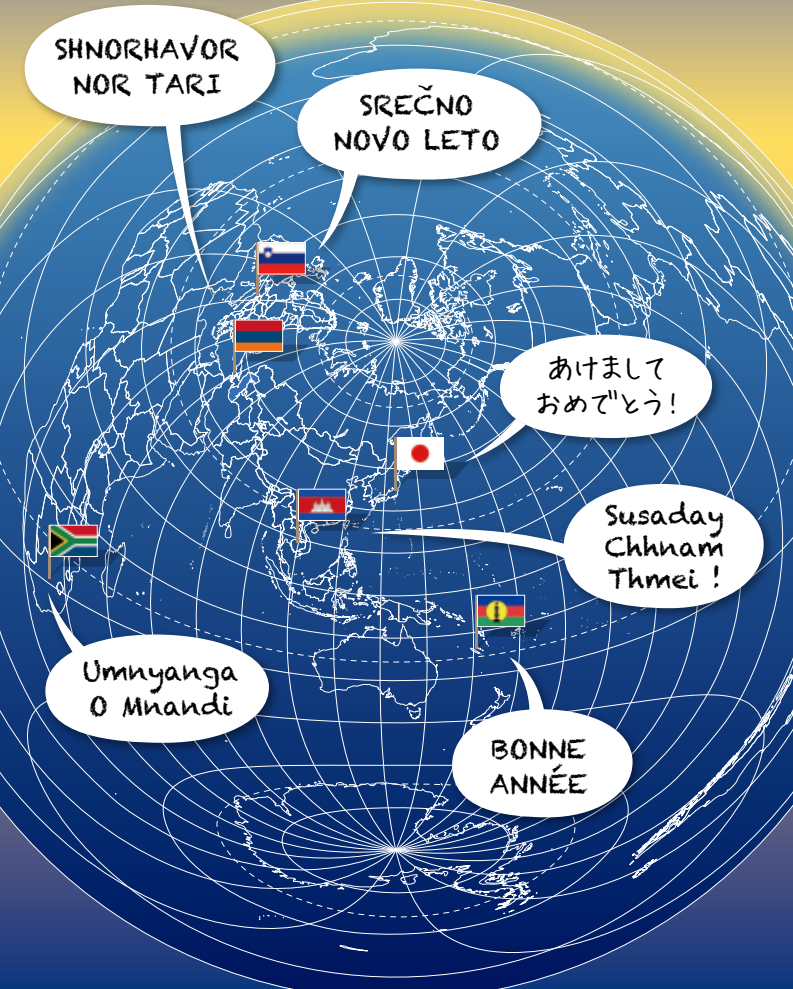


MY TOWN  
**AKASAKA** 赤坂  
青山 **AOYAMA**

世界の“ゆる年”くる年  
Special Feature  
“The Old Year and the New Year” Around the World



**Announcement from the Akasaka Goodwill Ambassadors**

The Akasaka Goodwill Ambassadors are mascot characters that communicate the appeal of Akasaka to the people!

They perform actively in events held in the Akasaka/Aoyama district, and engage in activities every day, together with those in the region, to enliven the Akasaka/Aoyama districts.

**Akasakamen**  
A hardworking boy with a strong sense of justice, this hero strives to preserve peace in Akasaka. He watches over the town to ensure that everyone can live securely with peace of mind.

The three Akasaka Goodwill Ambassadors are also on Facebook, and are spreading the good word about Akasaka!  
They perform in events and more, with the aims of revitalizing the local community and facilitating exchanges.  
Please inquire through the contact information provided below if you have any requests.

**The Akasaka Goodwill Ambassador LINE stickers are here!**

The eagerly anticipated LINE stickers have been released. Enjoy various expressions of Ayumin, Akao-kun, and myself, sides of us Akasakamen that we do not normally show. We hope for everyone to be connected, and for the city to become more and more vibrant and energetic. We will continue to put in steady efforts to communicate the appeal of the city, so look forward to our activities!  
Search for Akasaka Goodwill Ambassadors (“Akasaka Shinzen Taishi”) on the LINE sticker shop! The stickers are categorized according to the three different characters. (From Akasakamen)

**Inquiries:** Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section  
**Tel: 03-5413-7013**

**Ayumin**  
A friendly girl with an inquisitive nature. She loves shopping and restaurant-hopping!  
She is the leader of the Akasaka Goodwill Ambassadors.

**Akao-kun**  
Akao-kun has a very kind and level-headed personality. His age is apparently a secret. His hobby is taking historical walks in Akasaka.



**“Akasaka/Aoyama – The Towns of Beauty and Good Manners”**

Will you participate in the campaign and help to beautify these towns?

What is the “Akasaka/Aoyama – The Towns of Beauty and Good Manners” campaign?

The “Akasaka/Aoyama – The Towns of Beauty and Good Manners” campaign aims to improve manners and beautify the surrounding environment by organizing clean-up activities for the towns in collaboration with local residents, corporations, and administrative agencies. Examples of activities include prohibiting the littering of cigarettes and smoking on roads.  
Furthermore, engaging in clean-up activities together allows participants to see the faces of others, which in turn contributes to fostering community ties and to ensuring the safety and security of the Akasaka/Aoyama districts.

When does the campaign take place?

