



## Do People Celebrate Christmas in China?

圣诞快乐!



by Erin Dumke 1 year ago



89

圣诞快乐 (Shèngdàn kuàilè)! In America, Christmas is arguably the biggest holiday of the year. Stores have been putting up decorations and playing Christmas music since before Thanksgiving. Kids get two or three weeks off from school to celebrate and go on vacation. But is Christmas such a big deal in Eastern culture? Here's how people in China might celebrate Christmas.

With a population that is only 2% Christian, many Chinese families do not celebrate Christmas for the religious significance. December 25 is not observed as a national holiday, so people do not get off of school or work. Most rural areas do not put up decorations, even though the factories in Yiwu, in western China, [produce 60% of the world's Christmas decorations](#).

However, in larger cities, Christmas has become a big commercial holiday, with stores having winter promotions.





Credit

Chinese urban areas also have their own Christmas traditions different from those in the West. A tradition has developed fairly recently of giving apples as gifts on Christmas Eve--such as the one pictured above--because the word for Christmas Eve (平安夜 Ping'an Ye) sounds like the word for apple (苹果 Píngguǒ). Most people only see Christmas trees in shopping malls, but if a family does have one in their home, it is usually decorated with paper chains and lanterns. Young people will also use the holiday as an excuse to throw a big party, and young couples will give each other gifts like on [Valentine's Day](#).

China also has its own version of Santa Claus, called 圣诞老人 (Shèngdàn Lǎorén), literally meaning "old Christmas man." While Chinese children do not expect presents from Santa on Christmas morning, they can visit him in grottos inside malls just like in America and Europe. Weibo released a Santa emoticon last December, based on a character from the 1994 movie "Hail the Judge" (九品芝麻官 Jiǔpǐn zhīmaguān) who bears a resemblance to Santa Claus.



Weibo

In Hong Kong, which used to be a British colony, both Christmas and Boxing Day (December 26) are national holidays. The Hong Kong WinterFest is a festival of lights that is open from November to February. There are also many Christmas-themed performances in December at the ballet and the symphony orchestra. In Taiwan, December 25 is also Constitution Day, similar to America's Fourth of July.

Of course, people in China do not celebrate the New Year on January 1 like Western countries do either. Instead, [Chinese New Year](#), a major holiday that includes festivals, school breaks and family get-togethers, will be on January 25, 2020.

How does your country celebrate Christmas? Does your family have any special traditions? Please share in the comments below!



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