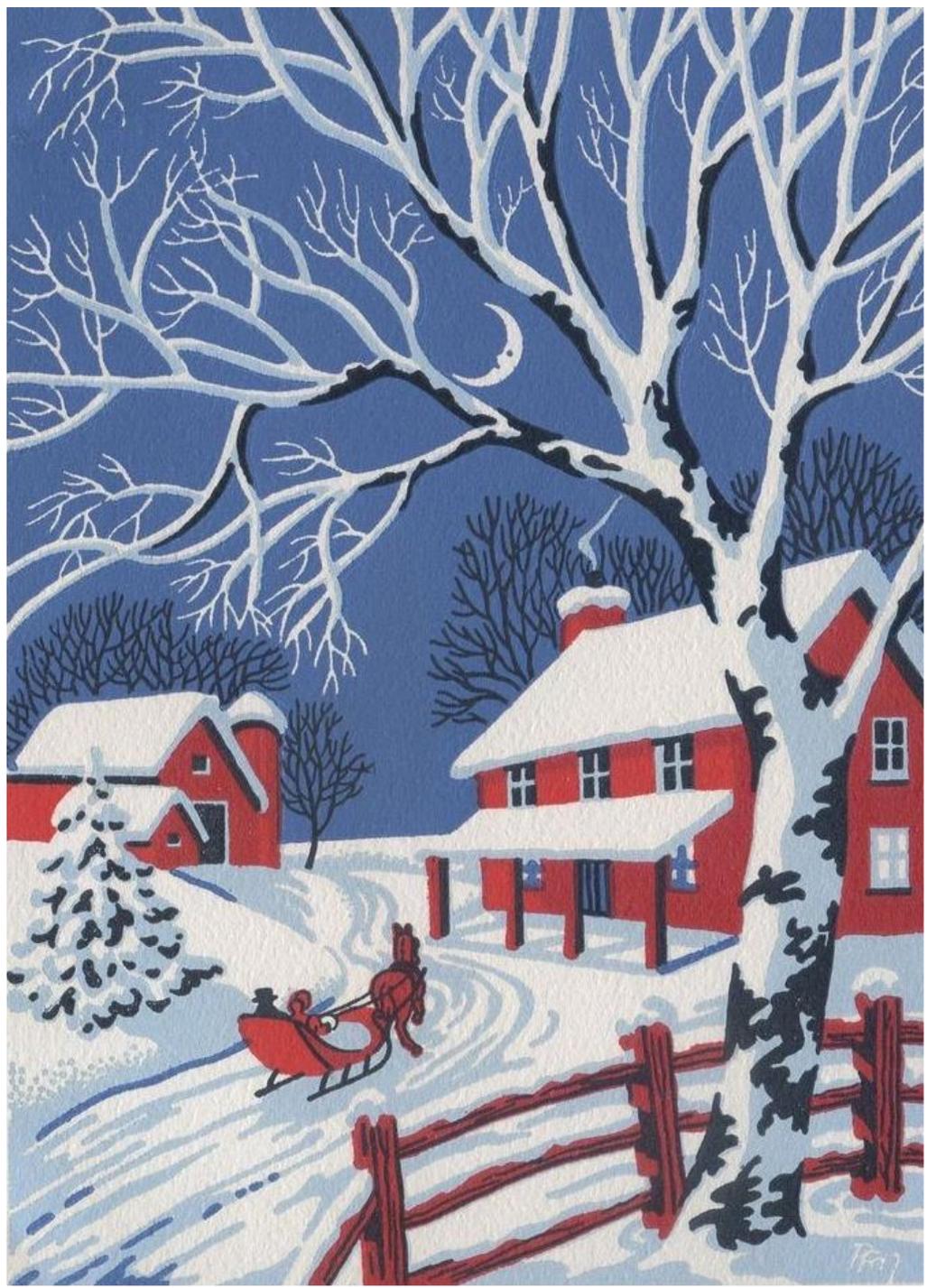


# Nexus Magazine Christmas Edition



British School of Barcelona



# Index

## 5. ADVICE ON XMAS GIFTS

Need help? Here's our advice for giving the perfect gift to the ones you love this holiday season!

## 6. QUARANTINE & LIFE

We hear you—being a teenager is hard. Especially now. But try not to lose it, we're here for you.

## 8. SELF CARE

In a pandemic, things are amped up. Stress, sleep loss, it's important to take a moment to remember how to care for yourself now and what we recommend for you.

## 10. CHRISTMAS MOVIES

Some films to try for the holidays—and what we think of them!

