

Beijing's essential international family resource

# beijingkids

December 2019

**Ring  
In The  
New Year:**  
New Year  
traditions  
throughout  
time

**Plus:**  
Where to go for  
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## Giving Back

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WOMEN OF CHINA has been published since 1952, and is sponsored and administered by the All-China Women's Federation, the largest women's organization in China. It remains the only English-language magazine with the specific purpose of introducing Chinese women to the world. WOMEN OF CHINA keeps global readers informed about Chinese culture and the reality of Chinese women's lives, experiences and perspectives.

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## WOMEN OF CHINA English Monthly 《中国妇女》英文月刊

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### ON THE COVER:

For our December Giving Back issue we had the pleasure of photographing dad Ken Li and daughter Alexis Li. Ken and Alexis have been giving back to the community by donating to orphans for years. For Ken, it's important that his daughter grows up beautiful inside and out. Photos: Ray Town Visual



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## The *beijingkids* Board

### Tim Coghlan

Tim first came to China in 2001 and has made Beijing his home for the last 10 years. He specializes in new market development for the world's most iconic consumer brands, previously helping luxury brands enter and expand in China, and now helping a Chinese technology company build their global business. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his two young children, and time permitting, vlogs in Chinese under the moniker of "Kangaroo Daddy".



### Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, China's first independent subscription wine club. Contact him at mike@sigwine.com.



### Marianne Daquet

In Beijing for 12 years, Marianne Daquet has always been passionate about art and education. She founded Atelier Art School 6 years ago with the mission to pass on her strong belief that creativity can change the world. She and her French husband have two daughters. You can reach her at Marianne@atelier.cn.com.



### Tara Gillan

Tara is from England, UK, and been in China over 14 years where she is raising third culture, bilingual kids. She has a passion for education in China, and is a life long learner still trying to master Mandarin. In between, work, study and being a mum, you will find her looking for her next adventure!



### Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after having grown up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at kulfidoll@gmail.com.



### Elisabeth Koch

China's milliner, Elisabeth Koch, arrived in 2007 and hit the ground running with her hats. This TCK has three children who were born in Beijing. While her creations adorn famous heads on the covers of international glossies, Koch gives hat-making workshops in her studio and is kept busy by the kids. Find out more information at www.ElisabethKoch.co



### Lise Floris

Lise Poulsen Floris is an EU official turned blogger. Since leaving her native Denmark in 1998, she has lived in Italy and Belgium before moving to China with her family. She writes about life in Beijing on her blog [ninemillionbicycles.com](http://ninemillionbicycles.com), aiming to tell "the big story through the small story." Her work has been published in the *South China Morning Post*, *Global Times*, and *Point of View International*.



### Juliet London

After seven years in Beijing, market researcher, branding consultant and writer, mother to two teenagers, Juliet 'Lady' London continues to be fascinated by this ever changing city. British by birth, she has also lived in Australia and Hong Kong. Her work primarily focuses on education research, leaving less time than she would like to take exercise, walk her dog, and snap up bargains at local markets.





## A NOTE TO OUR 「READERS」



“

When I was growing up, the end of the year was always all about celebrations. I come from a small family so we found every and any excuse to party with our friends. Nowadays, the holiday season brings back fond childhood memories of my mom's roast chicken and rekindles my hopes and aspirations for the year to come.

In this December issue we take a look at the ways people are giving back to the community and helping those less fortunate. I'm excited to share the story of our little grassroots group who have been helping a small number of homeless people in Beijing (p. 48) and all the ways students at Beijing's international schools are giving back to their community (p. 36).

The end of the year is a time for charity bazaars and holiday fairs. An all-time bake sale favorite has always been adorable tasty cupcakes. Chef Lily Zhang from Theatre Tea shows us one of her easy cupcake recipes (p. 28) that can be used all year round. Food brings people together and one of the best ways to make memories as a family is by sharing a great meal together. The Zaugg family spent an

afternoon at one of our favorite family-friendly restaurants, Casa Talia (p. 22). And for those who love to throw extravagant holiday parties at home, we've found Beijing's most trustworthy catering services (p. 24) to turn you into the hostess with the mostess.

January 1 and Beyond (p. 52) gives you a glimpse at New Year's traditions across cultures and time and as 2019 comes to an end, it's time to make some resolutions for the new year.

From the *beijingkids* family, we wish you a happy holiday season and 新年快乐!

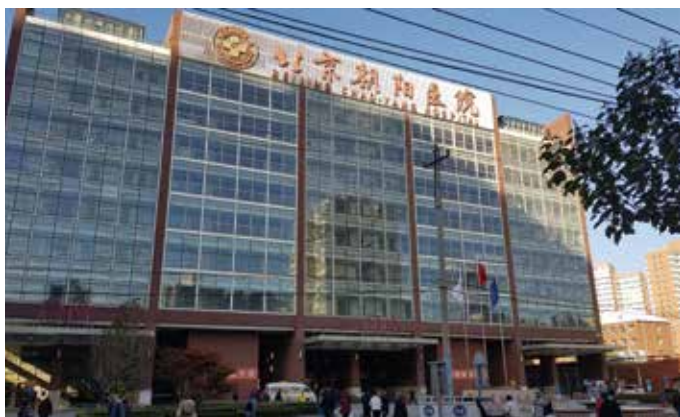


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Mina Yan



# What's New

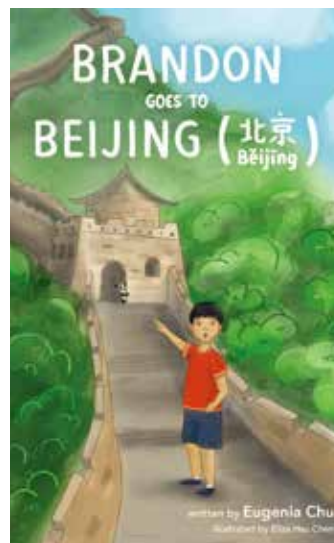


## Avoid It Like the Plague

As the chill of winter settles in, at this time of year we'd usually be worrying about the latest epidemic of influenza. But this flu season has brought a more frightening illness to the city: pneumonic plague. Two cases have been diagnosed in Beijing, a husband and wife who apparently contracted the disease in Inner Mongolia and came to the capital in the hope of treatment. The news caused much concern among Beijingers, worried that they may have spread the illness en route to the hospital. The bacterium responsible, *Yersinia pestis*, is mainly carried by fleas on rats. It's the same germ which causes bubonic plague, the Black Death which killed a third of the population of Europe in the 14th century, as well as a third form, septicemic plague. Pneumonic plague is in fact the most dangerous variety, but there's no need to panic: with modern sanitation and modern treatments, it is considered extremely unlikely to spread. You should of course take all the usual precautions to avoid germs at this time of year.

## Mom Writes Book That Bridges the Culture Gap

Wherever we're from originally, we international families are all *waiguoren* in China, and our children are growing up as Third Culture Kids, inheriting a mix of their parents' culture and that of their environment. It can be an enriching blend, but can also create challenges. The same is true for Chinese kids growing up in the US, which is why mom-turned-author Eugenia Chu wrote *Brandon Goes to Beijing*. Chu grew up and lives in the US. She was worried that her son Brandon might not learn the language and culture of his heritage, so she started writing stories about him. Family members read the books and encouraged her to publish them. The latest instalment is based on a real-life trip to Beijing which the family made. "I plan to write more books about Brandon's trips to different Asian countries, as well as other Chinese cities like Shanghai and Guangzhou," Chu told *beijingkids*. Find out more about her books at her website, [www.eugeniachu.com](http://www.eugeniachu.com).



## Ring in the Changes at *beijingkids*

There have been a lot of changes in the *beijingkids* team recently, and we're sorry to have to say goodbye to Auna Harris. Auna was only with us for three short months, but she brought great energy and fun to her role, and her love for our furry friends, especially doggoes, shone through in her heartfelt tale of animal rescue in our Pets issue. We wish her luck, and we're delighted to welcome our new digital editor Mark Allan Karanja Ngina. Mark comes from the ever-sunny city of Nairobi, Kenya, and moved here with his partner a little over two years ago. He has been a content developer and scriptwriter, working on numerous TV shows and movies in Africa, as well as being a contributing columnist to platforms such as [thelephant.com](http://thelephant.com). You can read his work for us on our website, [www.beijing-kids.com](http://www.beijing-kids.com), or via our WeChat official account.



## Introducing The Beijinger Chinese

18 years ago the Beijinger was founded as a print only magazine that bridged the gap between foreign residents and local Chinese by bringing the best the city has to offer, in English. Since then the company has expanded to include *beijingkids*, *Jingkids*, *Jingkids Shanghai*, and is beloved by Beijingers for its annual Burger Cup, Pizza Festival, and Hot & Spicy Festival. This year we're thrilled to welcome a new member into the True Run Media family – The Beijinger Chinese, a digital platform written specifically with the Chinese audience in mind. At the helm is Tracy Wang, an intrepid writer whom many remember from her Beijinger craft beer and streetside eatery articles.



## Doing It For The Children

On the evening of November 9, guests gathered at China World Hotel for the "You Are My Family" 2019 Chunhui Night charity gala to support orphans in China. More than RMB 6 million was raised from the event. The money will be used for children who are in the care of Chunhui Children's programs in welfare institutions and rural areas. Chunhui Children was registered in Beijing in 2012 and was granted public fundraising status in 2017. It recruits front-line caregivers and teachers and trains them to provide consistent family-like love and science-based, child-centered education for orphaned children in welfare institutions and for children left behind by migrant parents in rural areas.



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# DECEMBER EVENTS



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## CHRISTMAS TREE MARKET

Ongoing Until Dec 24

This year the market is in Shunyi so you can either come look for your Christmas tree in person or order via WeChat and choose your tree based on photos. Sizes available: 1.5 to 2.5 meters tall (5 to 8 ft). Price: RMB 3.5/cm (e.g.: 2 meter tall = RMB 700). Free home delivery within Beijing. Trees come with roots and pots but you may water them to keep the needles longer. The size is measured from the bottom of the pot to the tip of the tree. Regular plastic pot is free of charge. Add RMB 200 for a wooden barrel pot with iron rims. *All ages. 10am - 6pm at Beijing Yining Garden Forest Nursery, Shunyi. WeChat: Wx018761545*



## GINGERBREAD HOUSE MAKING CLASS

Ongoing

Every weekend in December kids can join either the 10.30am or 2pm gingerbread making class for RMB 328 per child including all the materials, hands-on instructions from the chefs, and one fresh juice. Everything you need to build a beautiful gingerbread house will be prepared by the Domain team. All you need to bring is your creativity. Each class usually takes around an hour and no matter what level of arts and crafts skill you have, the chefs will help you put together a beautiful gingerbread house to be adored. For a small private party for the kids, Domain offers private classes for groups of five or more. Bookings need to be made at least three days in advance. *Ages 3+. RMB 328. 10.30am or 2pm. 8414 9830.*



## ICE WORLD OF SHINE HILLS

Ongoing

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PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FEATURED EVENT ORGANIZERS





## WF CENTRAL ICE WORLD

Ongoing

The most luxury outdoor ice rink which is located in the city center of Beijing - WF Central Ice World. The ice rink is located at the green space of WF Central, which covers 1,000sqm and can accommodate more than 120 skaters at the same time. This seasonal treat is meant to further enhance your unique experiences of being in Beijing, located right along the famous Wangfujing Street, and just a short distance away from the Forbidden City, arguably some of the most authentically local places in the city. Don't worry about what to do with the family. WF Central Ice World will be your one stop fun spot for the whole of winter and well into the spring. *Ages 3+. RMB 48. 10am-10pm. WF Central, The Green, West Building, 269 Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng. [www.24tickets.com](http://www.24tickets.com)*



## BSB SHUNYI CHRISTMAS FAYRE & GERMAN MARKET

Dec 7

Families and friends from the community are invited to come along for a fun filled evening. Enjoy the sights and flavors of a traditional German Christmas Market with traditional wooden huts outdoors, a selection of hot food including wurst, pretzels, waffles, hot chocolate, gluhwein, and more. The school choir's performances and the lighting of the tree will add to the festive feel. There will be vendors selling gift items and children can play games and meet Santa for a truly magical experience! *All ages. Free admission. 4pm - 8pm. The British School of Beijing (BSB), Shunyi. 8047 3588, [www.bsbshunyi.com](http://www.bsbshunyi.com)*



## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING

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Lower Elementary School : January 15  
Elementary School : February 12

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## CISB CHARITY BAZAAR

Dec 8

At the Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB)'s annual Charity Bazaar, there will be over 50 vendors selling handmade gifts, jewelry, crafts, art, and food. You are welcome to bring your family and friends along to enjoy the live entertainment, great shopping, and amazing food. *All ages. Free admission. 10am-3pm. Canadian International School of Beijing. admissions@CISBeijing.com*



## "DULWICH CHRISTMAS" BAZAAR AND CONCERTS

Dec 9 - 10

Browse through festive stalls with both student entrepreneurs and established vendors touting their wares. Chat with friends over a cup of mulled wine. Unique seasonal crafts, bright gift ideas, yuletide roast, and more await you at the Dulwich Christmas Bazaar, followed by a concert. *All ages. Free admission. Bazaar 3.30 - 7pm, concert 7pm, Dulwich College Beijing.*



## 2019 CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Dec 12

Harrow Beijing would like to invite you to their 2019 Christmas Carol Concert. Enjoy the world's favorite carols, as well as fantastic performances by their amazing student and staff artists. *All ages. Free admission. 6pm - 7.15pm. Harrow Beijing. <https://yopay.cn/event/90644367>*



## HOPE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

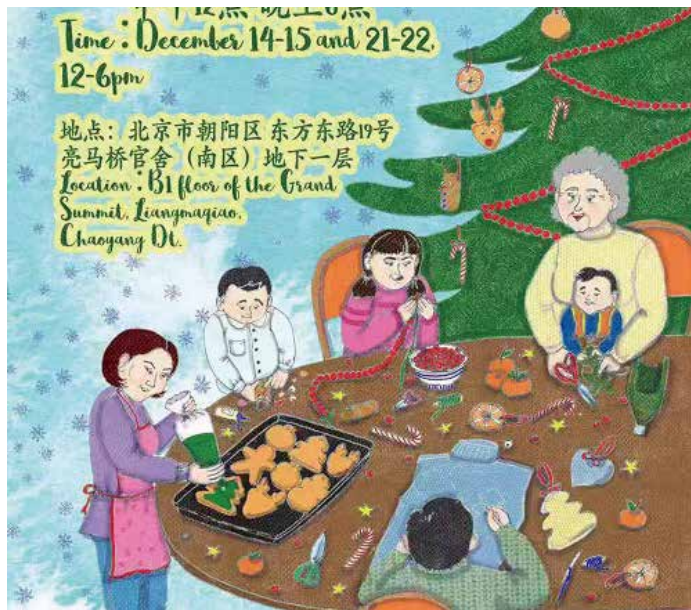
### "EMMANUEL"

