



IB

TIMES



Wkrótce Święta!

Życzymy, aby owa radość i pokój płynące z Bożego Narodzenia zagościły w Państwa domach. Niech Nowy Rok stanie się źródłem siły i nadziei!

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Christmas Classics

Gabriela Kruaze

It's Christmas and you're in the mood to watch something merry? Fortunately, there is plenty of Christmas movies out there!

But before you press play on „It's a Wonderful Life“, consider the alternatives we've prepared for you!

These are 5 top-rated Christmas movies of all times:

1. *A Christmas Carol* (1938)

In case you're somewhat distant from the genuine importance of Christmas, this tale about cantankerous Ebenezer Scrooge's nostalgic journey to find his Christmas soul will be just the thing.

2. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (1966)

Of course, there's an increasingly present-day reboot of this story, however, it's nothing like the original. In view of the eponymous Dr Seuss book, this animation can be a bit dubious. However, it has already stolen many hearts and may also steal yours!

3. *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940)

James Stewart is a real charmer! Here, he's by the side of Margaret Sullavan in the enchanting romantic tale, on which the Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks AO-focused romantic comedy „You've Got Mail“ is based. A man and a lady, who are totally incompatible, end up ensnared in a correspondence scheme set up by their mysterious friends.

4. *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944)

Not a Christmas motion picture exactly, yet we have this film to thank for the tune „Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.“ And at the Christmas Ball, Judy Garland (in a pseudo turn-of-the-century gigot-sleeve red velvet outfit) gives all of us a lecture on chic occasion dressing.

5. *Christmas in Connecticut* (1945)

This Christmas film is white with lies! Barbara Stanwyck accepts the job of a reporter who narrates an imaginary life as a housewife on a rural Connecticut ranch. When the truth is discovered, she puts on an act as to not disillusion a fan - a commended war hero played by Dennis Morgan. Incidentally, the two begin to have feelings for each other.

Surprised there's no „Home Alone“ on the list? We know you love it, but let's just give a chance to other charming movies that will definitely melt your hearts and make this special time unforgettable.



CHINESE NEW YEAR

Urszula Chocian

You've probably heard about Chinese New Year festival but did you know how people celebrate it? There is much more going on than just huge fire-works on our TVs. Let me show you Chinese culture from a fresh perspective.

Spring Festival 春节 Chūnjié

China calls its New Year the Spring Festival, which is determined by the old Chinese calendar and it starts at the end of January or early February. This year it will fall on Saturday, the 25th January 2020. The festival last will about 15 days and people get a week off from work. 2020 will be the year of the Rat, so I have a message to all Rats. Remember to wear a lot of red so bring it everywhere with you! Why? It is said that the year of your astrological animal is unfortunate. But do not worry, as the other eleven years are lucky for you. Why dates of Spring Festival change every year? It's defined by Lunar Calendar and this festival always falls on the second full moon after the winter solstice.

Preparations

How do you prepare for your celebrations? Do you have a routine or plan things spontaneously? As in every other country, the Chinese clean their houses. They have even more specific customs, for example on the 23rd or 24th day of the previous month they offer an oblation to the Kitchen God in the form of sweets. On the 28th day they sweep their houses with a bamboo broom as its symbolic meaning is to sweep away the evil. At the front of the house, on the doors' sides,

people hang Spring Scrolls 对联 Duilián, which are big red posters with gold or black characters. They have inscriptions wishing fortune, good luck and joy. Above the doors, the phrase 五福临门 Wǔfú línmén is hung. It means „May the five blessings come home“. This refers to Chinese 5 bats and their 5 boons, which are longevity, wealth, serenity, virtue and good death (death in peace). People also put door guards, which are the warriors of the Emperor, to keep out evil. Moreover, you will see a lot of red colour during the preparations and the festival itself, as it symbolises luck and good fortune. In southern China, people display boughs of plum (symbol of the end of winter and longevity) and peach (symbol of immortality and youthful beauty) blossom. Their flowers are one of the first to bloom. The character for good fortune 福 Fú is widely seen upside down to symbolise good fortune coming down from heaven.

