

Around the world in December – with Tony and Lou!

Hi boys and girls! For this year's holiday season, let's have a look at other parts of the world in December. Ready? Great, then hop on our special air balloon (it's really fast!) and let's take a trip around the world!



Read our first report; it's about a Jewish festival. Can you find the name of the festival in the wordsearch? And the words I spilt candle wax on? (Oops, sorry about that!)

When we were in Israel, we stayed with a nice mouse family and we celebrated a wonderful festival together. The 'Festival of Lights' is very, very old. It is a way to remember battles that the Jews fought and won over 2,000 years ago. Back then, when they celebrated, they lit some oil and it burnt for eight days – a miracle! So now, Jewish people light eight candles in a special candelabrum, the *menorah*. (Well, actually there are *nine*: there's an extra candle in the middle!). So each day, we lit another candle. On the eighth night it was beautiful with all the burning candles. But there's more: We also had presents and chocolate coins for the children. And there was lots of food: pancakes and jelly doughnuts! And one night, we played a very funny game with a *dreidel*, a top. There are letters on it, and you have to get the Hebrew phrase "A great miracle happened here" when you spin the top. And Lou won!!! We sang some songs too. They're fun - try them!



"The dreidel on the floor goes round and round"

(Tune: "The wheels on the bus go round and round")

The dreidel on the floor goes round and round,
round and round, round and round.
The dreidel on the floor goes round and round,
All around the room.
The children watch the dreidel go round and round,
round and round, round and round.
The children watch the dreidel go round and round,
On what letter will it stop?

"Hanukkah candles"

(Tune: "Ten Little Indians")

One little, two little, three little candles,
Four little, five little, six little candles,
Seven little, eight little, nine little candles,
In my Hanukkah lamp.

T	A	K	W	R	I	Q	F	S	X	A
X	L	M	Y	H	A	S	B	Z	L	L
C	F	C	V	W	I	P	M	U	G	O
L	M	O	U	S	E	L	F	O	D	L
U	E	W	T	C	E	R	R	Y	C	S
F	D	T	S	S	E	O	D	S	O	O
I	I	A	T	D	T	L	W	O	Z	N
T	R	N	N	R	T	Z	T	S	A	G
U	R	O	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S
A	W	H	Y	T	F	R	F	S	E	D
E	H	A	N	U	K	K	A	H	O	H
B	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	T

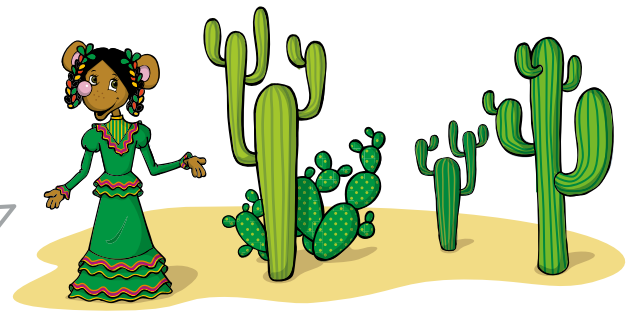
Look for the words in these directions:
→ ↓ ↗ ← ↑

season [ˈsiːzn] Jahreszeit; Saison ○ to hop on [hɒp, ˈɒn] schnell einsteigen ○ Jewish [ˈdʒuːɪʃ] jüdisch ○ to spill, spilt, spilt [spɪl] verschütten ○ wax [wæks] Wachs ○ battles that ... [ˈbætɪz ˈðæt] Schlachten, die ... ○ to fight [faɪt] kämpfen ○ victory [ˈvɪktəri] Sieg ○ miracle [ˈmɪrəkl̩] Wunder ○ candelabrum [ˌkændəˈlɑːbrəm] Kerzenständer ○ actually [ˈæktʃuəli] tatsächlich; eigentlich ○ top [tɒp] Kreisel ○ Hebrew [ˈhiːbrʊː] hebräisch ○ to spin [spɪn] drehen



Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls ...
Next stop: Mexico!

Read our report and choose the
right words. Oh, and *Feliz Navidad y
Prospero Año Nuevo!*



It can be really hot in Mexico in December. Last year was our first tropical **Easter – Christmas – Halloween**. Mexicans **finish – end – start** the party on 12th December. We saw so many things in Mexico – and we were in a play where we played the birth of Christ. Our Mexican friends got a **visit – letter – banana** from St. Nick, and he brought many presents. On Christmas Eve, we had a visit from *el Niño Dios*, the Holy Child. Then we went to **church – the hotel – the cinema** at midnight. That was great! We had no Christmas tree, they are too **small – old – expensive**. Only people with a lot of money have one. But on 6th January, the three wise men came to visit for Reyes Magos. The Magi left more **exercise books – presents – clothes** for the children – in their shoes!

The year before our Mexican Christmas, Lou was in the USA and I was in Australia!



Partner A: Read about what Tony saw in Australia.
Partner B: Read about Kwanzaa.
Then tell each other about December 'down under' and in the USA.