Dec 13

Hope International School welcomes you and your family to join them in celebrating the birth of "Emmanuel." All of their elementary and middle school classes will be performing. The HIS Honor Orchestra will be performing throughout the night and will be joined by their young ensembles, the Young Royals, the Intermediate Orchestra, and the Beginning Orchestra. *All ages. VIP RMB 120-140 / General Admission RMB 60-80. 7pm - 9pm. Onnuri. Laiguangying West Road, JiangDa Wuye, Yuan Nei Dadi Gongsi, Chaoyang District. RSVP: [wood.kaliyah@hopeintschool.org](mailto:wood.kaliyah@hopeintschool.org)*

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FEATURED EVENT ORGANIZERS





## F2N CHRISTMAS MARKET

Dec 14-15

On December 14-15 and 23-24, over 50 vendors will provide you with a fabulous Christmas Market, with gifts, workshops, food, and drinks. Come to F2N Market with your family and friends to enjoy an incredible seasonal shopping experience. *All ages. Free admission. 12pm-6pm. The Grand Summit, 19 Dongfang Dong Lu, Liangmaqiao. WeChat: F2NMarket*



## WORLD VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE CHARITY GALA

Dec 14

Be a part of this year's World Volleyball League Holiday Charity Gala benefiting Lost Puppies of Beijing. Everyone is welcome to attend. The dress code for the event will be black tie for men and evening gown for women. There will be a 3-course meal for all attending guests, a live band providing the entertainment, followed by a silent auction towards the end of the night. There will also be special drinks on offer. All proceeds from the silent auction plus RMB50 from all ticket sales will go to support the Lost Puppies of Beijing. Tickets will be going for RMB300. Feel free to bring a friend or come alone in order to support this worthy cause. *All ages. 5.30pm to 12am. Oh Yeah! Brewing Co. Guomao. WeChat: WVBL-Information*



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## MÜNCHNER SYMPHONIKER

Dec 15

The orchestra takes as its motto and as its remit the maxim "The Sound of our City"; with its four subscription concert series in Munich's grand venues, it is well-established as one of the city's most renowned ensembles, and when on tour, it takes that "Sound of our City" far and wide beyond the city limits, under the masterful conductor Kevin John Edusei, one of the youngest and most promising conductors expressing delicacy and clarity in his technique thanks to his deep understanding of the score. Cellist Tatjana Vassilijevam described as a 'phenomenon' thanks to her massive repertoire ranging from baroque to contemporary music and a few acclaimed works of her own, shall also be in attendance. One business day shall be needed to confirm availability of tickets, after which a confirmation email shall be sent. Proof of confirmation email shall be shown in exchange for a physical ticket before entry. Kids 1.2 meters and above. RMB 400 – 680. 7.30pm. National Centre for the Performing Arts - Concert Hall. 2 West Chang'an Avenue Xicheng. [www.247tickets.com](http://www.247tickets.com)



## BEIJING PLAYHOUSE KIDS THEATER CAMPS

Dec 23 – Jan 4

This festive season, let your child learn, have fun and be a part of a remarkable production of 'Robin, A Legendary Hero', at the Beijing Playhouse. Founded in 2005, Beijing Playhouse is the largest, most professional Broadway theater producer and English theater education program provider in China, where your children will learn numerous facets of theater production. Among them are, putting on a real theatrical production, acting, singing, dancing, costume designing, and prop making. They shall also experience the process of production from start to finish, beginning with auditions, rehearsals and eventual performances. Kids will experience the whole process of producing a show including auditions, rehearsal and performances, and learn to understand the balance between those on and off stage. Ages 3+. 9am-4pm. Dadao Studio, No. 52 Yard, Sunhe. WeChat: Dadao Studio. [broadway@beijingplayhouse.com](mailto:broadway@beijingplayhouse.com)



## MUSICAL: LES CHORISTES

Dec 19 – 29

*The Chorus* is a 2004 European drama film directed by Christophe Barratier. Co-written by Barratier and Philippe Lopes-Curval, in which a new teacher joins a boy's boarding school which is heavily administered, and finds a way to give the boys a much needed diversion through music. In this iteration, the stirring story is brought to life on stage in a captivating performance, all delivered in Chinese, accompanied by a live orchestra, music and dancing. Whether or not you have lived the magic that is the 2004 film depiction, it is to be a truly spectacular performance you won't want to miss. RMB 180. Er Qi Theatre, 15 Er Qi Ju Chang Lu Xicheng Beijing. [www.247tickets.com](http://www.247tickets.com)

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photos of babies born  
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**Ellie Valerie Sear**

Chinese/British. Born on March 30  
to Vivien Qiao and Kieran Sear  
at Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital



**Iva Kongshavn Jovanović**

Norwegian/Thai/Serbian. Born on October 30  
to Camilla Kongshavn Jovanović  
and Dimitrije Kongshavn Jovanović  
at OASIS International Hospital.



**Jiayi Zhou**

Chinese. Born on June 27  
to Chen Li and Bihui Zhou  
at Beijing Maternal and Child Healthcare Hospital



**Maxime Jingxuan Brend**

Chinese/British. Born on July 22  
to Tiffany Liu and Adrian Brend  
at Amcare Women's and Children's Hospital



**Martin Korolev**

Russian. Born on August 8  
to Maria Koroleva and Maxim Korolev  
at Yanda International Hospital





**Hair**

Laurent Falcon, French Style Salon  
F/2, Sanlitun North Street South.  
[www.laurent-falcon.com](http://www.laurent-falcon.com)  
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**Wardrobe**

Hat by Elisabeth Koch Millinery

**Location**

Hulu by TRB

# 'TIS THE SEASON TO SPARKLE AND SHINE

Elisabeth Kang glams up for gala season

*By Mina Yan*





The end of the year is a gala season and Beijing has no shortage of fabulous black-tie charity events for you to choose from. This month for Indulge, I'm excited to feature my good friend, and mom to three handsome boys, Elisabeth Kang, who essentially attends every gala in the city.

Already a Laurent Falcon regular, Kang met the *beijingkids* team at Laurent Falcon in Sanlitun for a makeover that's worthy of any red carpet.

One of the things we love about Laurent Falcon is that their stylists will never try to push any current trend on their guests. It's just a fact that the same hairstyle isn't going to work for every person, and having a hair dresser who doesn't try to convince you to get the most recent hair trend saves you a lot of stress and frustration.

What Kang asked for was unconventional, but Laurent Falcon was able to deliver exactly what she pictured. She asked for a blonde balayage color fade with no additional treatment to her roots so that her natural grey hairs could still visibly grow out. Not every woman is trying to hide their age. Some wear their grey hairs proudly.

Spending the day at Laurent Falcon watching her get her hair done was surprisingly fun! The hair salon has a brand new cocktail menu with delicious options for their guests (and guests' guests) to enjoy. Which brings me back to charity galas. It's always more fun to attend these events with your closest friends, and getting ready together is one of the best parts. With a salon that will make you over from head to toe all while providing you with endless cocktails, more of us should make pre-party group pampering a part of our holiday gala tradition.

Following hair and makeup at Laurent Falcon, Kang showed off one of her favorite formal wear looks - a custom-made embroidered skirt paired with a simple gold top and handmade fascinator to bring the whole look together. Looking like a golden trophy, this beautiful mom is ready for any party this city throws her way.





# TIME TRAVEL, GORILLAS, AND SECRETS

The Zupko family share their favorite reads

By Andrew Killeen

**T**he Zupko family were recommended to us for this feature, as a family who love reading... and when you see their choices, we're sure you'll agree! The family hail from the US, and moved to Beijing in 2017 when Julia became the Director of Career Development for Tsinghua University's Schwarzman Scholars program. David is the Associate Dean for the Office of International Affairs at Tsinghua. Their daughters Natalia (age 11) and Julia (age 9) both attend the Western Academy of Beijing (WAB). As well as picking a favorite book each, they recommended a book they have read together, which David told us is "an important aspect in my family's reading habits."

## Julia

*The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger is one of my all-time favorite books. It made me think and wonder and cry in the way only magical realism can. I find it frees up my imagination and creates a place that my own mind seldom wanders in the craziness of daily life! This novel is a wonderful read that can be shared and discussed with friends over a long dinner - it was a group favorite in my book club (another strong indicator of a novel's worthiness). If you have never been part of a book club I highly encourage you to start or join one. It's a great way to make sure you are reading new and different literary pieces on a regular basis and to share with, listen to, and learn from others. Finally, the novel is set in Chicago - a very formative place in my life - which adds that fun element at the juxtaposition of complete immersion and reality when you catch yourself thinking: "I know that spot!"

## Josephine

My favorite book is *The Name of this Book is Secret* (Secret Series Book 1), by Pseudonymous Bosch. I like this book because the author really expresses himself so it feels like you're actually with the main characters, Cass and Max-Ernest. So, when they're in some dark cold place, and you're not with them, you get the shivers like you are with them. Also, he writes his books so you want to keep on reading them to find out the secret. This is why this is my favorite book.



In this regular feature, we ask a family that's passionate about reading to share with us their love of books, by each nominating a favorite read. If you'd like to be featured in a future issue, then contact us on [editor@beijing-kids.com](mailto:editor@beijing-kids.com), via our website [www.beijing-kids.com](http://www.beijing-kids.com), or via WeChat. We'd love to hear from you!

## Read as a Family

We've read to our children on a daily basis since they were born. We'd read somewhere that it's great to do so, and even better if it's a book two or three levels above their current reading level so that they could learn complex topics and vocabulary. So, we've read many books together over the years, but a family favorite was *The One and Only Ivan*, by Katherine Applegate. It's a perfect family read because it has a mix of chapter lengths, making it easier to read a bit at a time. The topic of humane animal care is a tough one in this story, but told incredibly well through the relationship between gorilla and girl.

## David

*Ulysses* by James Joyce is definitely one of my favorites. A very difficult read - who knows how many times I started and stopped that one! After spending a little time though, the book suddenly becomes understandable. It presents a view so deeply embedded in the minds of Dedalus and Bloom, fused with a stream of consciousness narrative, ever-shifting language, and deadly wit, that I felt like my understanding of psychology, modernist literature, and the Irish all grew significantly.

## Natalia

This was an extremely hard choice, but in the end the book that I chose is a great story. *Dry*, by Neil Shusterman, is not only full of adventure and excitement, but it sends two messages in particular that are important in life: you are never too young to make a difference, and fight for what you believe in. During the book several children fight for water, shelter, food, and for the sake of their relatives. This book is a great read for avid and tween/teen readers not only for the above, but for its topic which hopefully will get more people to realize that this is a dangerous possibility, and make them think more about conservation and the environment.



# CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS FROM MY CHILDHOOD

Christmas in Kenya is not just a one-day affair. It is a full month of festivities and lasting magical memories

By Mark Allan Karanja

**F**riends remark that Kenya has all the grace and quaint charm of 40s London. This is in no small part due to our British colonial legacy. From our flat vowel pronunciation to our attitude towards “polite society”, the legacy of colonialism in Kenya has permanently woven itself into the country’s cultural fabric. It somewhat boggles the mind to realize that Christianity and its accompanying traditions did not truly reach the heart of East Africa until a little more than 120 years ago. And as the faith and culture of the British spread and coalesced, so too did the traditions and rituals. And as they spread inward, many of these traditions took distinctively native characteristics. In a country as large and as diverse as Kenya, no one would ever expect a uniform Christmas tradition.

There is, however, a specially accepted Kenyan Christmas despite there being over 42 tribes and numerous religious beliefs within the Kenyan borders. It is a simple formula which ensures success, and basically goes like

this – roast goat, chicken stew, rice, chapatti, and some version of mashed potato. The meat of choice might vary, from fish in the West Lake Victoria area, to camel towards the north-east of the country.

For me, the idea of Christmas being just a one or two day affair is entirely foreign. Even as an adult, I still consider the beginning of December as the beginning of Christmas proper. As a primary school pupil, it marked the start of the longest school holiday of the year. December was the month of plenty: plenty of eating, plenty of relatives, and plenty of heat.

December also meant mandatory visits with relatives upcountry. Children all over the city would be swiftly shipped out as fast as our parents could manage it. I was always all too happy to be bundled up and sent to my grandmother’s farm. The great exile meant I would also get to see cousins I would otherwise never get to see in the year. I would also get to flex my linguistic muscles as I regaled relatives with my exploits in the

city in my then-broken Kikuyu – my mother’s tribal language.

The mango, macadamia nut, and avocado trees would be in full bloom. Mornings would be spent browsing for ripe fruit or fallen nuts. We city kids would especially be excited about the prospect of learning how to milk the cows. So, while my aunt Monica was busy doing the milking, we would all gather around her with our little cup ready to tackle the task, learning how to roll, squeeze, and pull on the pink fleshy teat of an otherwise impatient cow.

My grandmother owned a modest coffee farm. Every once in a while we would be expected to help with coffee picking. I learned, to my great delight, that the red coffee berries ripe for the picking were also bursting with syrup. I got into the habit of sucking on the berries, until I later learned that where there is syrup, there might also be worms. It was not only a time of great adventure, but also one of barefooted bliss. I would get to walk around letting the richness of the red volcanic soil seep into my skin and stain my feet.





“

One day, however, stood out the most in all the excitement and festivity of the season: Christmas day. The notion of Santa was a quaint ‘white people’ idea to us. Suffice it to say we neither believed in nor cared much about him. Christmas Eve held no magic. It was just the day standing between us and the festivities to come.

In my family, as in most others, the Christmas church service was a part of the ritual celebrations not to be dispensed with. Mine was a family of staunch Christians, none more so than my grandmother who demanded strict attendance to the Christmas church service. It is quite a big ask for a child to sit attentively through a two-hour church service. But I loved the hymns and carols sung in Kikuyu. It was there I would get reacquainted with all the neighboring families in the village. These were families who had known ours for many years. It was always in a congregation of jolly old ladies that I would be reintroduced, and they would offer up guesses as to whose child I was. Was I Dorcas’ boy perhaps? No, her children are much older. No, I surely must be Damaris’ boy. The resemblance is uncanny. It was after this joyous discovery that these old ladies would often gift me with money for sweets, which would promptly be spent on the way home.

Santa never visited my home and I would wager he never visited my friends’ homes either. We all knew what we were getting for Christmas long before the day itself: new clothes and shoes. This is when we would grow our inventories of Sunday-best outfits. In a country where we were all expected to wear uniforms to school, Christmas clothes presented a welcome reprieve. On Christmas morning, we would excitedly try on our outfits. The trick however was to buy the outfit two or three sizes too big. The clothes were not just for the one day, but the year as well. Parents would buy them with rapidly growing bodies in mind, and how to get the most out of what would often be expensive little outfits. What was hard on the day however was trying to keep the outfits clean. I learned very quickly that red volcanic soil wasn’t compatible with new Christmas clothes, and neither was roughhousing with my cousins.

