

Everyday ELLA ideas for celebrations



Children love a good party! Teaching children about cultural celebrations around the world is a great way to get them excited about diversity. A culture's celebrations can reveal a lot about its deeply held values and traditions. Learning about the celebrations of another person shows you care about what's important to them.

How do you celebrate?

Some Australian families share a celebration from their cultural background



Arabic

Eid-ul-Fitr is a special feast to mark the end of Ramadan. Celebrations begin on the first day of the tenth month of the lunar-based Islamic calendar. Normally this falls sometime between May and early August. New clothes are worn at Eid prayers in the morning. It is important to visit family and friends and enjoy festive meals together. Children receive small gifts and people make donations to charities.



Italian

The Feast of the Epiphany is 12 days after Christmas (6 January). Children get gifts from La Befana on that day. Tradition says that La Befana is an old woman who rides a broom. She leaves children sweets and presents if they have been good, and charcoal if they have been bad. Children hang up large socks or stockings on the night of 5 January so she will fill them. They hope for treats, of course!



Vietnamese

Tet/Lunar New Year holiday takes place around late January to early February. It is so important that schools and businesses in Vietnam close for several days. There are colourful flowers and blossoms in Vietnam at this time of year. Families come together to cook and eat special foods and remember their ancestors. You will often see a tray of five carefully arranged fruits in Vietnamese homes during this time.



German

The whole of December is dedicated to Christmas celebrations. German children use the Adventskalender (advent calendar) to count down the days. On the night of 5 December children leave their shoes by a window or door to be filled with lollies and nuts by St Nicholas the next day. Families give each other presents on Christmas Eve, 24 December. Stollen and Lebkuchen are delicious Christmas treats.



Hindi

Diwali is a festival of lights. It falls in October or November and celebrates the light overcoming the dark, good over evil, hope over despair. Families light clay lamps to ward off darkness and evil in their homes. Children wear new clothes and people exchange sweets. Fireworks are set off throughout the day and into the night.



Indonesian

Hari Kartini (Kartini's Day) celebrates education and equality for women. It is held on 21 April, the birthday of RA Kartini. She was a national hero who worked to improve the lives of women. Children dress up in traditional clothing from various regions of Indonesia, and go on a parade.



Chinese (Mandarin)

Chinese New Year is celebrated on the first day of the first lunar month in January or February. People travel home to celebrate with their family. The streets are busy with dragon displays, lanterns, food and fireworks. This colourful celebration also marks the end of winter.



Japanese

Star Festival/Tanabata is 7 July (7 August in some regions). For this festival, people write what they wish for on long strips of coloured paper. They attach the strips to decorated trees or bamboo poles at the entrance to their homes, or in their backyards. Big and brightly coloured paper streamers are hung wherever Tanabata is celebrated. In schools, parents sometimes share their hopes for their child on a strip of paper displayed on a bamboo branch in their child's classroom.



Korean

May is considered the family month. Children's Day is celebrated on 5 May. Parents make a big effort to do something special with their children, like taking them to a park or zoo. Many people enjoy a picnic with special snacks. Parents' Day is celebrated on 8 May, when children make paper carnations or buy real flowers for their parents.



Modern Greek

Kathari Deftera (Clean Monday) is celebrated in February or March, on the first day of Lent – an important time in the Christian calendar. It is a time to escape routine and come together outside. In Greece it occurs at the start of spring, so kite flying is part of the tradition. You can take part in workshops to make traditional wooden kites or just enjoy finding a park and flying a kite. Many people eat seafood, beans and dolmades on Clean Monday.



Turkish

National Sovereignty and Children's Day is on 23 April. People celebrate children as the future of Turkey on this day. As a symbol of this, some children are chosen to act as the president and prime minister and other government officials. They can pretend to control the country for a day! There are parades and variety shows at schools. All over the world, we now celebrate 23 April as International Children's Day.



Spanish

Dia de los Reyes/Three Kings Day or Noche de Reyes/Night of Kings is on 6 January. In many Spanish-speaking countries people give each other gifts on this day, to celebrate the Christian story of how the three kings (the Magi) travelled far on camels to give gifts to the baby Jesus. There are big parades the night before, with displays of the three kings and their carriages of presents. In some countries, children leave their shoes outside the door on the night of 6 January, with hay or grass and water for the kings' camels. In the morning, gifts appear to replace the hay or grass.



French

The French national holiday 'la fête nationale', also called Bastille Day, is held on 14 July. Fire stations stay open for families to visit. There are military parades in the morning, and in the evening people gather to watch concerts and fireworks. People eat lots of cheese and pastries and some play pétanque in parks.