Partner A

The holiday season in Australia was really different! Christmas is in the middle of summer 'down under', so the food was like our Greenwich summer food: We had seafood, cold ham and cold turkey, salads and puddings with strawberries – I loved it! On Christmas Eve – 24th December – we sang carols by candlelight, together with thousands of other people. We were outside, and after the second song there was a summer rainstorm.

But everyone was really happy – especially the children: Christmas falls in the summer school holidays!

We had Chrissie pressies and a 'barbie' – a barbecue – on the beach on 25th December. After that we all played cricket, it's the Australian national sport. Then there was Santa Claus in swimming trunks, and he arrived at the beach on a surfboard! The Christmas cards had kangaroos and koala bears with red scarves.

Partner B

December is not just Christmas time, it's also the time for Kwanzaa. To celebrate this, I went to the USA. Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday when people stop to think about their African great-great-grandparents and about the original harvest festivals in Africa. The meaning of the word *kwanzaa* is 'first fruits' in Swahili, an African language. Kwanzaa is not very old, it started in 1966. Kwanzaa goes on for seven days, from 26th December to 1st January. People light one candle each day, and on each day people think about different things. The candles are black, red and green. I liked the straw mats, the fruit and the ears of corn for the children. There was a lot of singing and dancing too. And my friends gave me some presents. But Kwanzaa is not about the presents. And it's not a religious holiday. Kwanzaa wants to bring people together to show us how important we are to each other.

- play [pleɪ] Theaterstück ○ birth [bɜ:θ] Geburt ○ Christ [kraɪst] Christus ○ wise [waɪz] weise, klug ○ down under [ˌdaʊnˌʌndə] in Australien ○ turkey [ˈtɜ:ki] Truthan ○ carol [ˈkærl] Weihnachtslied ○ especially [ɪˈspeʃli] besonders, vor allem ○ swimming trunks [ˌswɪmɪŋ trʌŋks] Badehose ○ to arrive [əˈraɪv] ankommen ○ scarf [skɑ:f] Schal ○ harvest [ˈhɑ:vɪst] Ernte ○ Swahili [swɑˈhi:li] ○ straw mat [strɔ:ˈmæt] Strohmatten ○ ear of corn [i:ˈr:ɪv ˈkɔ:n] Maiskolben

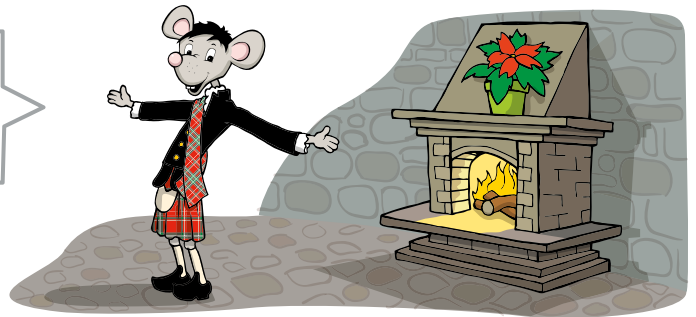


And do you know what we're planning for 31st December? After our trip around the world, we want to go to Scotland for Hogmanay.

I want to be the first mouse to come and visit my friends after midnight – this is called first-footing on Hogmanay.

People usually bring some shortbread and then have food and drinks. At midnight, they sing "Auld Lang Syne". It's a great song! (Maybe you can find out more about it on the internet.) Last time we were in Scotland, we went to the Hogmanay fireball ceremony in Stonehaven in north-east Scotland. People walked through the streets at night with balls of fire on chains and swung them round and round over their heads. That was a bit scary! And when we went to another family, we wished them *Lang may yer lum reek!* ("Long may your chimney smoke!") because we want them to be nice and warm in the New Year. Hee-hee.

Well everyone, I hope you have a very nice December, wherever you are and whatever you and your family do. Happy Holidays to you all!



Questions:

1. What places do Tony and Lou visit?

2. Which tradition is the oldest? Which is the youngest?

3. What is the shortest festival Tony and Lou talk about?

4. They don't talk about candles, flames or lights in one of the reports. Which report is it?

Additional activities:

- Find all the places on a map.
- Talk about how you celebrate Christmas / what celebrations you have in December.
- Do you know about December traditions in other countries?

Scotland [ˈskɒtlənd] Schottland ◯ Hogmanay [ˈhɒgməneɪ] ◯ shortbread [ˈʃɔːtbred] Buttergebäck ◯ fireball [ˈfaɪəbɔːl] Feuerball ◯ ceremony [ˌserɪməni] Zeremonie ◯ north-east [nɔːθˈiːst] Nordost- ◯ chain [tʃeɪn] Kette ◯ to swing [swɪŋ] schwingen ◯ chimney [ˈtʃɪmni] Schornstein ◯ to smoke [sməʊk] rauchen ◯ wherever [weˈrevə] wo auch immer ◯ whatever [wɒtˈevə] was auch immer ◯ oldest [ˈəʊldɪst] älteste/-r/-s ◯ youngest [ˈjʌŋgɪst] jüngste/-r/-s ◯ shortest [ˈʃɔːtɪst] kürzeste/-r/-s