If there was one thing that made the church service all the more unbearable, it was the anticipation of the food to follow. What was to be had varied yearly, determined by variables such as family members expected, whether or not there would be a baptism, or even whether one of the cousins had undergone initiation that December. But that’s a whole other story.

### Part of the food festivities would involve some sort of slaughter.

On slower Christmases, a rooster or two would have to do. On grander occasions a goat would bite the dust, but on especially festive years, it would be a bull.

The bull or goat slaughter would be left to my uncles and the older sons of the family. It followed slaughter traditions passed down for generations, by tying the animal down and laying it on a bed of freshly cut banana leaves. Decapitation of the animal would then be achieved with great precision by the uncle with the most experience. It was done over a pot or pan to collect the draining blood, which would later be used in the making of blood sausage made from the animal’s large intestines stuffed with odd cuts called Mutura.

It was never an activity for the squeamish. But none of us were. We all grew up watching our uncles and older cousins perform the slaughter, carefully roast the meat over a pit of coal, and lovingly apportion it appropriately to the different homesteads in the family compound. This was done depending upon the ages of the children in the home, the number of guests visiting each individual household, and obviously how big the bull or goat slaughtered was. Some of the more succulent cuts would be saved for my grandmother and more mature aunts and uncles.

Roast goat or beef was however meant to be the pièce de résistance to a grander feast of choice delights. For example, back then, a Kenyan favorite – chapatti – was often saved for special occasions. Christmas without chapatti was like a pub without beer – unimaginable. My people are big fans of a bean, pumpkin leaf, and potato mash which is called Mukimo – a “mashed mixture”. Kitchen duties would often be a collaborative affair with each aunt or cousin watching over a pot or two, feeding the fire, or kneading the dough. Some of the cuts from the slaughter would always make their way to the stew. There was always pilau. Bean, pea or vegetable stew and panfried greens – mostly a mixture of kale and spinach – were all mainstays at Christmas.

Now, it might be customary in other countries, indeed even other households, to have a Christmas tippie after the day’s festivities and grand meal. But that would never fly in my grandmother’s house. She believed that a day’s hard work could only be complimented by a warming mug of fresh milk tea. Liters of the stuff would be brewed and kept warm in large colorful flasks won in raffles, and one after the other, we were expected to have at least a cup. Being a city kid, I had other inclinations. Soda mostly, which was never there in plenty or on demand as it would have had I been at home.

But this too gave the otherwise mundane act of drinking a Fanta an almost magical potency even for a city kid. The adults would all gift us with a little money, which we would take straight to the shops and spend on single-sold balloons, sodas or fried dough called ngumu, which in literal terms means hard, as the dough bits would be fried to an unyielding, hard, golden brown crisp.

And if the festivities fell on a Saturday, then we would all be in for a treat, as we would get to watch WWE wrestling – then known as WWF – on my grandmother’s tiny black and white television, powered by a car battery, in lieu of electricity.

For me, however, it was never so much about the food as much as it was not being a city kid for a month or so. Christmas for me represented an abandonment of the ordinary and a definite shift into freedom and the making of wonderful childhood memories. It was a ritual which would begin with saying goodbye to my friends on closing day, weeks before the day itself, the taking of several matatu – buses and public taxis – from the city to my grandmother’s farm, and finally being greeted by the absolute tranquility of simple country life. Christmas was not just one day for me or my friends. Coming from a country as big as Kenya, we all had our own special rituals, some similar and some wildly different from each other. One thing was for certain however: on opening day and for weeks to come, we would be reliving the memories created with our friends, and again relive the wonder of Christmas.



# THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Want to live longer? Find nature's best kept secret here...

By Melissa Rodriguez



**T**he fountain of youth is not a mysterious potion, it's not expensive, and it's easy to do. The latest in the study of longevity, is that we can extend our lifespan with a very simple action. The truth is... people live longer when they help others. Volunteering and doing acts of charity is guaranteed to increase your lifespan by 50 percent! OK, I clearly just made that number up and it's not guaranteed, but studies are showing that those who help others tend to live longer. Bob Hope said: "If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble." And Bob should know; he was an American actor and comedian who did a lot to help others, and lived to the ripe old age of 100.

There are many well documented benefits to volunteering: it helps to increase one's life satisfaction, ease feelings of sadness and depression, it benefits the heart, can decrease blood pressure, and reduce stress. Exactly how volunteering translates to these benefits is not entirely clear, but the key is that these acts of kindness must be done consistently and ideally over the long term. Doing good for others can help us feel valuable, increase feelings of self-esteem and give our life an overall sense of purpose. It's possible that being in the company of others is what helps us feel happier when we do charitable acts. It definitely can help improve our social life, especially if we do it in groups. Volunteer work can be physical, which in part might explain the benefits for the heart. Although a stronger case could probably be made for the effect of hormones: helping others decreases cortisol levels, the stress hormone that's released when our body goes into "fight, flight, or freeze" mode. Higher cortisol in our blood stream has a negative impact on our heart, by increasing heart rate, blood pressure and overall inflammation.

Interestingly, for teens there are some unique benefits to volunteering and community service. It appears to help improve academic

performance and the chance for youth to complete their high school studies. It increases resilience, a sense of community belonging and social responsibility. Regular volunteering between the ages of 12-18 seems to decrease the risk of involvement in future criminal activity. As with adults, it helps create greater mental/emotional balance, contributes to overall feelings of happiness and a positive sense of self-worth. Examples of the type of activities used in these studies were visiting old folks' homes, working at soup kitchens (places where food is given for free to the homeless), and raising money for charity. Regular involvement in these kinds of activities leads to a greater chance that your teen will engage in volunteer work as an adult.

Volunteering and doing acts of charity not only benefits others, but it has the pleasant side effect of quite possibly helping us live a longer and more fulfilling life. That seems like a pretty good trade-off. There are many opportunities in Beijing to lend a helping hand, so let's get out there with our kids and make a difference in someone's life – it will make a difference in ours as well.



#### Got a question?

Melissa Rodriguez is a naturopathic specialist and mother of two. To find out more, check out her website at [drmelissarodriguez.com](http://drmelissarodriguez.com)





# DEEP BREATHS, IT'S THE HOLIDAYS

Managing the holiday stress

By *Prairie Boulmierz*

Gearing up for the holiday season can bring a great sense of joy and anticipation for both parents and children. On the other hand, it can cause a great deal of stress and anxiety. As we inch ever closer to that time, it may be helpful to look for ways to manage stress and deal with possible issues before they arise.

Talk with your children about different holiday traditions around the world, the meanings behind them, and the reasons that people choose to celebrate these holidays. Recognize that not everyone views this time in the same way, and help your children appreciate their own and other people's traditions.

## Help set realistic expectations

Rather than allowing your child's mind to run wild with all the things they hope for and want, help them to learn about making wise choices, spending money responsibly, and finding satisfaction within the simple pleasures of life. Consider giving them a small budget to buy gifts for family members or help them to make meaningful gifts that are homemade.

## Make connections with the people who mean the most

At the core of most holiday traditions is the feeling of togetherness that comes from enjoying time with others. Especially when stress and anxiety about holidays creep in, it's important to step back, find those special people and spend time with them. An unexpected cup of coffee or chat can be simple to arrange and go a long way in terms of reducing holiday anxiety.

For those who are anxious about family dynamics that often come up during holiday celebrations, it might be helpful to imagine the worst-case scenario. If we can imagine it, we can plan for it. Take as many other stressors away as possible. Recognize and accept

family members and others as they are. Know that you can only be responsible for your own actions. Plan for how to manage that one situation you hope won't come up. Hopefully, it will be much easier to deal with if and when it does. Regardless of how anyone else responds to a stressful situation, you can do what you must to take care of yourself and model to your children emotional regulation and health.

## Make realistic travel plans

Many parents may feel pushed to go over the top with their holiday plans and then struggle with how to manage the cost and the stress of travel later on. Sometimes the easiest route is the best. The magic of the holidays can spring out of any location, and sometimes the path of least resistance leads to the most relaxed and enjoyable holiday.

Children today have more material wealth in general than at any other time. While it's wonderful and exciting to have new things, it may be even more valuable to have the memories of time well-spent together. Rather than overtaxing family budgets on all the new gadgets, consider paring down. Give gifts that are going to be well-loved over time and are particularly special. Take some time to plan activities (and not too many!) that will carry on for many years. Consider building a family gingerbread house, making homemade tree decorations, or doing some special holiday baking and cooking. Make gifts for family and friends. Make a collection of holiday songs to sing and plan to go caroling at the homes of friends and loved ones. There are many activities that are free or low cost, which do a great deal to spread cheer and holiday joy. These are often the activities that people remember years later and perhaps even carry on.





# *Dinner Is Served*

Creating tasty memories as a family at Casa Talia

By Mina Yan



**D**ining out as a family is about more than just sharing a meal, it's about creating memories and bonding together as a family. One of the most beautiful additions to the Tiago restaurant group is Casa Talia at Parkview Green. The beautiful interior gives you that chic vibe that takes family dining up a notch, but the friendly staff and kid-friendly menu options lets you enjoy an afternoon together at Casa Talia by Tiago no matter how old your little ones are. The Zaugg family spent an afternoon together over good conversation and great food.

### Unleash the Kraken!

If the little mermaid learned how to deep fry, her favorite go-to dish would be calamari. Tender baby squid deep-fried to golden crispy perfection and served with a side of garlic mayonnaise (RMB 68), these poppers are one of Casa Talia's most popular option amongst seafood lovers.

### Garlic Makes Everything Better

For those who love garlic, these jumbo prawns are cooked with a healthy dose of garlic and olive oil (RMB 78). Arriving at your table still sizzling hot, it's one of those dishes whose delicious aroma will fill the restaurant and turn heads all around.

### All Nice and Toasty

Being a seafood lover mom Marzey tries to share her favorites with her family as often as possible. While waiting for the rest of your meal to arrive, these smoked salmon toasts (RMB 68) are fantastic appetizers to get your tummy excited for what's to come. Accented with truffle oil, honey, and caviar, they're great for introducing your little ones to a more grown-up palette.



### Make Way for the Show Stopper

Dining out as a family is all about making memories, and one of the most unforgettable dishes on the Casa Taglia menu is their Australian Wagyu M8 Tomahawk Steak (RMB 1,688). Weighing approximately 1.6 kilos of juicy beef, the tomahawk comes with sides of comfort food for the whole table to share. It's one of those things that'll get the whole family taking turns posing with before anyone takes the first bite. Sharing a gigantic juicy, melt in your mouth, cut of wagyu steak is one of those picture-perfect moments that's too precious to not share on your WeChat Moments.

### Keep It Sweet, Keep It Classic

Casa Talia's dessert menu is possibly one of their best sections. Numerous creative desserts like their matcha wagna cotta (RMB 98) that literally looks like a beautiful pot of edible flowers or their famous nitro tiramisu (RMB 128) that adds a molecular gastronomy spin on the classic Italian favorite. But, Ariana opted to keep it simple and sweet with a simple classic roasted light cheesecake (RMB 88). After all, who doesn't love a good piece of cheesecake?



### Casa Talia by Tiago

Daily, 11.30am - 10pm  
Unit L1-22, Parkview Green, 9 Dongqiao Road, Chaoyang District  
东大桥路9号侨福芳草中心1层  
L1-22单元  
(6553 7021)





# LEAVE THE COOKING AND CLEANING TO OTHERS

Catering services for your holiday home parties

By Mina Yan

**T**he end of the year is here and no matter where you're from or what religion you believe in; it's a time for celebrations with friends and family. As someone who loves throwing small house parties, I can tell you it's not an easy task. There's the menu planning, shopping, preparing, cooking, table setting, entertainment, and when everything is done there's the cleaning. Wouldn't it be nice to enjoy one of your own parties as much as your guests instead of worrying about every small detail?

Fortunately for us, there are a few places in Beijing that'll es-

entially bring their restaurant to your home. In other words, give your guests a party to remember and enjoy yourself a party too. Leave the cooking, serving, and cleaning to the professionals.

Catering in Beijing isn't something that's as widely promoted as restaurant deals. There are only a few reputable options that you can depend on to give you your money's worth. Most function the same way with a preset minimum spending requirement and menu options that need to be decided days in advance, but each company's rules still vary.

PHOTOS: UNSPLASH





# TRB CATERING

Crowned as the world's best fine dining restaurant according to TripAdvisor, TRB is known for impeccable service and great food. TRB Catering makes choosing easy with four menus (full buffet, multi-course dinner, canapés only, and the drink package) depending on what type of event you're looking to throw. TRB's signature dishes can be found on all the menus and if they're a guest favorite in the restaurant, they're sure to be a guest favorite at your party too.

Their catering team brings the same level of excellent service that we've all come to expect from TRB, Hulu, and Merci right to your home. For anyone looking to host a stress-free holiday party, the TRB team will let you enjoy the evening just like your guests.

Their team needs at least 48-hours prior notice to get everything ready and a minimum spending of RMB 10,000 for the entire event. When you're ready to give the team the go-ahead, you'll need to pay a RMB 5,000 deposit. Then, the rest of the work is all on them.

Based on what's available in your kitchen or whatever exotic party venue you've decided on, the team will bring the proper equipment to make it work, but keep in mind that the more they need to bring, the more expensive your bill will get.

One of the things I love the most about TRB Hospitality Group is their flexibility. The menu is interchangeable to cater to dietary restrictions or just personal preferences.

**www.trb-catering.com**  
**catering@trb-cn.com**  
**8400 2232**





## ANNIE'S CATERING SERVICE

Annie's isn't where you go for fine dining, but most of us have at least one Annie's plate or bowl in the kitchen. They offer comfort food at affordable prices. For those looking for a casual night of great food and company at home, the sharply dressed Annie's catering team will bring all your favorites right to your kitchen counter. They require a minimum spending of RMB 4,000 for buffet meals and about 3 to 4 days of lead time, but as the Annie's team tells *beijingkids*, they'll try their best to accommodate last minute requests as much as possible.

**Rain: 136 6116 5838**  
**Eric: 186 1139 9728**  
**Leo: 138 1192 7918**  
**Marlon: 186 1908 8846**







## FLO PRESTIGE



Maison FLO is a Beijing dining institution that's been serving up delicious French cuisine for years, and their casual dining restaurant Cafe Flo lets you have a taste of their incredible menu for a fraction of the price.

When it comes to catering, Sales Director Frankie Foo knows his job inside and out, having catered numerous events large and small in all kinds of unique venues over the years. All you need to do is tell them how many people you're inviting, the venue, and the date. He'll do the rest.