Celebration

In our culture we teenagers and youth spend New Year with friends, throwing out parties or meeting in friends' houses. However, for the Chinese Spring Festival may be the only chance to meet the family and spend some time together. I suggest that you should not travel at that time to China as it is

considered the world's biggest migration, where 4 million people migrate inside the country. Families eat together a lavish meal, which usually contains fish 鱼 Yú which sounds the same as 余 Yú – plenty, surplus. Dumplings 饺子 Jiǎozi are shaped like silver/golden currency and sound similar to the phrase „change of time”. They are often eaten at midnight. In the afternoon people may attend „farewell ceremonies” or watch TV galas during midnight. Chinese let off firecrackers 爆竹 Bàozhú as in their culture firecrackers' loud sound was supposed to scare away the evil. Nowadays they are banned as they pollute the air and are unsafe. Instead, the government organises spectacular fireworks shows, which we can watch on TV.

In the morning of the New Year's Day



children greet their parents and grandparents. Everyone can sleep as long as they wish and it is prohibited to wake them up because it's unlucky. As a gift children receive a red envelope with money 压岁钱 Yāsuiqián „lucky money”. There are more attractions during the holiday. For instance, cities prepare performances of Lion or Dragon dances, which we can also watch on TV. In these dances, people hand a long paper dragon. There are often drummers in the background to scare away the Nian monster. People ought to be on their best behaviour for

the whole festival, as it will bring luck for them in the new year. Complaining and swearing are prohibited. People entertain themselves, for example, going to opera, theatre, acrobatic displays and gambling. There is even a specific „to do” list for each day of the Spring Festival, however, I won't include it here. Every Chinese Celebration concludes with Lantern Festival 元宵节 Yuánxiāo jié. As part of the closing ceremony, many dragon or lion parades are held. The traditional Lion dance was assigned for closing the Spring Festival but now it is displayed during other ceremonies. Paper lanterns are made, which lit the way for the ancestral spirits to home (tombs) after meeting with their family.



I hope you find Chinese New Year celebrations interesting and you have learnt not to travel to China during this time unless you want to be squished up during your trip or truly experience eastern culture.

I wish you all Happy New Year! 祝你新年快乐! Zhù nǐ xīnnián kuàilè!

The Star of Christmas Eve

Marcin Andraka

Let me take you on a short adventure that in the most curious of ways will show you how small we all are and will present an idea literally brighter than the sun.

Christmas Eve is not the same without a beautiful Christmas Tree. It is the symbol of life and rebirth, the mother of all Christmas decorations and most of all... it is where you put the presents. Have you ever spent the entirety of Christmas Eve watching the Tree, only to eventually miss Santa's appearance? Me too, but this year I have concocted a plan.

According to the data collected by the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Santa Claus usually starts his journey in the East, and then makes his way West through all the continents, before returning to his base at the North Pole. Well, I have thought up an invitation that, try as he might, he cannot decline. My evil plan will force him to come to Białystok first, straight from his home.

Like every year, a huge Christmas Tree has been put up in the middle of the city square recently. What if I wanted to make the Tree big enough to be seen from the North Pole? If illuminated, the Tree would be impossible to ignore and I would obviously only turn it off once I have gotten my present! First, let's lay some groundwork. According to historical accounts, Santa Claus is about 1.70 meters tall. Furthermore, due to the cold temperatures at the North Pole, the visibility out there should be great, even from very, very long distances. Next, the Pole is incredibly flat,

so with his height, our Santa should have a prime view on the horizon – extending about 4.5 km in all directions. That is, assuming that the Earth is round, rather than flat. If you believe in the flat Earth, I am afraid you might dislike the rest of this article. You have been warned.

Białystok's latitude is approximately 53° N, while the North Pole's is 90° N, of course. I will spare you, my dear reader, the specific calculations, as they were rather tedious.

That being said, here we go: If we assume the Earth's radius to be 6370 km, (which it is not the exact length, because the Earth is not a perfect ball, but is a close estimation nonetheless) and Santa's height to be 1.70 meters, as outlined before, then our Christmas Tree would have to be almost 1600 km tall! Words cannot describe this – not really. Hopefully, the following diagram can:



The tree would be incredibly tall, that is plain to see. However, length is not all that matters. Had it been only a thin, fragile branch, it would break apart under its own weight immediately. We are now going to give it some width based on the real Christmas Tree in the city square. I have found video footage of the tree being put up and used it to work out the following: The average size of a Polish man is 177.6 cm. I assumed that one of the workers in the video was that height. Then, through pixel measurements, I have compared his height to the height of the trunk of the tree, the height of the trunk to the tree's radius, and finally the radius to the tree's height. The tree

came out to be 26.2 meters tall, and 9.2 meters wide at its base. Applying these proportions to our tree, this image showcases how huge its base is. It covers parts of 5 countries and a sizeable portion of Poland's land area: The distance directly from Santa's eyes to the peak of the tree would be nearly 5000 km! Speaking of the peak, what you would be able to see from it is even more impressive. From that point, you could see from the North Pole to Dubai, the Ural mountains, half of Africa, even the eastern-most point of the North American Coast, and everything in between. Let's backtrack to the tree's height for just a moment. Sending something into space sounds like a huge deal, but the point where the atmosphere ends, and where the border with space is, is actually „only” 100 km from the Earth's surface. The humans at the International Space Station live at a height of 408 km. In the following picture, imagine that everything we do as people exists in this tiny belt of the atmosphere. Trapped between the rock and outer space. We seem so insignificant, our species so unable to survive anywhere, except for this narrow place on our tiny, tiny marble of an Earth. But let us not forget how badass that tree still looks up there and how it towers above all other human achievements. It would be visible from space. Actually visible, mind you. Much more so than the Great Wall. Speaking of being visible, we might be forgetting a crucial detail. The lighting. How many Christmas lights can we fit on our Great Tree? I suppose that depends on its area. A detailed British guide to dressing Christmas Trees states that for a 6ft (183 cm) tall tree, one ought to use 300 bulbs or 15 meters of Christmas lights. The area of our tree is, rather predictably, much larger than the area of a 6ft tree. What is not predictable, is that it is 750 billion times larger. That means we will need over 220 million million bulbs, for a total length of cables of 11 million million meters. To put these insane numbers into perspective

I made these comparisons: that is as many light bulbs, as there are drops of water in Lake Lucerne in central Switzerland and enough cables to go around the Earth's equator 280 thousand times or enough to go to the Sun and back 30 times!

According to Poland's leading providers, the total cost of the lights themselves (not including extra costs incurred due to how ridiculous, uncommon and dangerous the operation would be) would be 100 million million zloty. It would cost another 100 million million for every hour it spent running, too, so it would be favorable if Santa noticed the tree rather quickly...

But that is what the lights were made for! They would require an estimated power input of 54.2 thousand billion Watts. In just half a month they would use up as much electricity as the whole world did in 2016. However, it would be for a good cause. In all of Poland, parts of central Europe, and in almost the entirety of Eastern Europe, the tree would be brighter than the sun. In Białystok, it would be like an eye-, skin- and bones-burning supernova 90 million times brighter than our star. From the North Pole, it would rank as the third brightest light source, coming in right after the Sun and the Moon. Surely a spectacle Santa would not ignore.

Hopefully, you enjoyed this journey through both the big and the small. Maybe you learnt something new, maybe you just passed some time thinking about an evil mastermind plan. Either way, I must go now, the gingerbread will not make itself after all. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!



Vegan Christmas gingerbread cookies

Małgorzata Rojs

Ingredients for 20-30 pieces:

2 cups of wheat flour

1/2 tablespoon of cocoa

1 tablespoon of instant chicory coffee

2 tablespoons of dissolved molasses/ agave syrup/maple syrup

2/3 cup of sugar

1.5 teaspoons of baking soda

2 tablespoons of (preferably) homemade gingerbread spice

1 tablespoon of grapeseed oil

1 tablespoon of ground linseed + 3 tablespoons of lukewarm water, combined in a glass and set aside about 1/4 - 1/3 cup of your favourite, lukewarm plant-based milk

Preparation

- On a large board, mix flour, cocoa, coffee, pour molasses and mix thoroughly with a knife, then add sugar, soda, gingerbread spice and continue to stir with a spoon or knife.
- Set aside to cool for a while.
- When the mass cools down add oil, linseed and knead with your hands, Kneading all the while, gradually add milk until the mass is elastic and smooth. It will take about 5 - 10 minutes.

Heat the oven to 180 degrees. On a flour-covered board or mat, roll out the dough into a 1 cm thick cake and cut out the gingerbread cookies, then roll up the remaining dough and roll it out again.

Place the gingerbread cookies on a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake for 12 - 16 minutes, until the gingerbread cookies are overgrown and golden. Leave them to cool, then put them into a can or box. Cookies are quite soft right after baking, but they harden quickly, that is why they taste best when they are left in a container for a couple of days.