# Index

## 11. HOLIDAY BAKING

Some treats we found that you can make at home! Tested and approved by our very qualified baking specialists

## 17. TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Get ready for what we found out about how other parts of the world spend this time of the year!

## 18. CLIMATE CHANGE & THE HOLIDAY SEASON

It's a serious issue that affects us all year long. But for the sake of the magazine, let's take a look in terms of what this could mean for you, for a little reality check.



# christmas gift ideas

by Adel Veliyeva

Celebrating Christmas is a fun, memorable occasion that is usually spent with friends and family and is full of fun gift giving. But the reality is, after many years of celebrating Christmas and giving gifts to the same friends/family, it is difficult to come up with something new. Simply said, Aunt Karen does not want to receive a cooking appliance every year because at a certain point her home will look like a commercial kitchen. The goal of this article is to provide you with a few ideas on ways to give unique, memorable Christmas presents.

First and foremost, I truly believe that it is the thought that counts the most when giving a present as it will mean much more to the person. When it comes to giving a present to your mom, you can never go wrong with a Christmas pj set however, small gestures also count so do not discard chocolate and flowers with a cute note straight away. It has been a stressful year so face masks and bath bombs would help her take care of herself and relax.

As mentioned before, DIY gifts mean the most so giving your dad a picture frame of the both of you when you were younger will bring back all the memories he cherishes so much. You can never have enough cologne or sweaters so make sure you get him the one he enjoys!

If your parents have a hobby, such as cooking or running, get them something that is going to help them with that.

Buying something for your sister is super easy, however if you are having a tough time figuring out what to buy, find out what her favourite clothing store is and get her a gift card from it. You could do this with skincare and makeup too! For your brother, you could get him AirPods or a playstation card.



Sometimes, when it comes to your close ones, giving money is the best option as it can be hard to find a present or you may run out of time, however, here are some other ideas to give to your friends.

1. Something from jewellery, like a chain or rings
2. A trendy belt
3. A Christmas sweater
4. Tons of chocolate and candy!
5. A mug
6. Scented candles
7. A picture frame with the other person
8. Cool shoelaces
9. A bucket hat (or a beanie)
10. A book

# quarantine & life quarantine & life quarantine & life

by Jamila Serrao

Embarking on the journey of our young adulthood and finding out who we truly want to be is probably one of the most stressful, and ambiguous moments of our lives so far. Society is evolving at a faster rate than ever, with the aid of new generational creativity, technology and fresh perspectives, it seems as if everything is developing swiftly and smoothly. The fast pace at which the world is operating at sometimes provokes people to think they must be working and thinking at the same pace, another way of looking at it is that humans unknowingly put a lot more pressure on themselves than needed, due to the subconscious fear of being left behind by the rest of society. Have you ever feared not keeping up with the rest of the world? Perhaps, not being able to adjust as well as every other person seems to? Whether it be because of your personal emotional development, not knowing what you want to do in the future, or maybe just feeling stuck and unmotivated. Well, welcome, fellow overthinking teenage entity, let us talk about what you can do when you do not exactly know what to do.



I am mainly focusing on the panic and confusion that some go through in school, of course. Us being teenagers not only makes us susceptible to anxiety, but without the proper guidance it can lead us to making mindless decisions regarding our future. Obviously, I am not experienced enough to properly give advice on indecisiveness, but I can certainly drop some friendly advice. Firstly, I believe it's important to have an outline of what you would want your life to look like in ten- or twenty-years' time. Of course, that isn't easy for everyone, many don't seem to have a fixed plan detailing what they aspire to achieve, but, despite our young, indecisive recklessness, everyone has a sort of blueprint of what happiness could mean to them.

For example, do you see yourself working towards something specific? Do you wish to live a simple, easy going life? Or are you spontaneous and see yourself travelling around? Whether you think about these types of things much, we have all fantasied or idealized lifestyle or major achievement in the past, and all these sporadic fantasies sometimes aid to one's motivation. Give yourself time to think about who you want to be and how you want to live - what are your hobbies? What makes you happy when you are feeling low? Incorporate your passions into your life and see the bright possibilities that you and your potential could lead you to. It is the most cheesy, predictable thing to say, but doing what makes you happy is, in my eyes, one of the greatest successes you can achieve.

# moreover,

if you believe everything is going a bit too fast for you, if decisions you are unsure of have become nothing but dreadful deadlines for you, do not make them just yet! Remember that you can always take a gap year...travel, do extra courses on the side, get to know yourself and your surroundings - there is nothing wrong with taking a bit more time to be sure of yourself, if anything, it is recommended.