Flo Prestige's minimum spending is RMB 8,000 with a 48-hour minimum lead time, catering to at least six guests. They'll bring the tables, the chairs, the sharply dressed waiters, and cooking stations for full buffets, sit-down dinners, backyard BBQ, cocktail parties... you name it, they'll cook it.

**Frankie Foo: 138 1167 0151**  
**Frankie.foo@flo.cn**

We love the food and friendly vibe at Caravan. They're not the first name to come to mind for home catering, but their fantastic menu and enthusiastic team has made their way into the hearts of Beijingers over the years. If you live within the 5th Ring Road, they can bring the whole caravan to your home.

For a minimum of RMB 3,000, imagine having all your Caravan favorites come directly to you. Caravan is one of those places that'll do their best to accommodate, so even if you're arranging a last minute event, they'll still try their best to give you a party to remember.

**eat@caravanbeijing.com**  
**8563 0801**



## CARAVAN @ HOME





# *Piece of Cake*

*Quick & easy cupcake recipe  
that's a hit for the holidays*

*By Mina Yan*



Everybody likes cupcakes. What's not to like? They're soft, moist, and you can decorate them however you want. Personally, decorating cupcakes is one of the best parts of getting them ready. It's like arts and crafts that you can eat - win, win!

They're great to have as snacks in the house and when it's the season with numerous bake sales and holiday fairs, cupcakes are a

fun and easy way to wow the crowd.

For a super fast and simple cupcake recipe we consulted Chef Lily Zhang, Executive Pastry Chef of Theatre Tea. They not only carry a wide selection of classic and fruit tea blends, but under Chef Zhang's guidance they've created chic and creative desserts that are delicious and beautiful. Her simple holiday cupcake recipe is great for a fun afternoons of bonding in the kitchen.

While I stick to the classic one-color frosting with sprinkles on top, Chef Zhang ups the game with a few holiday decoration ideas that are still relatively easy to DIY at home.

Check out her easy Christmas tree, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, and little snow man made of strawberries. According to her, it's all about practicing keeping your hands steady with a piping bag.

### INGREDIENTS

- 5 eggs
- 180 grams sugar
- 2.4 grams salt
- 2 grams vanilla extract
- 72 grams light cream
- 72 grams butter
- 144 grams cake mix
- 2.5 grams baking powder

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine eggs and sugar together in a large bowl and whisk.
2. Add in the vanilla extract and salt. Continue to mix the ingredients.
3. Pour in the light cream and melted butter and continue to mix the ingredients.
4. Add in the cake mix and baking powder and mix well.
5. Transfer your cake batter into a piping bag. (optional)
6. Fill the cupcake tins about 80 percent.
7. Preheat your oven to 175 degrees C and bake for 20 minutes.
8. When your cupcake is ready, let cool before you decorate.

### PRO TIPS:

Don't rush perfection. Let your cupcakes fully cool down before you start decorating. Otherwise you'll be left with a sugary mess.







# Catch the Sunshine

Make a leaf suncatcher to warm your December  
with Beijing City International School

*By Wendy Xu*



**W**hen the warm autumn leaves have already withered away from the biting winds of Beijing's winter, it's the perfect time to brighten up your windows with lovely leaf suncatchers! As Percy Bysshe Shelley says: "O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

For this Maker's Corner, we have Adam, a 7-year-old student from Beijing City International School (BCIS), along with Nan Zhang, ES Visual Art and Performance Art Teacher, to show us how to decorate our home with a beautiful and easy-to-make leaf suncatcher for this December.

All the materials are easy to get and almost any color works for this project. Please note that the instructions below are only guidelines. Feel free to encourage your kids to use their creativity to bring these leaves to life!



- A black marker
- Colored tissue papers
- Clear contact paper
- Scissors
- Glue stick or double-sided tape
- Black construction paper (optional)



You can choose to print out a leaf template and cut the outline out. Or use a black marker to draw a leaf outline on white card and cut it out (folding the leaf in the middle might make it easier to get a symmetrical shape).



You will need 2 identical leaf outlines for each suncatcher. Then place one leaf outline onto the sticky side of a piece of contact paper.



Cut tissue paper into small pieces and layer the tissue paper pieces onto the clear contact paper. Don't worry if you go outside the outline, this will get trimmed off later!



Using a glue stick, glue the second leaf outline on top of the tissue paper.



Place another piece of clear contact paper on top and press down to smooth out any bubbles. Trim the excess contact paper with scissors.



Stick your leaf suncatcher onto a window with double-sided tape and enjoy the light of the sun's rays through the tissue paper!



# TAKIN' IT SKI-SY

Quick trips and winter shenanigans abound in the People's Capital

By Drew Pittock

If you've ever conducted an online search for ski resorts in China, you may have encountered articles with headlines such as, "Where to (Surprisingly) Go Skiing in China," "China's Skiing Revolution," or the top related-search suggestion, "Does China have ski resorts?"

However all of this confusion and consternation would surely bewilder those who lived roughly 5,000 years ago in the Altai Mountains of present-day northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. For it is these folks who, thanks to some rock paintings found along the region's Dundeulake river valley, are credited with being one of the earliest pockets of civilization to have strapped repurposed wooden planks to their feet and hit the slopes.

In fact, at a 2006 news conference in Beijing, Chinese ski historian, Shan Zhaojian, proudly pro-claimed that China was "the original place for human skiing." While his comment gave rise to a, quite literal, world of debate, Shan's assertion is not without its merits.

Nevertheless, unlike Shan's assertion, the headlines that pop up on search engines are without their merits, and Beijing, as well as China at large, is rife with ski resorts for all ages and skill levels.

Below we've collected a few of those resorts that are within easy reach of the Capital, so that you too can glide through winter like the Altai residents of old.

## BADALING SKI RESORT & LONGQING GORGE ICE LANTERN FESTIVAL

Badaling Ski Resort combines Huabei's proximity to the Great Wall with Snow World's commute along the Golden Tourist Route, which makes for a truly special China holiday getaway. Across the park, you'll find two ski runs for beginners, two for intermediate skiers, and one for advanced folks, though word on the street is that even the more advanced trails aren't beyond the skill level of most intermediates. Of course, non-skiers are not to be left out of the fun. Badaling offers snow tubing, snow mobiles, and even dog sleigh tracks.

What's more, it's got onsite accommodation which means you don't have to head home after a long day of tiring yourself out on the slopes. There's myriad attractions nearby such as the Longmai and Tianlongyuan Hot Springs to rest those achey muscles in the evening.

What makes Badaling Ski Resort particularly unique though is its impressive light display once the sun goes down. Dazzling, colorful lights shine through the resort, making the whole place look like something out of a children's book. Additionally, if you find yourself there between January and February, you can pop over to the Longqing Gorge Ice Lantern Festival, which takes the idea of a winter wonderland to a whole new level.



### Badaling Ski Resort

#### Address:

66 Economic Development Zone, Badaling Town, Yanqing County

#### Public Transportation:

Take Bus 919 from Dongzhimen Bus Terminal: from Beijing the buses leave at 8am and 9am; back from Badaling Ski Resort the buses leave 3pm and 4pm.

#### Driving:

Drive along the Badaling Expressway and take Exit 50 (Badaling Great Wall). Continue through Badaling Safari Park, drive for another 3 km until you reach Badaling Ski Resort.

#### Booking Hotline:

6912 9944

#### Rates:

RMB 80 - RMB 270 depending on equipment rentals, day and length of time.

#### Hours of Operation:

8.30am-5pm (weekdays)  
8.30am-5pm & 6-9pm (weekends)

### Longqing Gorge Ice Lantern Festival

#### Address:

Longqing Gorge Scenic Area, Gucun Village, Jiuxian Town, Yanqing County

#### Public Transportation:

Bus 919 from Deshengmen Bus Terminal. At Yanqing County, transfer to Bus 920 bound for Longqing Gorge.

#### Driving:

Take the Badaling Expressway (Jingzang Expressway) and get off at Exit 62. Drive along National Highway, through Yanqing County, until you arrive at Longqing Gorge.

#### Enquiries:

6919 1020

#### Rates:

RMB 100 (Adults), RMB 50 (Students), Free (12 & Under)

#### Hours of Operation:

9am-10pm



## BEIJING SNOW WORLD (XUESHIJIE) SKI RESORT

At a mere thirty minutes drive from downtown Beijing, Xueshijie (which literally translates to Snow World) Ski Resort is perfect for a quick day trip. It's located along the Golden Tourist Route, which takes commuters past the Ming Tombs, Juyongguan Great Wall, and Badaling Great Wall, so if you have friends or family in town, or if you haven't been to these spots yourself, you could knock out a couple of sites throughout the day.

In addition to its five slopes, Beijing Snow World Ski Resort has two snow playgrounds for sled-ding and tubing, in case you or your little one aren't so ski- or snowboard-inclined. Additionally, if any in your party happen to be less experienced, fear not, the park has ski coaches for beginners and kids at RMB 220 per hour.



### Address:

Xiaogongmen, Shisanling Town, Changping District

### Public Transportation:

Take Bus 345 zhi (345支) at Deshengmen Bus Terminal, then get off at Zhengfa University (政法大学), then change for Bus 53 at Sunshine Plaza (阳光商厦), get off at Xiangguo Leyuan (鲜果乐园), you will see the Snow World Ski Resort.

### Driving:

Take the Badaling Expressway until Exit 32 (Xiguan 西关). Continue north along National Highway 110 for 5km and turn left at Tailing Tomb. Follow this road until you reach the ski resort.

### Booking Hotline:

8976 1886 / 8976 1899 / 8976 1707

### Rates:

RMB 30 - RMB 1360 depending on equipment rentals, day and length of time

### Hours of Operation:

8am-5pm

### Address:

No. 548, Hefangkou Village, Huabei Town, Huairou District

### Public Transportation:

Take Bus No. 936 (branch) / 936 (支) 线 at Dongzhimen Bus Terminal.

### Driving:

Take the Jingcheng Expressway to Exit 14. Take Huidu Road (会都路) to National Highway No.111 (111 国道) until you pass Yanxi Lake (雁西湖). Continue north for about 5km until you reach the ski resort.

### Booking Hotline:

8969 6677

### Rates:

RMB 38 - RMB 198 depending on equipment rentals, day and length of time.

### Hours of Operation:

8.30am-9pm

## BEIJING HUABEI INTERNATIONAL SKI RESORT



You've seen the Great Wall. You've probably even walked across it at this point. But have you ever skied next to it? No? Well now's your chance! The Beijing Huabei International Ski Resort is the only ski resort in the Capital's confines to be flanked on three sides by the country's most iconic structure. With unprecedented views like these, Huabei International definitely puts both the Ski and the Resort in Ski Resort.

If that weren't enough, Huabei International is also the largest ski resort in Beijing, boasting an impressive 5,100m of ski trails and a massive drop of 238m. Between its seven slopes, one is reserved for the most seasoned skiers, three go to the intermediate, and a whopping four trails are available for those still trying to find their snowlegs. If you count yourself among the latter bunch, ski and snowboarding lesson packages are available for between RMB 220 and RMB 1,700, depending on sport, lesson length, and amount of people in your party.

To make matters more convenient, Huabei International Ski Resort provides a shuttle bus that departs from Oriental Ginza, located near Exit B of the Dongzhimen Line 2 Subway Station, with rides costing RMB 150 for weekdays and RMB 210 for weekends.



# my merry christmas

Students from Daystar Academy share their favorite Christmas memories

By Wendy Xu



**Woody (Grade 2)**

It is a Christmas-style restaurant. My parents and I came here for dinner on Christmas Eve. There is an elegant environment and beautiful Christmas music here. We had a pleasant night.



**Judy (Grade 2)**

This is how we dressed our house for Christmas Eve. We had gifts under the Christmas tree, a warm fireplace, and gingerbread men on the table. Santa Claus was giving out gifts at one house after another, and he was about to come to ours.



**Jacob (Grade 2)**

It was Christmas Eve. We all fell asleep. Santa Claus came to my house, in secret, to give us gifts. He left quietly, afraid to wake us up.



**Jade (Grade 2)**

I think a lot about what gifts the reindeer is about to give me. It comes here, running, with a Christmas hat, and looks happy. I feel happy too. My heart becomes colorful, so I paint my background colorfully too.

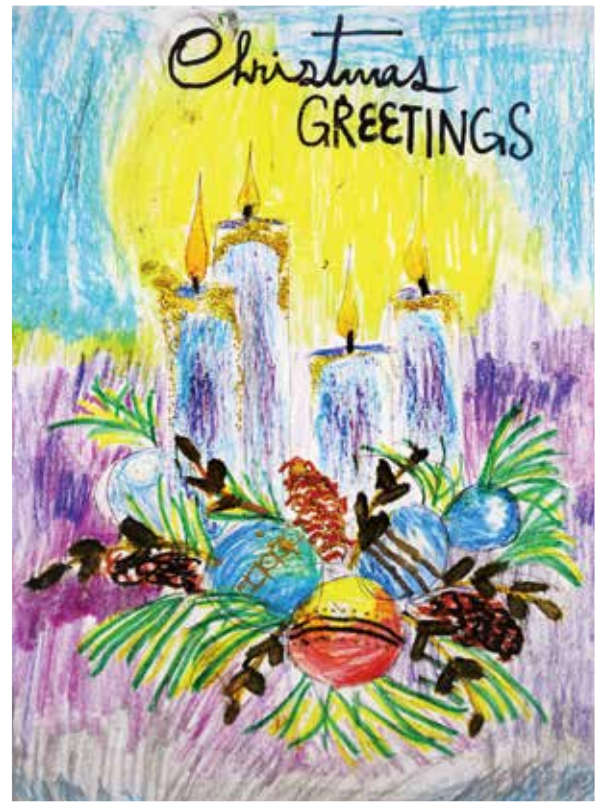
PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DAYSTAR ACADEMY





**Cathy, Natalie (Grade 4)**

This piece of art is called "Wish Tree," and we called it "Wish Tree" because we think everyone all should have a chance to wish and dream together at Christmas. The candles around the tree mean to bring light to the world.



**Isabella, Katy, Jennifer (Grade 4)**

These are the Christmas candles we drew. We drew this picture because it brings us happiness and warmth, making us experience a pleasant Christmas.



**Kira (Grade 7)**

My art piece is called "A Warm Christmas Night." It has a family in the picture on a Christmas night opening presents and having fun. The mom is baking warm cookies, and even Santa is peeking in at all the fun in the room. I wanted to make the art piece to seem warm and happy so I used bright color markers to draw it.



**Jolie (Grade 6)**

My piece is called Christmas Eve. It shows a tree surrounded by presents, which means that Santa has already been there and ate the cookies and drank the milk! I used markers to add texture and watercolor to the background so it can be soft.