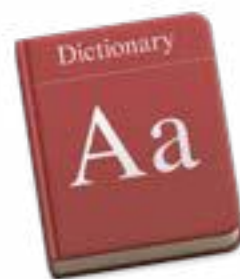
- If you want to decorate them do it after you take them out of your sealed container. If you want to eat them right after baking, wait until they cool down and then decorate them.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Aleksandra Popławska

From being cringey to being savage, there is no denying that the English language has changed remarkably over the past years. Most information nowadays is conveyed to us by social media and it has significantly modified the language we speak as well as write. But is that a change for the better? Some argue for, however, others claim that it may be detrimental to the society and its culture.

New means of conveying messages have appeared: abbreviations, emoticons, acronyms and other common neologisms. I am pretty sure we all use and know them very well. Am I right? They all come in handy when texting or writing a caption as no-one has time and desire to spell long and elaborate sentences when they can just simply write ,’omg” (oh my God), ,’lol” (laughing out loud) or type out one of the many emoticons (smileys) our phones’ keyboards possess. This way we can use minimal effort to express our thoughts or feelings. Shockingly, some of these acronyms have become so ubiquitous that they can even be found in some dictionaries (for instance, in the Oxford dictionary).



But as new short and less complex phrases take over, what about the high language? More and more people tend to speak as if they are texting, which is ne-

ver good. I am not suggesting we turn 400 years back in time to the Shakespearean era when words such as „thou” or „ought” were quite prevailing or that all conversations should be graced with an excessive use of magniloquent language, but how about taking some



time to come up with a nicer and a little bit more complex sentence? It will definitely make your, for example, speech much more entertaining and delightful.

Yet not only new words are being coined, but also New Englishes. You may be wondering if it is even an existing word and yes it is in fact. This term is quite new as it was first used around 20 years ago. ,’New Englishes” refers to the localised forms of English in the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and some parts of Asia (e.g. Singapore). These countries were under colonial administration, thus a lot of multilingual people live there. English has become the only link between people. Each one of these variations has taken on local characteristics such as accent, vocabulary and gram-

mar, so each has a different name (Singaporean English or Nigerian English). Due to the massive growth of social media networks, this language has become so popular that approximately 55 % of the information on the Internet is written in English. This led to developing Englishes in countries in which it is not the native tongue. Japanese English (Engrish) or Polish English (Polnish). Each has distinctive differences like the pronunciation or the words used and each of them is unique. Now the majority of people speaking English use the ,’new ,’ version rather than the” old” one.



To conclude, it is very clear that social media is playing an important role in the spread of the English language. Nonetheless, it is not only popularising but also adjusting it. In this article, I urge you to use English wisely. Remember to pay attention to the vocabulary you chose to use as well as grammar since the way you communicate reflects what kind of a person you are. The habit of writing and speaking correctly ought to be cultivated as English nowadays can be found in every corner of the world wide web. I think that we all should use social media properly for our benefit and pull out all the stops to make the Internet a nicer place.

bad moon rising

tam jesteś świadkiem ostatecznego zderzenia fal,
gdy grawitacja pociąga je z powrotem do jądra ziemi,
a wokół ciebie nagle zapada cisza.
twoje przerażone oczy podążają
za szkarłatnymi kroplami stopniowo uwalnianymi z chmur,
a ty zastanawiasz się, gdzie zniknęło światło księżycy.

w tym czasie ja patrzę,
jak oceany stają się czerwone,
a chmury spadają z nieba,
tworząc na ziemi jadowite kałuże.

badam twoje słone łzy w oczach,
które w końcu mnie dostrzegają,
świecąc ku górze w chwale i złości,
ale ja pochodzę od słońca i w nim żyje,
przechodząc przez twoje ciało każdego dnia,
nie zastanawiając się nad tym ani chwili.

moja interakcja z ludzką tkanką jest bliska zeru,
więc w końcu rozstaję się z tobą,
by wrócić do domu, do gwiazdy, w której zostałam poczęta.

twoja egzystencja leży na plecach z rękoma
pod głową, wpatrując się w twój księżyc,
który i tak nic dla ciebie nie robi,
tylko odbija moje światło i moje uczucia.
teraz wstaję i wylewam moje rany na twój wadliwy, kraterowany księżyc,
który ulega rzece mojego optymistycznego płynu,
abym mogła w końcu dać ci prawdziwy krwawy księżyc.

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