You have probably heard this one before but ask for reassurance. Personally, being the innately stubborn teen I am, I have a hard time asking for help or guidance, and I know I am not the only one; however, in the end no matter how headstrong you may be, a second, preferably more knowledgeable perspective on your decisions or queries is essential - and I do not only mean about university or school in general, but about your drives and passions and where you see yourself in life and why. Remember that school is not everything, it is simply a tool to get you further to wherever you wind up going. It is easy to get wrapped up in the pressure, but practice prioritizing your education and wellbeing even if you are not sure what you will end up doing in the future, it will truly pay off and benefit the smoothness of your upcoming bumpy adulthood.

Lastly, bearing in mind 2020's messy narrative, remember that absolutely no one was prepared for the pandemic this year, it was a very unexpected wave that surprised and incapacitated millions of people. Lockdown, although heavily necessary, took a toll on many teenagers, perhaps you included, there was increase amount of stress, worry and boredom all bottling up within us that we could not release in any way. This led to heaps of motivation lost, feelings of loneliness, and at least in my case, way too much time to overthink simple decisions; be nice to yourself in these hard times, pamper yourself, write, paint, make music...do what you love in order to keep yourself in check, and remember to check on your friends and see how they are doing!

We're all facing a very difficult moment of our life, but you don't have to make things difficult for yourself. Remember why you're doing this, it's all for your own benefit - and if you truly feel lost, give yourself time to understand yourself, it's deserved and necessary. I'm not trying to solve anyone's problems, of course. But I do think it's important for teenagers to remind one another that they aren't facing their problems alone, and that one's issues or worries may be more common than one thinks. I do believe that we unconsciously put a lot of pressure onto ourselves due to having been brought up in a high functioning society where everything seems in place, except us...we have been told our whole lives that we would soon integrate into society, maybe get a job, start a family; but the truth is, the world is entirely yours to explore and learn from. You do not have to meet any expectations, you do not have to demonstrate your worth and most importantly, you don't have to prove anything to anyone but yourself. Take it easy, stay on top of your goals and assets for your own benefit, and do not forget to give the beauty of life a chance - breathe in and out and remember you are here to enjoy, not to burden yourself :)