# THANKFUL FOR EACH *Blessing*

Students at Beijing's international schools share their stories about giving back to the community, and helping those in need

*By Drew Pittock*

Whenever life doesn't seem to go as planned, or we encounter a bump in the road, it's easy to fixate on those problems and let them consume all of our mental energy. However when this happens, we run the risk of losing sight of all those things that are going well, which, more often than not, are the things we take for granted in the first place. Generally speaking, it's pretty safe to say that no matter how bad things get, most of us have those basic necessities that provide for a comfortable and secure

life; health, love, shelter, financial stability, and food. Unfortunately though, there are a lot of people in this world — either clear across it or right in our own backyard — who don't have basic amenities. Thankfully, students at Beijing's international schools know not only how to count their blessings, but how to share them as well.

A few took time out of their busy schedules to tell us about the organizations they volunteer with, and what it means to them.



PHOTOS: UNSPLASH





## HARROW BEIJING ALENAH'S HOME

*Founded 2004*

### STUDENTS:

Charlie L., 18 Years Old, Year 13,  
Volunteering for 3 years

Lucy S., 15 Years Old, Year 11,  
Volunteering for 1 year

Wendy Z., 17 Years Old, Year 12,  
Volunteering for 2 years

### **What is Alenah's Home's mission?**

"Take care of special needs orphans and provide them a safe and loving home, and to provide them with access to specialized medical care and rehabilitation." - Charlie L.

"Help special needs orphans receive medical care and rehabilitation training in Beijing." - Lucy S.

"Not only bring them happiness, but also bring them warmth. Let them feel the love from society." - Wendy Z.

### **Why did you get involved?**

"I love the experience of having fun with the children." - Charlie L.

"Because I want to help the children there. I am a part of the community and I think I have a responsibility to be involved and help where I can." - Lucy S.

"To let them feel love from us. They don't have love and family from their parents, so if we are able to accompany them and give them love and warmth, they they don't feel lonely, and they'll grow up healthy and happy." - Wendy Z.

### **What have you learned from your experience volunteering?**

"Be patient. Be positive." - Charlie L.

"I think I get more ideas about how the world works and I have become a lot more sympathetic. Now, I am keen and know how to help." - Lucy S.

"Every child should have a happy childhood. No matter whether they have health problems or not, they should not be abandoned, because all people are equal." - Wendy Z.

### **Why do you think it's important to volunteer, or give back to the community?**

"As I live in a lovely family, I want to give this kind of feeling to people who have less opportunity to be loved." - Charlie L.

"Volunteering strengthens self-confidence, as I am doing good things to people and the community. It gives me a sense of accomplishment and pride because I can feel my value and the children show that they need and value me." - Lucy S.

"Volunteers are lucky as they have the time and ability to help people who need help. People who need help are also part of society, so helping them is making contributions to society." - Wendy Z.

### **What does volunteering and giving back to the community mean to you?**

"It means a lot. It gives me happiness." - Charlie L.

"Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and fulfilling feelings of achievement. Giving back and contributing to our society, in my view, is unparalleled and it is a duty that everyone should work on." - Lucy S.

"I can share my love with them and let them know that we have not abandoned them, and that society has not abandoned them." - Wendy Z.

### **Is this your first time volunteering?**

"Yes!" - Charlie L.

"Yes, it is the first time for me doing it." - Lucy S.

"Yes, actually the time I spent in Alenah's Home is my first time volunteering." - Wendy Z.

Is volunteer work something you will continue to do in the future?

"Definitely!" - Charlie L.

"Sure, volunteering helps me to gain experiences and teaches me more about myself and the world. This connects me and society closer together." - Lucy S.

"Yes, through my two years at Alenah's Home, I have realized that volunteering can't be done for just a while, because they need more help than just a short period of time. The love for them will continue no matter where I am." - Wendy Z.





# CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BEIJING DAYS FOR GIRLS

*Founded 2008*

## STUDENTS:

Jood Q., 16 Years Old, Grade 11, Volunteering for 4 years

Julia T., 18 Years Old, Grade 12, Volunteering for 3 years

Lucia G., 14 Years Old, Grade 9, Volunteering for 1 year

Rayna A., 11 Years Old, Grade 6, Volunteering for 1 year

Emmanuelle E., 18 Years Old, Grade 12, Volunteering for 2 years

## What is Days for Girls' mission?

"Days for Girls' mission is to help every girl everywhere have access to safe and healthy menstruation management with our DFG USA patented kit. The kit contains two pairs of panties, two shields, eight liners, soap, a care card, a washcloth, and a bag to secure things. A zip lock is included, but that will be phased out by next year to help support climate change.\*" - Jood Q.

\*Days for Girls is part of a global mission and not a CISB founded charity. The kits are created under the supervision of quality control experts.

## Why did you get involved?

"I was a new student who joined CISB in 2016 and was trying to choose an after-school activity (ASA). All the ASAs were pretty basic to me, but when I was introduced to Days for Girls I was amazed as to how our community can help such a great and unique cause!" - Jood Q.

"One of my close friends was the leader of the DFG club at our school and she told me all about the organization. I felt like it was a great opportunity to get more involved with my school and do something amazing for our society." - Julia T.

"I got involved because at the assembly and at the ASA (After School Activities) Fair, they not only explained it extremely well, but it was very shocking to me that girls in other countries have to miss school just because they are on their periods. The people in the club are very inspiring individuals which motivated me to join even more." - Lucia G.

"I came to the school and I was super excited to join activities like drama club, dance team, etc. Then, I saw a poster that said 'DAYS FOR GIRLS.' I came to the table and asked what it was about and then I instantly knew it was a cause I had to join." - Rayna A.

"When I first came to this school in grade 10 I was looking for a club to join, my friend Julie introduced me to Days For Girls and how it helped girls in Nepal. After hearing this I immediately wanted to join the club. I wanted to involve myself in something where I could give back and learn how to be more open-minded." - Emmanuelle E.

## What have you learned from your experience volunteering?

"I have learned so many things. By volunteering to be a part of DFG at CISB, I learned more about the living conditions of girls in other countries such as Nepal. I learned how to make sanitary products with fabric. I learned how the products we help to produce are used and how they benefit girls." - Julia T.

## Why do you think it's important to volunteer, or give back to the community?

"If we are privileged to have our daily essentials and wants, then it's important that we take time to try and help those people who don't have what we are blessed with." - Jood Q.

"Giving back to the community and volunteering is crucial. It is important because it not only makes us more aware of what we do have, it also helps you connect with a community that is in need and want your help." - Lucia G.

## What does volunteering and giving back to the community mean to you?

"It means a lot to me. Last year, [our parent advisor] Sarah went to Nepal and she sent us pictures of the kids we helped with our fundraising. Seeing their happy faces was the best feeling ever." - Julia T.

"Volunteering and giving back means that you have empathy and that you are sharing positive things you have with people in need." - Rayna A.

## Is this your first time volunteering? If no, what other work have you done?

"This is not my first time volunteering. I have had quite a lot of experiences in the past. For example, last year, I took part in Roots and Shoots, where we collected plastic containers and had elementary [school] kids plant flowers and paint the plastic containers. My family and I also fostered two kittens for over three months. These were moving experiences." Lucia G.



# WESTERN ACADEMY OF BEIJING

## JIASHAN-JINGXI PROJECT

*Founded 2008*

### STUDENTS:

Eliza, 16 years Old , Grade 11

Simona, 16 years Old , Grade 11

Emilia, 16 years Old , Grade 11

### **What is the name of the organization**

The Jiashan-Jingxi Project

### **What is the organization's mission?**

When the devastating earthquake in 2008 struck Gansu Province, a group of Grade 8 students lead by 12 year old Karoline Aaen wanted to do something to make a difference. They formed a partnership with the Jiashan Primary School and were able to raise enough money to rebuild the school. Ever since then, this partnership has grown stronger by the year, forming an undoubtedly everlasting relationship. Open to grades eight through eleven, the bi-annual student-run visits to Jiashan strives to not only lead fun and educational activities, including professional development workshops, at the school, but also to give students the opportunity to explore the town of Huixian and better immerse ourselves into the culture of our surroundings.

### **How long have you been a part of it?**

This is my second year working with the Jiashan-Jingxi Partnership and first year as one of the leaders. - Eliza

My first involvement with the Jiashan-Jingxi Partnership was during the Spring Trip 2017 (I was in grade 8). Since then, I have been on 5 trips to the Jiashan Primary School. - Simona

I joined the Jiashan-Jingxi group as a grade 9 student, 2.5 years ago and have taken part in 4 week long visits to the school. - Emilia

### **Why did you get involved?**

I got involved in this project as I had always been interested in the mission due to the relationships and connections we, as international school students would be able to build with those students and the local school through a variety of activities, sports, arts and music. Also, my interest in teaching and working with children is something I am passionate about and thought this would be another great opportunity. - Eliza

I became involved in the Jiashan project because, not only had I seen photos and videos of prior trips, but I was drawn to the opportunity to visit a part of China which I had never been to, and experience as well as be aware of what it's like to grow up and go to school in such a contrasting environment. I have also always been quite an active person and enjoyed spending time with kids, so I thought that this would be a great opportunity to combine my interests while helping the community. - Emilia



### **What have you learned from your experience volunteering?**

This has taught me so much about why volunteering is never a sacrifice of any sorts, in my case, it feels more like an exchange between what I can teach the primary school kids and the joy they bring back to me. - Simona

I have learned that volunteering brings so much joy to whoever it is that you're helping, but also to yourself. It's amazing to see how much the kids appreciate our visits and the smiles on their faces from simply joining them for a game of football. I have also learned that volunteering doesn't always have to consist of giving away money or objects, instead, putting in effort to organize and lead physical and creative activities can be more valuable. - Emilia

### **What does volunteering and giving back to the community mean to you?**

Volunteering to me means taking your time to help others whether it be something as simple as helping pick up trash to building houses in an underdeveloped country. Anything at all, big or small where someone other than yourself is the person who the action is providing primary benefit for is something I would consider volunteering. - Eliza

It doesn't feel like much, but I know that my experience with the kids has clearly shaped who I am and how I act today. Personally, I feel that when volunteering for something you are passionate about, the experience becomes equally as, or even more, rewarding for the volunteers themselves. - Simona

I believe that volunteering is an opportunity for me to share my interests and happiness with the wider community. To me, volunteering isn't an obligation or duty, but being a volunteer means that I am able to give back or offer something to the community and make connections with people around me. - Emilia

### **Is this your first time volunteering? If no, what other work have you done?**

I have been involved in this project for a while along with other clubs at WAB such as environmental clubs, ambassador clubs and migrant schools that also incorporate the idea of volunteering both in our direct and wider community. However, this is the most 'obvious' and hands on volunteering project I am currently involved in. - Eliza





# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING GREENKEEPERS

*Founded 2009*

## STUDENTS:

Nadya C., 17 Years Old, Grade 12,  
Volunteering for 3 Years

Sam Y., 17 Years Old, Grade 12,  
Volunteering for 3 Years

Vimala M., 16 Years Old, Grade 12,  
Volunteering for 2 Years

## What is Greenkeepers' mission?

"Our mission statement is to raise awareness of environmental issues in our community to inspire individuals to take action and make our community a 'greener place'." - Nadya C.

"The mission statement for Greenkeepers is to inspire environmental awareness through local impacts within communities worldwide. I feel like the trash pickup is a good example of this. Through local impacts (just as picking up trash), we inspire environmental awareness (through interviews and talks with residents)." - Sam Y.

"Greenkeepers believe that every individual makes a difference on the environment and everyone should make our community a 'greener' place. Through local impacts and volunteer work, Greenkeepers is committed to raising awareness of the environmental challenges that face us locally and globally, promoting more sustainable practices in everyday life, and raising funds for a variety of environmental causes." - Vimala M.

## Why did you get involved?

"Initially, I was greatly inspired by many environmental organizations around the world that are in action helping various environmental issues. I hoped to take a stand against environmental exploitation and was determined to fight for a better, greener world. While looking for a suitable environment-related student club, my friend introduced me to the perfect answer: Greenkeepers." - Nadya C.

"I wanted to help increase sustainability in our school and local environment." - Sam Y.

"When I started at ISB, I was already involved in various environmental clubs in my previous school. Greenkeepers was a club that was interesting for me mainly because of the trash pickups and tree planting activities." - Vimala M.

## What have you learned from your experience volunteering?

"I have participated in several volunteering experiences, one of them being our weekend Trash Pick-up event. Through personal experience in picking up trash by a nearby river, I am fortunate to have obtained more knowledge regarding the causes of the many environmental damages human actions have initiated. Hence, gained a better understanding of how to tackle the problem." - Nadya C.

"From volunteering, I have learned the true value of personal impact. Even though volunteering and picking up trash may not make a big difference in sustainability, setting a good example for the local residents does make a big impact. Being a small club, we might not always be able to directly make a big influence on the environment, but we can inspire others that, collectively, will build up to make a great impact." - Sam Y.

"Through volunteering with Greenkeepers, I have learned that volunteering is as important as conducting sustainable projects. It involved directly engaging with the community by going to the trash pickups, I've learned that we can make a difference through little steps." - Vimala M.

## What does volunteering and giving back to the community mean to you?

"Volunteering gives me a unique sense of purpose by serving those around me who are in need. Immersing myself in a community not only enriches and broadens my perceptions of the world but also improves my health both physically and mentally. Volunteering allows me to meet new people and have a broad, open-minded perspective of events in life which helps me become an effective and empathetic individual in society." - Nadya C.

"Volunteering is always a good experience for me, especially in Greenkeepers, because I am not only able to give back to the community by doing something that I enjoy, but I am also able to do so with my close friends. I would say that volunteering has enriched our friendship." - Vimala M.

## Is this your first time volunteering?

"No. I have volunteered in several other events in and out of Greenkeepers, such as raising awareness of the recent climate strike and helping out on one of our 'trash exchange for food' fundraising event. 'Trash exchange for food' primarily raises awareness regarding recycling and effectively engages students to recycle by receiving 'trash' (used paper and recyclable plastic bottles) and exchanging it for a plate of food." - Nadya C.

"This is not my first time volunteering. Before this, every Sunday I taught 4- to 5-year-old children of our school staff English with another ISB club." - Sam Y.

# BRITISH SCHOOL OF BEIJING, SHUNYI

## THE MYANMAR PROJECT

*Founded 2015*

### STUDENTS:

Anna B., 17 Years Old, Year 13,  
Volunteering for 1 Year

Daniel R., 17 Years Old, Year 13,  
Volunteering for 1 Year

Julia K., 17 Years Old, Year 13,  
Volunteering for 2 Years

Luca C., 17 Years Old, Year 13,  
Volunteering for 1 Year



### **What is The Myanmar Project's mission?**

"To raise money for a local school in Myanmar and teach the children in the school English." - Anna B.

"The goal of our project was to travel to Myanmar and teach children English, since they didn't really have access to any textbooks or other resources. We also donated as much money as we could gather so they could build a new classroom and buy other essential items for education." - Daniel R.