# a message of self-care this season

by Yulia Grechman



# Last year, when doing a program by the Mental Health foundation, we looked at 5 keys to mental wellbeing.

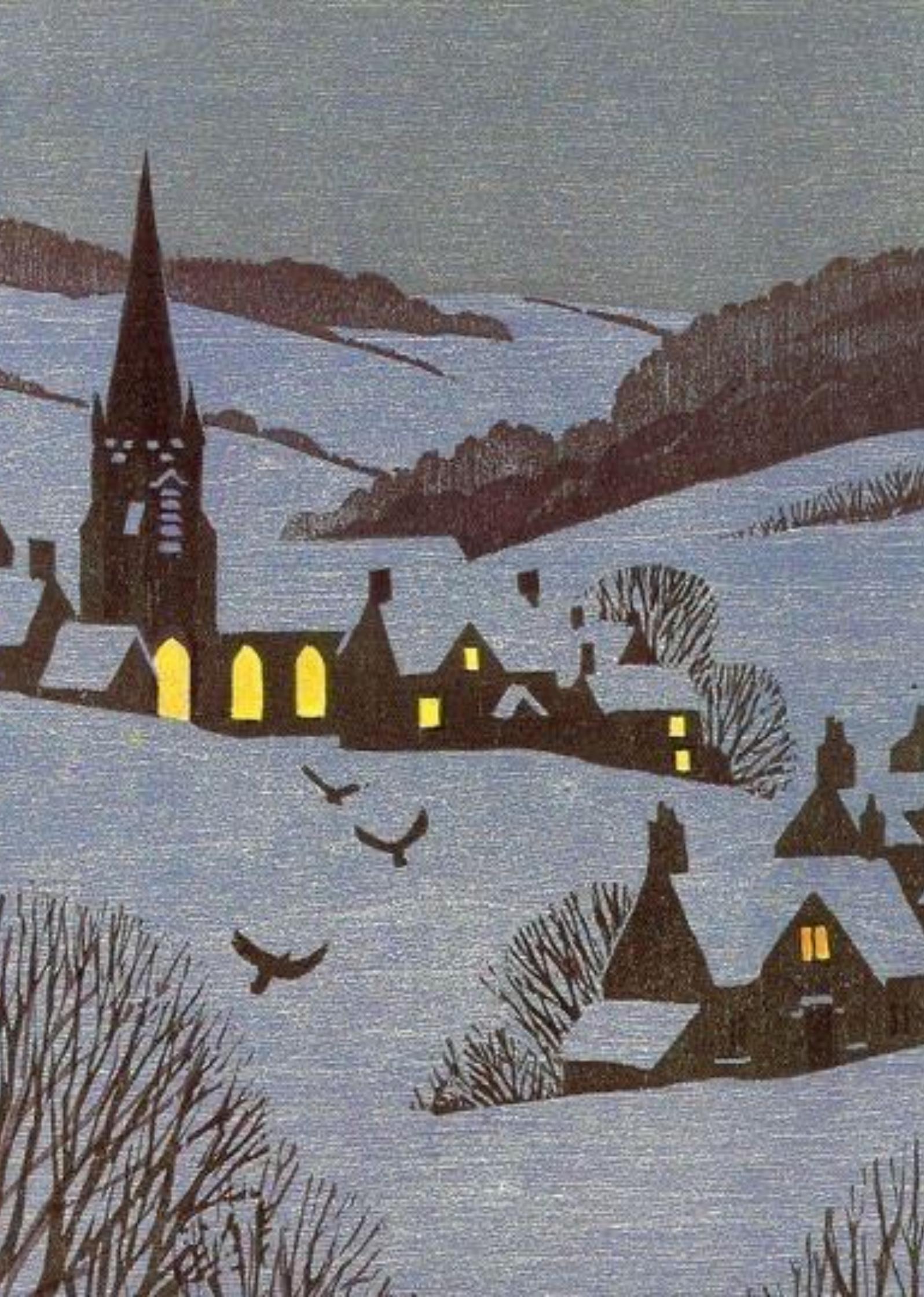
It's hard to find someone with a healthy mental state and for me and a lot of my friends this is an issue. Participating in the program not only helped educate little kids but also told me a lot about myself and the people around me. And of course, with the January and summer exams coming up I feel like many more people will need a reminder to stay healthy and take care of yourself. These steps are designed to improve your life and lessen any mental health struggles you might be having.

Are you surprised by the fact that what we do and the way we think has a bigger impact on our wellbeing than money and material possessions?

The first recommendation of the program is to connect to the people around you. While it may seem vague it is just trying to say that going out and making friends is crucial for your wellbeing. Studies in the 80s show that if you have no friends you are 50% more likely to die early, unlike a person with friends. Relationships allow us to share our feelings and experiences, exchange emotional support and build a sense of belonging. So why not reach out more to people and pay more attention to those around you, in the spirit of Christmas!

Secondly being active is shown to improve your mental health. Finding physical activities that you enjoy will bring greater self-esteem and the ability to rise to a challenge. Getting your ass up and doing something, helps your mental health, who would have thought...





# Christmas Movies to Watch

by Maria Ferrer

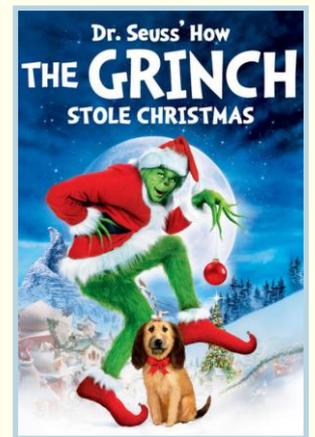


## Love, actually

It is that movie that helps you see how life redefines itself. It realistically looks at relationships happy and sad, successful and unsuccessful, with a future and without, with humor. There are cheesy happy moments and touching sad moments, while still embracing this festive time of year. A really recommended movie to watch with your family/friends if you want a laugh but are still looking for a film that is related to Christmas.

## The grinch

This is a movie that conveys the mistaken belief that children and their parents want to see a dank, sinister, weird movie about a sour green creature who lives on top of a mountain of trash, scares children, is mean to his dog, and steals everyone's Christmas presents. There is a happy ending, and even a saintly little girl (who if you've seen Gossip Girl, might recognize her, she is Jenny Humphrey), who believes the Grinch may not be all bad, but there's not much happiness before the ending. However, it is an iconic movie that you cannot miss!

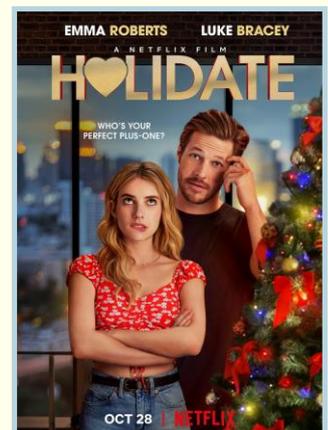


## Krampus

If you are into horror movies and like Christmas, then this film is a perfect option for you! It nicely blends horror and humor, delivers scary stuff at its best and is worth watching if you do not want to see a "traditional" Christmas movie, and want to change genre. Do not watch it alone at night if you are easily scared! You could perhaps watch it with your friends!

## Holidate

It's a romantic comedy (with Emma Roberts), that revolves around all festivities around the year, including Christmas! This one's If you want to have a laugh and enjoy watching cliché/ cheesy movies!



# HOLIDAY BAKING

by Kate Harvison







# Gingerbread Cookie Bars



## INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup butter, melted  
3/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/3 cup molasses  
1 egg  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon salt

## frosting:

1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
1 lb (3 3/4 cups) powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

## STEPS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9x13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray and set aside.

In a large bowl, beat butter, sugar, brown sugar, vanilla, and molasses on medium speed until creamy.

Add the egg and stir until completely incorporated. Add baking soda, flour, spices, and salt and mix until well combined. Spread dough into prepared pan, using clean hands or a rubber spatula to press the dough to the edges of the pan. Bake for 15-20 minutes; do not overbake! Cool in a pan with a wire rack.

When bars have cooled, frost with cream cheese frosting or dust lightly with powdered sugar. They are delicious with nothing on them! Cut into squares and serve.

For the frosting: Cream together the butter and cream cheese. Add the powdered sugar and vanilla. Slowly mix on low and then beat it on high until fluffy.



# Christmas Swirl Fudge



## INGREDIENTS

- White chocolate (5 oz)
- Unsweetened condensed milk (1/2 cup/340g)
- Vanilla extract (1 tsp)
- Red food colouring
- Green food colouring



## STEPS

Melt your white chocolate in a glass bowl over a pot of boiling water, stirring until smooth

Remove from the heat and set aside to cool a bit (not fully)

Add your condensed milk to the fudge and stir until combined

Split your mixture into 3 bowls and add colour in each bowl—one for red, one for green, one kept white.

Mix them together in a container of your choice, swirl with a tooth pick, and put it in the fridge for minimum 30 minutes, or until totally firm.







# Chocolate Yule Log



## INGREDIENTS

85g all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
5 eggs  
150g white sugar  
2 (1 ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate  
2 tablespoons water  
2 tablespoons coffee-flavored liqueur  
2 tablespoons white sugar  
¼ teaspoon baking soda  
confectioners' sugar for dusting  
4 (1 ounce) squares semisweet baking chocolate  
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
384g confectioners' (powdered) sugar  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 tablespoon coffee flavoured liqueur

## STEPS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly spray a 10x15 inch pan and line with parchment paper. Sift flour with baking powder in a bowl and salt and set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs on high for several minutes until they are very pale and fluffy. Gradually add in the sugar, beating 1 to 2 minutes more or until very thick. Gently, but thoroughly, fold in the flour mixture.
3. Melt the chocolate in a small saucepan over low heat. In a small bowl, combine the 2 tablespoons of water with the 2 tablespoons coffee liqueur and the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar and the baking soda, then gradually stir into the melted chocolate until smooth. Quickly, but thoroughly, fold chocolate mixture into batter.
4. Pour batter into prepared 10x15 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 18 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. Lightly sift an even layer of confectioners sugar over a cloth napkin or tea towel (do not use Terry-cloth). Flip the cake out of its pan onto the prepared cloth as soon as it comes from the oven. Carefully peel away parchment paper. Lightly dust top of cake with confectioners sugar, then trim away crisp edges. Starting with one of the short sides of the cake, immediately roll the cake up in the cloth, jellyroll style, and cool thoroughly on a rack.
5. For the Filling and Frosting: In a small saucepan over low heat, melt the chocolate. Remove from heat and let cool to lukewarm. In a medium bowl, beat the cream cheese with the confectioners sugar until smooth, then blend in the vanilla extract and coffee liqueur. Blend in the melted chocolate. Unroll the cake and spread about 1/3 of the filling evenly over the surface. Roll the cake back up.
6. Arrange cake roll on serving tray, then frost generously, swiping with an icing spatula to form the long 'bark line' design. Swipe ends of cake in a circular motion to simulate the tree-rings of a cut log. Decorate log as desired with holly leaves and berries, mushrooms and snow.