"To raise money for the children in Myanmar" - Julia K.

"To help educate and raise supplies for children in underfunded schools." - Luca C.

### **Why did you get involved?**

"I am interested in being a teacher so it seemed like a great experience to get to teach the children." - Anna B.

"I got involved because firstly I love charity work, and I saw an opportunity to give and help those who are less fortunate than myself." - Daniel R.

"Actually, my friend Julia K. was part of the founding team of this project and so she invited me to join and took me onboard." - Luca C.

### **What have you learned from your experience volunteering?**

"I really enjoyed volunteering at the school and experiencing the culture of Myanmar. I would like to volunteer more in the future because I enjoyed the experience so much." - Anna B.

"I learnt that teaching takes time and must be done consistently. I'm sure after our trip the children will continue to work very hard to improve their English." - Daniel R.

"I think it was good to see how other people less fortunate than us are living since it was eye-opening and made us appreciate what we had

even more. In addition to that, we were able to see a change happening and I learned that it's not that hard to make a difference." - Julia K.

"What to us may seem like not a lot, can actually be life changing to others." - Luca C.

### **Why do you think it's important to volunteer, or give back to the community?**

"It's important because it gives people the opportunities that they would not receive and it allows us to give back and raise money for people who need it more." - Anna B.

"It's important to volunteer because not everyone is given the same opportunities, and those who have better circumstances should take time from their everyday lives and help those who are not quite as fortunate." - Daniel R.

"I have lived a fairly privileged life to be very honest, taking part in Model United Nations (MUN) and other student debating activities, and I believe that the only right thing to do is provide action rather than just talk about, or come up with theoretical solutions to problems." - Luca C.

### **Is volunteer work something you will continue to do in the future?**

"Yes, I am very interested in it and after university this will be something that I will be looking at more." - Anna B.

"Certainly, I believe charity is important in our society for those who are privileged to help those who are less privileged. I think that's one way we can make our society a better place to live." - Daniel R.

"I will be doing volunteer work in the future since I think it was eye-opening, and really seeing what was happening, and how people were living, and making a change definitely gave me the motivation to continue doing this again." - Julia K.

"Yes, next year I am actually taking a gap year where I will work as a social worker back home in Germany with kids in kzwzzzzvzindergarten or after school." - Luca C.



# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Parents in mixed culture marriages talk about their experience of celebrating both Christmas and Chinese New Year

By Andrew Killeen and Jolie Wu



When we asked him what brought him to Beijing, Daniel Mulroy answered "my wife"! He met Ge Qian in Canada, and they moved to the capital 18 years ago. Currently they run Instaphoto, a luxury photo booth rental company, for northern China. They have two children, Arabella, who is 3, and 10-month-old Sebastian.

**Did you celebrate Chunjie as a child? What are your memories of it?**

No, I never really heard of it until I came here the first time in 2001.

**How did your wife celebrate Chunjie as a child?**

Probably the same as most Chinese people: with lots of family dinners, temple fairs, red packets, and of course, loads of fireworks!

**Where do you go for Chunjie? Do you visit relatives or stay home?**

My wife's family all live in Beijing, so we always stay here during Spring Festival. The city is deserted, which is a nice change. Also, traveling during the holidays is always a huge pain.

**What do you eat at Chunjie? What's your favorite and least favorite traditional food?**

I love pretty much everything, and I'm not picky. Things like trotters and chicken feet used to make me cringe, but I've slowly acquired a taste for them. The first time I celebrated Spring Festival in China. my wife's

family cooked up a huge batch of stewed duck tongues – that kind of creeped me out at first. Probably the foods I look forward to now the most are (my wife's) 红烧肉 (hongshaorou) or 梅菜扣肉 (meicaikourou). They take lots of effort but are so worth it.

**Is there anything your in-laws do to celebrate Chunjie which seems strange to you, or which you don't like?**

I never liked the temple fairs. They like to go because it's nostalgic for them, but I didn't grow up with it, so for me it's just an overcrowded park with overpriced street-food-style snacks and food wrappers everywhere. Now that we have two small kids it's a perfect excuse not to go.

**How do your kids feel about Chunjie? What do they like about it? Is there anything they don't like?**

I'm not sure they understand what's going on yet. My 3-year-old enjoys the family time and the hongbaos, but the fireworks frighten her. I hope that in the future our family can form some holiday routines and rituals they

can look forward to. I definitely don't want my kids to see it only as time to be given money by relatives.

**What's your children's favorite holiday, and why?**

My daughter probably likes Halloween the most; she loves dressing up, and obviously she likes being given candy! We did like seven parties this year.

**How is celebrating the holiday as a parent different to how it was when you were younger?**

Not much has changed yet, the kids are still pretty young.

**What do you hope your children will remember about Chunjie when they grow up?**

Mostly the gratitude of being able to spend time with family. I really like getting together and spending all day prepping the feasts, and as soon as they're old enough we'll get them to start helping out.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DANIEL MULROY

Yang Zheng is a piano player who studied at the China Central Conservatoire of Music and graduated from the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, becoming a professional performer and teacher. She married British academic Simon Spooner, and they moved to Beijing from Cambridge in 2008. Spooner was involved in a joint project between China and Europe to harness the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, and is also an honorary Professor at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo Campus. Their two children, Jasmin and Gabriel, both studied at Dulwich College Beijing (DCB). Now Jasmin has graduated from Oxford University, and is studying at the London School of Economics (LSE) for a two-year double degree master program in international relations (her first year was at Peking University). Gabriel returned to England to study at Charterhouse School for two years of high school, and this October he has also gone up to study at Oxford University.



**How did you celebrate Chunjie as a child? What are your memories of it?**

When I was a child, our small family gathered together, made dumplings, and watched TV on New Year's Eve. My memory is that I watch fireworks with my family in our backyard. My parents would take my sister and me to visit my grandparents, who would make a lot of delicious treats for us. On the first day of the Lunar New Year, there would be neighbors coming to visit, or we we'd go out to visit friends. I only remember one or two Spring Festivals when my father, Yang Yong, was the group leader of the creation room of the Spring Festival gala, and my whole family spent the time with him in the hotel.

**How did your husband celebrate Christmas as a child?**

My husband's mother would make a big turkey and ham with a lot of vegetables and potatoes. Oh! and Christmas pudding. The entire holiday lasts about a week before the family can finish the huge turkey and ham in various ways.

**Where do you go for Christmas/Chunjie? Do you visit relatives or stay home?**

When the children were younger we tried to spend as much time as possible with my in-laws at Christmas. It is as if time is frozen when I recall the fun we had playing games with each other beside the warmth of the fireplace, the lights of the Christmas tree (which my father-in-law would cut from his garden) and, of course, together with all the delicious homemade food! These memories are unforgettable and very precious.

**What do you eat on Christmas? What's your favorite and least favorite traditional food?**

At Christmas I usually have turkey, ham, Christmas pudding, and so on. During Spring Festival there will be dumplings and a variety of foods and snacks. Everything is delicious, but there are just some things you'd like more - like dumplings! As a Chinese, I must have a predilection for dumplings.

**Is there anything your in-laws do to celebrate Christmas which seems strange to you, or which you don't enjoy?**

My British parents-in-law pay more attention to the sense of ceremony. They have a clear schedule before and after the work on Christmas Day, such as what time to eat and so on. It's just a matter of different cultures.

**How do your kids feel about Christmas? What do they like about it? Is there anything they don't like?**

They enjoy both Christmas and Spring Festival. Especially in the UK for Christmas, the city streets in early December are decorated by beautiful lights. In the primary school there are all kinds of performances about Christmas stories and legends. We walk down Piccadilly in London and enjoy the atmosphere of people, lights and colors, listening to Christmas songs, and daydream about what the Christmas presents will be. Chinese New Year is another lively atmosphere! How can you not like wearing traditional Chinese clothes, eating steaming hot dumplings, and getting hongbao from your elders?

**What's your children's favorite holiday, and why?**

My children like both Christmas and Spring Festival.

**How is celebrating the holiday as a parent different to how it was when you were younger?**

In recent years, our children have gone to high school and university in the UK, so they can only come back to China to visit their grandparents and families during the Christmas holiday. This holiday is not only a time for us to reunite with our children in China, but also a good time for our family to go to the surrounding Asian countries for holidays. For Spring Festival, because it is in the middle of the semester, the children have no holidays, so we take this opportunity to go back to the UK and use the weekend to celebrate the Chinese New Year! The children come home and make dumplings and Chinese food with their friends and neighbors. They can share their experience of living in China with their friends in Britain. Everyone enjoys making dumplings together!

**What do you hope your children will remember about Christmas when they grow up?**

Of course, I hope my children can serve as envoys of Chinese and western culture to share and pass on the two distinct cultural customs of Christmas and Spring Festival so that more people can understand and enjoy them!





# The Generous Ghosts of Giving

## A Post-Halloween and Pre-Christmas Generosity Lesson

By Ember Swift

Halloween has passed and I am nearly ready to tell the kids that their treats have been consumed in large (garbage-bag-sized) mouthfuls by hungry ghosts. The influx of sugar into the house has meant an ear-splitting spike of hyperactivity and misbehaviour.

"He stole my candy!"

"She has more chocolate than me!"

(These are the types of phrases that inspire the imminent arrival of said hungry ghosts.)

"Generosity" or the adjective "generous" have been words I've used with the kids since they were babies. I like it better than the typical, urging word "share," even though we as parents invariably tell our battling kids to "share", by default, when Halloween candy wars start to invade household peace.

It's not that sharing isn't important as a concept; it's more that generosity, to me, is about having the kindness to give without thinking about oneself. Sharing, on the other hand, is about giving some and keeping some. This may be easier for kids to comprehend and accept, but I'm not one to care about age-appropriateness when it comes to concepts. I tell my kids to "be generous" or "show generosity" because I want them to understand that when we give, we don't always have to retain something for ourselves. We can just let things go. True giving is without the expectation of getting.

All that sounds nice, but after the overflow of Halloween follows the abundance of Christmas. How can we reinforce this concept of generosity when "getting" is what these two holidays seem to communicate to kids? No matter what, those hungry ghosts better come quick to strike an armistice to the candy wars so my children can narrowly avoid Santa passing judgment on the "naughty or nice."

Recently, I talked to the kids again about the notion of charities and how there are many children in the world who never get Halloween candy or Christmas presents at all! (And not just because they don't celebrate these festivals.) For kids, it's really not an easy to imagine the lives of other children who aren't as lucky as they are.

So, I proposed a deal: with every Christmas gift they'd like to receive, one item from their toy boxes must be removed to be donated

to charity. I explained that if some kids weren't going to be getting presents this year, maybe it was time for my kids to be the givers themselves. They could be like Santa, I said.

This message got through. Already, they have sorted many toys they don't play with anymore and would like to give away. The arguing about items has been kept to a minimum and they're keen on making a trip to Roundabout before the holidays. What's more, both kids are very proud that their stack of giveaway toys are much more numerous than the items on their wish list to Santa. Perhaps this means they're getting closer to truly understanding the meaning of generosity after all.

Then, my nearly-8-year-old daughter had a very interesting insight:

"Mommy?" she asked, "You know those hungry ghosts you say are going to come and eat our Halloween candy? Maybe they're not really hungry. Maybe they just want to give our candy to kids who didn't get any on Halloween?"

I smiled at her. She continued.

"But then we can't call them hungry ghosts anymore."

"Okay," I answered, curiously. I wasn't sure where she was going with this as I took in her mischievous smirk. "What should we call them, then?"

"GENEROUS GHOSTS!" she yelled out, laughing.

And so it was that Halloween finally ended. Merry Christmas to me!



### About the Writer

Ember Swift is a Canadian musician and writer who has been living in Beijing since late 2008. She has a daughter called Echo (国如一) and a son called Topaz or "Paz" (国世龙).



2019  
12.21  
9:00-17:00

# JIABAO'S 6<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY

## 嘉宝6岁生日派对

人民币988元净价 (含1位成人和1名儿童)  
人民币1288元净价 (含2位成人和1名儿童)  
人民币1788元净价 (含2位成人和2名儿童)  
每增加一位儿童需另付人民币688元  
每增加一位成人需另付人民币368元

RMB988nett (1 adult + 1 child)  
RMB1288nett (2 adults + 1 child)  
RMB1788nett (2 adults + 2 children)  
Additional child at RMB688 per person  
Additional adult at RMB368 per person

### 游戏时光

家庭互动·科学小课堂·美食饮品·创意手工·寻宝游戏·舞蹈和泡泡秀·儿童时装秀·  
和嘉宝一起切蛋糕·拍照·邂逅圣诞老人和圣诞女孩·以及儿童探险乐园欢乐时光

### ACTIVITIES:

Family games · Science experiments · Food & drinks · DIY corner · Treasure hunt ·  
Dance & bubble shows · Children's fashion show · Cakes · Picture taking ·  
Santa and Santarinas · Playtime at Adventure Zone and more...



扫码线上购票  
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票务热线 Ticket Hotline: 8565 2460

北京市朝阳区光华路1号北京嘉里大酒店三层  
Level 3, Kerry Mall, 1 Guanghua Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing













# DECK THE STREETS WITH JOLLY GIVING

Making a difference to the forgotten and ignored

*By Mina Yan*

This month's theme of giving back is one that's near and dear to my heart. For over two years now my friends and I have formed our own little do-gooder group. We're not registered and we don't have an official name - we're a 100 percent grassroots group.

It started a few years ago when I saw on my friend's WeChat Moments that she went out to deliver hot meals to homeless people. I contacted her and got in touch with the then organizer Fiona who, like the rest of the group, has a completely unrelated day job and does charity work in her free time. I tagged along with her one night, and since then I've recruited my close friend Michael Tsai and we've taken over her homeless "route," which she was more than happy to hand over - allowing her more time to help the homeless in other places in the city.

Unknown and ignored by many, there are a number of homeless men and women living in the back alleys by the train station. During the day some beg for money, while others sell instant noodles and tissues to travelers to make a little bit of cash. At night, they curl up under layers of rags to protect themselves from the elements.

Their weathered faces and stories of their rough past are heartbreaking. Some were abused. Some, cast out by their families. Many of them are elderly women who are living their golden years on the streets - facing all the dangers that come with this life.



PHOTOS: MINA YAN



One of the grannies has become our favorite. Despite being homeless, she still has a positive outlook on life and helps others in need. She sells instant noodles and tissues during the day and looks out for other homeless women whom she calls her sisters. We watched her as she adopted a tiny puppy which was thrown away by owners who discovered at the last minute they couldn't bring a dog onto the train. We watched as she gave her warm hard-boiled eggs to the puppy instead of eating them herself, and we watched as her heart broke when the puppy got lost months later.