# traditions around the world

by Luka Maiburg

As Christmas time comes around and we trim our trees, bake cookies and get ready to open our presents, many people forget that there are so many ways people celebrate this holiday. Let's take a trip to discover some peculiar traditions that you might not know of...

## Germany's Crowded Christmas

A major focus of Germany's Christmas celebrations is the so-called "Advent". They use various types of "Adventkränze", including ones in the shape of a wreath fashioned out of branches. From these circular calendars hang 24 decorated bags or boxes, each of which contains a small gift. Another version is a fir "Kranz" with four candles on it, a candle is lit each week during the Advent celebration. Residents of Germany differ on who they think brings the gifts on Christmas Eve. Some say it's Santa Claus or Father Christmas, known as Weihnachtsmann. Others say it's the Christkindl, The Christ Child. Some also believe a character called Krampus, accompanies, rather than bringing gifts, this horned monster comes to punish the children who were bad.



## Japanese KFC Holiday

Although Christmas is not a national holiday in Japan (an estimated one percent of the population is Christian), its citizens still find an interesting and delicious way to celebrate. Rather than gathering around the table for a turkey dinner, families head out to their local Kentucky Fried Chicken. The tradition began in 1974 after a wildly successful marketing campaign called "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" or "Kentucky for Christmas!" The fast-food chain has maintained its yuletide popularity, causing some people to order their boxes months in advance or stand in two-hour-long lines to get their Christmas dishes in time.



## Egypt's Fasting Feast

Christians in Egypt participate in a Holy Nativity Fast for the 43 days before Christmas. They eat what is essentially a vegan diet, which contains no foods that come from animals (including milk and eggs). On Christmas Eve, they attend a church service that begins around 10:30 and can last several hours. Following the service, everyone goes home to the big Christmas meal, which contains meat, butter, and all the other things they couldn't eat during the Advent fast. A popular dish is Fata, a soup that contains rice, bread, garlic, and boiled lamb.

# Christmas has become noticeably warmer over the last few decades.



---

Using Barcelona as an example, the average winter temperature has stayed consistent since the start of the century, at around 15 degrees. 2003 was an especially hot year, the temperatures were noticeably hotter that year because of the lack of humidity in the air. In 2020 the average temperature of December is 16.5 degrees, a noticeable difference. But this is thought to be because of a known phenomenon that is predicted to increase in southern Europe over the next century, rapidly fluctuating temperatures. By the 2030s, 1 in every 3 years are predicted to have temperatures similar to 2003's.

Christmases won't feel as cold and part of the magic could be lost! With that famous song, While Christmas, so much of the cultural imagery associated with Christmas features is related to a glistening carpet of snow. Scientists predict that milder climates, like the one in Barcelona, will see an increase in rain fall alongside the warmer temperatures. The warmer temperature of the air will retain a bigger build ups of condensation which means more rain in the colder months of the year. Areas in the northern hemisphere that can still have temperatures below freezing will actually experience more snow precipitation, because of the same phenomenon. Which can also cause complications for those communities. The way in which people will experience Christmas will be much different 50 years' time, as outside celebrations are cut short because of rain.

---

---

Many of the Christmas traditions will be negatively affected by the rapidly changing climate. The Pine trees that are decorated by people in December will not disappear, but they are being affected by the climate. Pine tree farmers are being hit with droughts and flash floods which has decreased the number of trees being grown. Similarly, Cocoa and Maple, two ingredients for many Christmas recipes will become rarer in the future.

About half of the world's Chocolate supply comes from just two West African nations, Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire, which are losing land suitable for Cocoa agriculture to climate change. Maple, on the other hand, is the least concerning of the two crops as Maple trees are susceptible to freezing and can benefit from slightly hotter climates. But it is generally agreed that global warming will continue to a point where Maple plantations will be affected negatively. In general, these parts of Christmas traditions won't disappear, but they will increase in price as they become rarer and the demand increases.

Christmas is a celebration that is ingrained in our culture and will not disappear any time soon. But many of the things that we take for granted in Christmas will become rare in the future at the rate that climate change is going. We must fight Climate change to allow our descendants to experience Christmas like us and not allow it to become folk lore.





# 'Tis the season.

Organised by Vika Kurbatova

Writers:

Luying Bao   Jamila Serrao   Yulia Grechman   Kate Harvison

Luka Maiburg   Maria Ferrer   Adel Veliyeva

Magazine Design by Kate Harvison