So for the last two years Tsai and I have been inviting any friend who wants to join to come along with us when we visit the homeless. Each of these grannies has got their own story, and none of them has a happy ending. Unintentionally Tsai and I have created our own mantra for why we visit them on a regular basis. "We're not looking to make any national impact or even city wide impact, but if we can help make the life of even one elderly homeless person just a tad bit easier, it's worth it."

Once every other week we head out with hot meals and daily necessities in hand to make our round. The smiles on the faces of the grannies and uncles when they see us coming makes it all worthwhile. We don't only want to bring them food, we want to act as reminders that there are people out there who care about them and that they matter.

One of the questions that I get asked the most is "how do I help"? It's simple. There are people in need all around the city. You don't need to join any official organization or group (though we wholeheartedly welcome anyone who want to join us on our visits). My advice is to think small scale. Instead of trying to tackle the entire poverty issue as a whole, start by just helping one person and go from there.







# PLANE CRAZY?

Flying with young children  
needn't be a nightmare

*By Andrew Killeen*

Parenting has its joys and challenges, and so does living in a foreign country. When it comes to traveling with kids though, those challenges can compound each other, and the joys can be hard to come by.

My kids were used to being dragged around the world long before we came to Beijing. Our older son went on his first holiday when he was 7 months old, though we drove the car to France via the ferry and avoided flying. When he was 6 we took him and his not-quite-2-year-old brother to the Gambia. Since moving to China we've explored all around East Asia, causing the younger one to wearily ask: "Can't we just have a holiday where we stay in one place?"

At 13 and 10 they are now seasoned travelers, but for many Beijing families whose children were born here, that first long trip can be intimidating. We spoke to some parents who have packed up the diaper bag and taken young kids on the long haul.

For Wes Daniels, as for many others, introducing the little one to family back home was the incentive for making the journey. Daniels came to Beijing from his native Britain in 2010, initially for a two year project. He kept extending his contract, then met the woman who became his wife. Their daughter was born in 2014, and a family party when she was only two months old was the perfect opportunity to show her off.

"This was my first baby and I obviously wanted my family to see her," he told us. "After checking all documents needed for a trip, it seemed unlikely I would get it all done so I told family we couldn't make it back for Christmas. Actually, the document arrived just a few days before the (hopefully booked) flights, but we still didn't tell anyone – literally only one friend in China knew.

"The whole thing went perfectly and we were able to turn up at 8am at my sister's home on her birthday to surprise her and her family, but also to wait it out there for all my other family to visit her, videoing the reactions of each one for a lovely (and quite popular) YouTube video and a lifelong memory – which is great because it will never happen again.

Daniels shared with us his tips for flying with a very young baby.

"We started adjusting her sleep pattern to align that she would have her night sleep directly on the flight. I believe our flight was lunchtime in China, so we kept creeping her and my wife's sleep pattern backwards by one hour each day. Breastfeeding was a very useful benefit. We used a car seat from the China side through to the UK. It was very useful for carrying and putting on top of trolleys, and we checked it in at the gate.

"It's very important to have a dummy, water bottle, milk, or breast milk being sucked during takeoff and landing. Lots make the mistake of not doing this, then the baby will cry from blocked ears. A bassinet seat isn't given as standard but definitely helps if you can request it."

He and his wife now have a second child, so we asked what advice he had for flying with a baby and a toddler.

"Don't do it!" he joked. "Seriously though, it's tough, but I prepared a full snack tray, new toys (to be opened on the flight), drawing books, and iPads preloaded with offline videos. It was just about enough to fill the no-sleep time.

"In summary, I dread flying with kids. Even with all this preparation, there is a fine line between a perfect flight, and a flight with a small issue that upsets the whole rhythm and causes a knock-on effect that will ruin the whole holiday... It's worth the risk though!"

Michelle Lori also met her husband in China. She came to Beijing with her parents when she was still in high school, and went to university in Liaoning, where her husband-to-be was studying for a masters' degree. They first took their son Jason on holiday when he was six months old.

"We went to Disneyland Hong Kong," she told us. "I was very excited, and we were staying at the Disneyland hotel so it was perfect for baby and us. Being a first time mom I was clueless so I sort of over-packed. I had everything from food to changing mats and a first aid box. I made sure I packed food he was familiar with too, and of course his stroller."

Getting the right stroller is a big help, Lori said.

"For all the parents who travel a lot like myself, I would also encourage them to get the Yoyo stroller. My first trip I didn't

know about the Yoyo stroller, I traveled with a Hot Mom stroller. It's such a hassle, and airlines really don't know how to handle such strollers, but when I switched to the Yoyo I don't need to check it in, it fits perfectly in the cabin. My son turned 3 this month and we still use it, it's a must have!"

Lori agreed with Daniels that preparation is key.

"We made sure we checked in early, and also requested decent seats. Before taking off I made sure my baby was well fed (I breastfed till he was 2). That helped with calming him down. The flight attendants gave me a bassinet, so after takeoff Jay was fast asleep. When we landed I made sure we were last to leave the plane, just so I packed without rushing – people tend to always be in a hurry to leave flights here!"

She also finds traveling gets trickier as kids get older.

"It was always easier when he was a baby, because he wasn't the crying type. Now he is a toddler and he talks a lot and wants to know everything. Unless he sleeps first, we will talk till he knocks off. Another challenge is when we fail to get decent seats."

Having flown from a young age however, he isn't fazed by airplanes.

"Jason loves planes and the attention he gets from people. He also loves watching movies on the flight. We always make sure he gets the window seat. He enjoys telling us what he can see from the window. When he sees clouds, he says 'mommy, we are now in heaven!'"

Overall, Lori finds the benefits outweigh the difficulties.

"Traveling with Jason is fun," she said, "because we get to teach and show him so much at a young age, and he becomes very accommodating. I have always been a traveler, and having a kid who equally loves traveling and is comfortable with flights is a plus for me. He is my travel buddy. He's not a picky eater, and this makes life way easier for me too."

Her top tips for traveling with kids were remarkably similar to Daniels'.

"My advice is always check in early," she said. "Make sure your kids are well-fed and have necessary snacks. Always book your seats earlier. Always wear comfortable clothes (both parents and kids!) Pack books, coloring books, an iPad with necessary entertainment too. Get kid-friendly headphones. Parents with toddlers should also pack a backpack for their kids, this promotes independence and a sense of responsibility. Always pack a tiny bottle of paracetamol and a light blanket, flights tend to run out of those."

Daniels and Lori both managed their flights without major incident. However Andrew Morrissey from South Africa had a cautionary tale.

"We were on our way to St. George's, Grenada, via Heathrow (with a short stopover in Stroud, England)" he told us. "Our son Liam was 18 months old, and he needed his bottle. My wife needed the bathroom, so I took him back to get some hot water. They gave it to me in a cup, and it was way too hot for bottle purposes. As I got back to the seat, him in one arm, the water in the other, we hit quite an air pocket. The water spilled out onto his left lower leg and foot. I wasn't thinking, and pulled off the long flight-provided sock that he was wearing... that also removed some of the skin that had been burned."

Despite the nightmarish situation, Morrissey found that he didn't panic.

"It was a kind of desperate time on the plane, but I went into some sort of 'place of calm' and I couldn't help thinking, 'Is this

why regular people who find themselves in battle zones suddenly do stuff that makes them heroes?' The staff were great. The boy was screaming like crazy, because he was sore and scared. I just wanted to get somewhere quiet, with less people, even the area where they rest. Didn't happen.

"After about three hours of screaming, we arrived at Heathrow. They'd radioed ahead, and an ambulance was waiting in the tarmac, and the captain asked everyone to stay seated until we were off of the plane. My sister was in Stroud, so they had arranged to take my son to a clinic half way between Heathrow and Stroud. The wife and son went straight down the stairs into an ambulance, and I was taken by an air host through a quick immigration channel with their passports. My sister was waiting, and we met the others at the clinic."

Morrissey was less impressed by the healthcare provided in England.

"A couple of days later, we took our son off to the local GP, before our next flight. The boy was screaming, and acting like we were killing him. The nurse looked at me like I was the worst child abuser on the planet. She was stressed, did a hugely c\*\*p job of the bandaging, but they still charged me £80!"

But the story has a happy ending, he told us.

"The doctor in Grenada was like, 'No, mon! Get these bandages off! Put him in the sea, and let the sand work off that dead skin! My own grandfather suffered burns over two thirds of his body! We rolled him down to the sea in his wheelchair, and threw him in, mon!' It worked. No scars, and the boy has no memory of it."

Few parents will face such a horrific situation, but holding a screaming baby while red-eyed passengers glare at you in annoyance can be pretty unpleasant in itself. However, with a bit of planning and preparation, flying with little kid can be fun, and make an enjoyable start to a great trip.

### Top Tips for Trips Without Tears

- Don't wait till your child gets older – flying with a baby is actually easier than with an active toddler. And the earlier you get them used to planes the fewer problems you will have.
- Book early, and contact the airline to make sure they know you're bringing a baby. Most planes have bassinets which your little one can sleep in, but there's a fixed number of them.
- If you're flying to a different time zone, adjust sleep times gradually to avoid jet lag.
- Check in early, so you can make sure you get the right seat and iron out any problems.
- Plan for ear-popping – bring a bottle or dummy to suck on, or boiled sweets for older kids.
- Make sure you have plenty to keep toddlers busy – don't rely on the in-flight entertainment!



# JANUARY 1 *and Beyond*

New Year celebrations across cultures and time

*By Mark Allan Karanja*

What we in the west consider to be New Year's Day has changed drastically through the millennia. The selection of the first day of January as the first day of the year did not take place until 45BCE, when the Julian calendar was instituted by Julius Caesar, who moved the Roman New Year's Day - Kalends - from March 25 to January 1. From Caesar to Pope Gregory XIII after whom the Gregorian calendar is named, the day we now celebrate as the beginning of a new year has been a moving goal post for world leaders and religious leaders alike, moving from a secular feast to a religious one and back round again.

In Asia and China in particular, there is a duality when it comes to the idea of New Year. Though all Asian countries have embraced the use of the Gregorian calendar for official and governmental functions, most countries such as China, Thailand, Japan and even India have had a long history of using traditional calendars which govern cultural festivals. Chinese New Year itself has come to be one of the most important festivals on the Chinese calendar and in the recent past, has seen the highest amount of human migration within one country as people from different cities try to go home for the New Year's celebrations. Last year alone, approximately 385 million people within

China traveled to welcome the lunar new year, eclipsing numbers across the world marking other cultural or religious festivals such as Hajj or Thanksgiving.

The tradition, however, has a bit of a murky past. Though it's speculated to have started as far back as during the Shang dynasty (1766BC-1122BC) as part of a religious year-end ceremony, it's not until the maturity of the solar calendar which enabled the consistent tracking of time and days throughout the year that the tradition really stuck, and continues to be adhered to, to this day. Living in China, you have probably experienced some of the merriment at this time of year, from fireworks, firecrackers, and dumplings to the ubiquitous "red packet". But that is just the tip of the iceberg, with each region having its own traditions and customs during this festive time. In the North of China for instance, dumplings are sprinkled with sugar as a way to sweeten the year ahead, or a coin is hidden in a dumpling and the one who eats this dumpling will have good fortune in the coming year. In the south, a warming hotpot of soup is more customary, accompanied by the eating of "Year Cakes," which in Chinese might also be translated as "Year High" so are also tied to ushering in luck and success in the new year.

# The Fun Is in the Details



## 108 RINGS – JAPAN

Japan quite literally rings in the New Year. At the heaviest bell ever cast in Japan, found in the Chion-in Temple and weighing a colossal 74 tons, it takes up to 17 monks to sound the bell in its traditional 108 rings. But why such a loud welcome to the New Year? The number 108 holds a special place in the Buddhist faith, as it represents the torment of passions and desires with a tight grip on our lives. Chiming in the New Year with 108 rings works to dispel said passions and purify us from suffering and reincarnation. On New Year's Day people also eat buckwheat noodles called toshikoshi sabo to symbolize wishes for long life.

## THE GRAPES OF LUCK – SPAIN

When most people imagine a New Year's party in Spain, they imagine high spirited people sipping on overflowing glasses of full-bodied red wine, nibbling on platters of tapas. But such images are a long way from what happens at most Spanish New Year celebrations. At the stroke of twelve, with much fanfare, giggling, and a risk of choking, people in Spain stuff twelve grapes in their mouths and aim to gulp them down before the clock strikes 12:01. The twelve grapes are meant to open the door to twelve months of good fortune in the New Year. So while you might be trying to steal a kiss from your Spanish companion, they might have other inclinations for the New Year.



## COLORFUL UNDIES THE WAY TO GO – SOUTH AMERICA

Now on any given day, the pressure to pick the right color knickers is immense as it is. As my mother says, don't wear something you wouldn't want to be seen if your skirt is blown up by the wind. But in parts of South America, namely Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina, the pressure is doubly immense on New Year's Day. It has little to do with the fabric and more to do with the color of your chosen undies for the day, as the color you choose might dictate your fortune for the New Year. Red is believed to attract love – hello St. Valentine – while white is believed to usher in peace, yellow for wealth and success, and green for overall well-being. Under no circumstances must you wear the color black as this might lead to a year of bad luck and misfortune.

## SCARECROW BURNING – ECUADOR AND PANAMA

In Ecuador and Panama, a cathartic tradition with rather dark origins is now a part of each New Year celebration. Effigies made in the likeness of pop culture icons or politicians are burned as a way to purify and burn away the old and start the New Year on a clean slate. The effigies, aptly called "Año Viejos" or old year, are stuffed with straw or old newspapers. It is suspected that this tradition has its origins in Guayaquil in 1895 when a yellow fever epidemic ravaged the town. As a way of purifying the city, the residents filled coffins with the clothes of the dead and proceeded to burn them.



## ROUND FOOD, ROUND CLOTHES, ROUND EVERYTHING – PHILIPPINES

If you find yourself in the Philippines over the New Year or indeed in a Filipino household, then you might be struck by just how important round-shaped objects and fruits are important on the day. Believed to have its roots in the Chinese New Year tradition of having fruit on the table during New Year celebrations, the presence of a variety of round fruit is important to usher in luck over the New Year. Additionally, people dress in polka dots just to keep with the round theme. To ensure financial prosperity through the coming year, people, both young and old, fill their pockets with coins or notes of cash, as it is believed that ushering in the New Year with a sizable amount of cash in your pocket will bring in even more financial fruitfulness.



# What a Difference a Date Makes?

## ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia uses a solar calendar consisting of 12 months of 30 days plus an additional five days for regular years, and an additional six for leap years. These extra days make up a 13th month which is the shortest month of the year called Pagumiene, falling between the months of August and September. Christmas Day falls on December 29 on this solar calendar, while the first day of the new year falls on September 11 (12 in leap years). According to the Coptic calendar, Ethiopia is eight years behind the Gregorian calendar from January to September, and seven years behind between September 11 and January 8. So while we are in the year 2019, Ethiopians just ushered in the year 2011.

The New Year itself is known as Enkutatash which means "gift of jewels" and is marked with the exchange of gifts among friends and family. Gifts of money are also accepted. Torches are lit using dry leaves and wood bunches on tall thick sticks in front of homesteads. Congregants dressed in traditional Ethiopian garb flock to their local church. After church, families gather to share a meal of Injera – traditional flat bread – and Wat – stew. As this is also spring time after long rains in Ethiopia, it is seen as a time of future fruitfulness. Girls go from door to door singing New Year songs for gifts of money, while boys indulge in a bit of merchandising as they sell pictures they have drawn. Some practises, like the drinking of Tella which is a traditional Ethiopian beer, still persist. Other traditions like the exchange of a bouquet of flowers as a gift have since been replaced by a more modern exchange of New Year's cards.

## ROSH HASHANAH

Seen as one of the two High Holy days in Judaism and commemorated in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, this day falls between the end of September and the beginning of October. The day itself, Tishrei, is believed to mark the day the world was created, and opens the door to ten days of introspection and repentance. These are known as the days of awe, and culminate in the second High Holy Day – Yom Kippur.

## SONGKRAN

This could arguably be the biggest event on the Thai calendar. As it is also a religious celebration brought to Thailand via Buddhism from India, Songkran is derived from the Sanskrit language, which means to pass or to move into. Put contextually, it means the moving of the sun and other heavenly bodies into one of the zodiac orbits. The Songkran is celebrated for two days starting April 13. The day marks the beginning of a year based on the Buddhist or Hindu solar calendar, whose highlight is the water festival. The water festival itself is an integral part of the New Year festivities as it is a symbol of renewal and rejuvenation, while offering thanks for the blessings from the past year.

## HIJRI

The Hijri calendar itself is an ancient system devised as far back as 622 CE, and is a lunar calendar. This means that each new month is marked with the sighting of the new moon. Depending upon the sighting of the moon, New Year's Day, which generally lands on the month of September, is announced. Different Muslim communities around the world have their own festive ways of ushering in the New Year, most of them including large feasts and visits to the mosque for thanksgiving prayers.

## HINDU

Even though India and the adherents of the Hindu faith follow the Gregorian calendar, the Hindu New Year is dictated by the Panchang, the Hindu Lunar calendar. This means that there is no real set date for Hindu New Year, but it usually falls between the months of March and April according to the Gregorian calendar. Hindu new years are renowned the world over as being elaborate celebrations filled with pomp and color. Some of the traditional rituals such as Holi – the festival of colors – reserved for the New Year's celebrations have made their way to the secular mainstream. There are also mythologies and legends associated with this day. According to the Brahma Purana, Hindu New Year is the day when Lord Brahma created the universe after the pralaya and time was created again. Different regions in India and the Indian diaspora scattered across the world have their own special celebrations that are as varied as the adherents of the Hindu faith are.

## *Now, How do You Say...*

Now that you can brag to your friends at having just a little more knowledge about their New Year traditions, here are a few ways in different languages of wishing your friends and family a happy New Year.

**Afrikaans: Gelukkige Nuwe Jaar!**

**Bulgarian: Chestita Nova Godina!**

**Czech: Stastny Novy Rok!**

**Danish: Godt nytår gelukkige nieuwjaar!**

**Dutch: Een Gulikkig Nieuw Jaar!**

**Finnish: Onnellista Uutta Vuotta!**

**French: Bonne Année!**

**Greek: Eftychisméno to néo étos!**

**Italian: Felice anno nuovo!**

**Hawaiian: Hau'oli makahiki hou!**

**German: Frohes neues Jahr!**

**Spanish: ¡Feliz año nuevo!**

**Swahili: Heri njema ya mwaka mpya!**

**Tagalog: Manigong Bagong Taon!**

**Yoruba: Eku odun / Eku odun tun tun / eku iyedun!**

**Xosa: Nyak'omtsha!**

**Vietnamese: Chúc Mừng Năm Mới / Cung Chúc Tân Niên / Cung Chúc Tân Xuân!**

**Turkish: Yeni yılınız kutlu olsun!**



# :: Mascot Challenge! ::

Test your knowledge of Beijing's international school mascots

By Drew Pittock

**Mascots** – some are cute and silly, others intimidating and tough. But what they all have in common is their ability to get a crowd riled up, hootin' and hollerin' for the home team to score that final point before the clock runs out. They're an important part of any school's

identity, and here at *beijingkids*, we wanted to honor a few who are the pride of their campus.

So take our Mascot Challenge! And see if you can match the mascot to their school.

1.



9.



8.



7.



2.



6.



3.



4.



5.



## Mascots Quiz

Beijing City International School

British School of Beijing, Sanlitun

British School of Beijing, Shunyi

Dulwich College Beijing

International School of Beijing

Western Academy of Beijing

Yew Chung International School of Beijing

Canadian International School of Beijing

Harrow Beijing

1. Harrow Beijing – Harrow Lion
2. International School of Beijing -- Long Long
3. Beijing City International School – BCIS Warrior Horse
4. Dulwich College Beijing -- DCB Lion
5. Western Academy of Beijing -- WAB Tiger
6. Yew Chung International School of Beijing -- Scorpions
7. British School of Beijing, Sanlitun -- Winston
8. British School of Beijing, Shunyi -- BSB-Shunyi Bears
9. Canadian International School of Beijing -- Bobcat

# SCHOOL NEWS



## DCB Part of Record-Setting Effort for World's Largest Sustainability Lesson

Late in October, 3,006 students across the Dulwich College International network, including over 1,000 Year 3 to Year 11 Dulwich College Beijing (DCB) students via an interactive live stream, participated in a successful Guinness World Record-setting attempt for the Largest Environmental Sustainability Lesson (multiple venues) and made sustainability pledges to live by.

## MYP Network Conference in Huijia

Recently, the fourth International Baccalaureate (IB) Northern China – Middle Years Program (MYP) Network Conference took place in Beijing Huijia Private School. Exploring the theme "MYP: placing the learner at the center, and the teacher as a learner," this event involved the participation of more than 190 teachers.



## New Department at HIS

Hope International School (HIS) has appointed Mr. Christopher Wood in the new position of Optimal Learning teacher. Mr. Wood comes from the United States with teaching experience and has a passion of reaching students with a variety of learning needs. He looks forward to helping each and every student to reach their full academic potential.



## Super Swimmers at BWYA

On Saturday November 9, the Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA) aqua-wolves waded forth boldly into the ISAC 10 and Under swimming competition. The 37 BWYA swimmers eventually left the event with 2 gold medals, 2 silver, 1 bronze, along with 21 Top 10 finishes. With nearly 400 swimmers present, they truly did themselves proud.



## Jane Goodall Visits Harrow Beijing

On November 13, Dame Jane Morris Goodall, world famous primatologist and anthropologist, visited Harrow Beijing to present her new documentary to the Harrow community.



The Circuit is a chance to check out what's happening in the Beijing community. Want to see your event on these pages?



#### Honing Performance Skills at YCIS Beijing ISTA Festival

11 Lower Secondary students from Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing) improved their performance skills by taking part in the world renowned International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA) Festival, which took place in Shanghai from October 31 to November 3. There, students attended many drama workshops and took part in cultural activities.



#### BSB Choir Delighted Audiences at The British Ball 2019

The British School of Beijing, Shunyi (BSB Shunyi) Choir gave a great performance at The British Ball that had everyone in the audience singing and clapping along. They matched the theme of "Swingin' Sixties" in their sixties accessories and tie-dyed t-shirts. They all had an enjoyable event together.





Send an email with the date of your event, a brief description, and high-resolution photos (at least 1MB each) to [magazine@beijing-kids.com](mailto:magazine@beijing-kids.com)



#### Enterprise Fair Halloween Edition at DCB

Dulwich College Beijing (DCB)'s annual Enterprise Fair crossed STEM with Business Management, and this year, also with Halloween. Student entrepreneurs showcased their products alongside professional vendors and organized fun activities for visitors of all ages while gaining firsthand design, marketing, sales, and event coordination experience.



#### ISB Middle School Show Impresses Audiences

The International School of Beijing (ISB) middle school show, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or *The Night They Missed the Forest for the Trees* was an engaging high energy, family-friendly production that entertained audiences of all ages in three sold-out performances. Students built relationships and made memories to last a lifetime.



COURTESY OF HOK, DCB, ISB, BSB SHUNYI, NO.55 HIGH SCHOOL, BWYA, DAYSTAR ACADEMY, BCIS, HARROW BEIJING, HUJITA PRIVATE SCHOOL, YCIS, LITTLE PACE COURTYARD PRESCHOOL





### Creative Learning at BWYA's Primary School

As part of their innovative curricula, Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA) primary school students recently had two unusual and challenging learning experiences. The first was a series of performances on Friday November 8, the Fairy Tale Showcase. The second was a visit from musician and teacher, Mr. Nicky, creatively combining expressive arts and study.



### A Lunch to Remember at BCIS

For International Day, Beijing City International School (BCIS) PTA held an international lunch to celebrate its diverse community with the one thing that brings everyone together - food! Culinary delights from around world were lovingly prepared and shared between community members, providing a great opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the BCIS community.







### HoK Celebrates St. Martin's Day

House of Knowledge (HoK) recently celebrated St. Martin's Day at 3 campuses. St. Martin's Day is a traditional German festival, and children hold their self-made lanterns in a procession. At HoK, they keep this tradition to deliver the message of kindness and sharing.



### Little Pace's Day Camping and Red Leaves Picnic

Little Pace Courtyard Preschool went on a day camping trip to enjoy the autumn scenery of the Beijing countryside. The students aged 2-6 years participated in setting up tents and singing before having their picnic under the red leaves. It was a refreshing excursion from their daily downtown hutong life.







### An Unforgettable Day with the Royal College of Music at Daystar Academy

The sounds of music and laughter flooded Daystar Academy's music classes on Nov 5, as two music workshops were given to the students by teachers from the Royal College of Music, who were impressed with the students' creativity in solving compositional problems, their sense of rhythm and timing, and their enthusiasm.

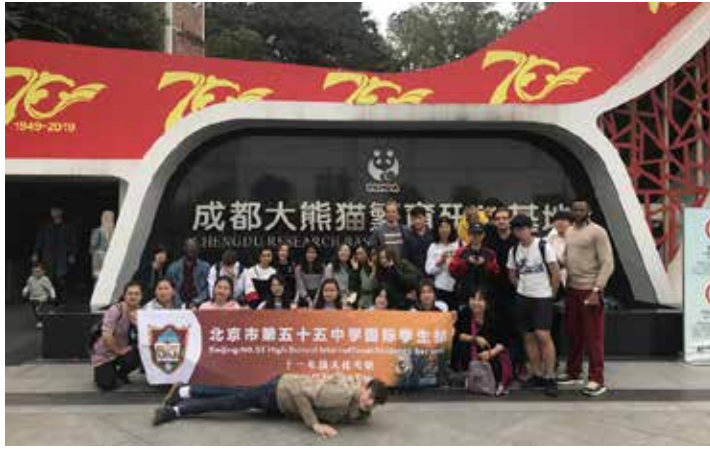


### Harrow Beijing Well-being Week

From October 28 to November 1, the Harrow Beijing community spent a meaningful week pausing, engaging, and reflecting on their well-being by identifying and practicing ways to incorporate five principles of healthy living with friends and family.







### Culture Trip Activities with BJ55 International Students Section

The culture trip is an important part of the International Students Section's curriculum at Beijing No.55 High School (BJ55). It is an extension of classroom learning and has been practiced for more than 20 years. This year, the students departed for a journey across the great rivers of Northern and Southern China.



### Huijia Green Dragons Win Three Titles in BASE Volleyball League

The Beijing Huijia Private School Green Dragon volleyball teams (U16 women's volleyball team, U19 women's volleyball team, and U19 men's volleyball team) won all three titles in the recent Beijing area international school sports league (BASE).







### **Favorite Spot to Relax**

Solana Mall. Tiara loves to stroll around the mall with a cup of hot chocolate, while her dad gets coffee from his favorite joint.

### **Favorite Weekend Activity**

Going out to have lunch together! We usually eat pizza or Japanese or Korean BBQ.

### **Adapted Chinese Culture**

Cooking and eating *jiaozi* on Chinese New Year's Eve.

### **Family Rituals**

Cooking together on the weekends.

### **Favorite Neighborhood**

Of course, Sanlitun!

### **Favorite App**

WeChat

### **Favorite Chinese Restaurant**

Western Mahua. Tiara fell in love with their "Beijing Kaoya" (roast duck) the first time she tried it. She literally asks to visit this restaurant at least twice a month.

### **Favorite Non-Chinese Restaurant**

Nine Road Pizzeria, where Tiara gets her favorite Four Cheese Pizza.

### **Favorite Moment in Beijing**

Tiara's favorite moment was her first day at BWYA. It was fun and she got to make new friends at school. All the teachers and students were so nice.

### **The Most Interesting You Find About Living in Beijing**

Coming back to Beijing after ten years, we are quite surprised by how much the city has changed. Everything has become more convenient. You can go anywhere and do anything without having to carry cash - it's all electronic now. All you need is your mobile phone and, of course, WeChat. From ordering takeouts, taxis, train tickets, even movie tickets, to grocery shopping, you can do it all by simply tapping your fingers. We love the new Beijing!

### **Favorite Thing to Cook at Home**

Indonesian meatballs

### **Favorite Thing to Do in the Winter**

Staying at home and doing nothing because it's cold outside.

### **Favorite Shop for Groceries**

Local supermarkets like Jingkelong or Sanyuanli Market to get the special imported goods from Indonesia.

### **Favorite Family Holiday Tradition**

Catching a movie at the cinema and having a good dinner afterwards.

## **Family Favorites!**

Photography by Uni You

**A**rianto Surojo is the Head of Social and Culture Department at the Embassy of Indonesia in Beijing, while Tilly Zaman was formerly a preschool Chinese teacher and is now a full-time mom. This is the second time Arianto has been stationed in Beijing, and they call themselves an "authentic" Beijing family. Why? Because their family became complete when their daughter Tiara was born here 12 years ago. Tiara is now a Grade 7 student at Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA).



# 中国女性 WOMEN

OF CHINA 海外版

《中国女性》(《Women of China》中文海外版)是由全国妇联主管、全国妇联网络信息传播中心(中国妇女外文期刊社)主办并出版的国家级女性主流刊物。创刊于2001年,16开本全彩印刷,发行几十个国家和地区以及国内大中小城市。

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- 特别策划** 全方位关注女性的成长与提升、事业与家庭,传递新生活方式和生活理念;
- 人物** 新时代新女性、她群体等栏目,关注各界女性人物,讲述精彩人生;
- 心情** 关注心灵、心理测试等栏目,沟通女性心灵,服务女性需求;
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