With the exception of July and August, the campaign is held twice every month.  
Campaign activities are carried out in rotation at Akasaka-Mitsuke Station, Tameike-Sanno Station, Akasaka Station, Aoyama-Itchome Station, Gaenmae Station, and Omotesando Station. The time depends on the venue, but kick-off generally begins from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. A large number of participants are involved each time, and all participants work actively to beautify Akasaka/Aoyama and transform them into towns that we can be proud of.

Indeed! All members of the community and corporations are striving to beautify the Akasaka and Aoyama districts! Perhaps I shall also participate in the campaign!

We are recruiting corporations and organizations to participate in the Clean Campaign. Individuals are also welcome! Please inquire with the Collaboration Project Section for more details.



**Inquiries:** Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section  
**Tel: 03-5413-7272**

**Countermeasures against Illegal Bicycle Parking in Akasaka/Aoyama Districts**

Minato City is working together with relevant national organizations as well as the local regions to implement countermeasures against illegal bicycle parking near subway stations and promote the development of parking areas for bicycles and the dissemination of the relevant information. However, as there is little land in the Akasaka/Aoyama districts that can be developed, parking areas for bicycles have not been built at all the station areas in these districts.

Jun Utsumi, BDA Secretariat

In order to reduce the cases of illegal bicycle parking in the Akasaka/Aoyama districts, a parking lot design competition, Bicycle Street Design Competition AOYAMA (BDA), is held every year based on the concept of “Tomeru + Miseru” (Stop + Show) designs. The objectives of the competition are to increase the number of parking spaces for bicycles, and to create bicycle parking lots that contribute to beautifying the surrounding town, and which enable users to park their bicycles in a “stylish” manner suitable to the Aoyama district.

In 2009, the Aoyama Shop Owners Association made a declaration about becoming a “bicycle-friendly city,” with the aim of achieving symbiosis between the city and bicycles. In cooperation with corporations and organizations, this initiative was launched in 2012 by volunteers from the Aoyama Bicycle Conference as part of efforts to promote various activities in order to attain the goals set forth under the declaration.

Isshinro, hair salon on Aoyama 2-chome

The photograph shows the “Parking Comb,” which was selected for the award of excellence in the third competition.  
Minato City is working to set up “Minakuru” (bicycle-sharing) ports ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Aoyama Shop Owners Association and BDA Secretariat are providing information about the location of these ports in Aoyama. Going forward, greater effort will be made to apply the winning BDA designs to bicycle parking racks at bicycle parking lots in the Akasaka/Aoyama districts.

**Inquiries:** Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section  
**Tel: 03-5413-7272**

**If you are a senior citizen, why not try enjoying fashion more?**

**Introducing the Akasaka/Aoyama Senior Fashionista Project**

Minato City will be launching the **Akasaka/Aoyama Senior Fashionista Project** starting this fiscal year. This project aims to help **senior citizens enjoy fashion**, head out actively to the streets, and live vibrant and dynamic lives. To that end, the following activities will be launched.

- **Fashion seminars**.....Various seminars will be conducted for those who wish to improve their own fashion sense and styling.
- **Senior model photography session**.....Photo shoots of your own fashion style that you take pride in will be carried out in the trendy neighborhoods of Akasaka and Aoyama. As the photo shoot will be undertaken by professional cameramen who have photographed many famous celebrities, with the participation of professional hair stylists and make-up artists, participants will be able to experience what it is like to be a model. There are plans to publish a collection of photographs at the end of the event.

Those living and/or working in Akasaka/Aoyama, who are about 70 years old and above, are eligible to participate, regardless of gender and nationality. Please introduce anyone whom you feel may be a suitable candidate.

Call for participants on the various events will be put up on bulletin boards and published in Minato City newsletters as and when the information becomes available. Please inquire if you are interested.

Cooperation on location: BLUENOTE TOKYO and LOUNGE by Francfranc  
**Inquiries:** Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section  
**Tel: 03-5413-7013**

**Questions for foreigners**  
**Do you know about New Year in Japan?**

Japanese classes are held regularly at the Minato International Association at Kita-Aoyama-Itchome. On a certain day in October 2015, we visited a class of students who had recently arrived in Japan, and conducted the “The Old Year and the New Year” –New Year Questionnaire on 15 students. These students of diverse age and nationalities from the Philippines, United States, United Kingdom, Ecuador, Canada, Korea, Syria, China, and Belgium earnestly answered the questionnaire.

When it comes to New Year in Japan, **kite-flying** was the most well-known among foreigners, and is probably familiar to them as global competitions are also held. There are also still many storefronts at shopping streets that are decorated with **pine decorations**, and may be seen when one passes by the stores. **Karuta** is a New Year game that remains a difficult one even among the Japanese people today.

As these students have just arrived in Japan, many of them have probably not experienced New Year in Japan. However, we were delighted to hear that **they wanted to learn about New Year**.

After the questionnaire was completed, we thanked the participants. In response, they returned the same greeting “Arigato gozaimashita,” which touched us very much.  
As we welcome the year-end and New Year period, we hope that foreigners can fully experience the seasonal traditions of Japan as they take walks around Akasaka and Aoyama.

**Q Do you know about the things that are related to New Year in Japan?**



**Q What surprised you about New Year in Japan?**

- I like the way people give prayers for the New Year at shrines (New Year’s visit to Shinto shrines).
- My impression of New Year is that it is a holiday that people spend at home with their families.
- I was surprised that fireworks are not set off.
- The streets are very quiet. I was surprised that the stores are closed.

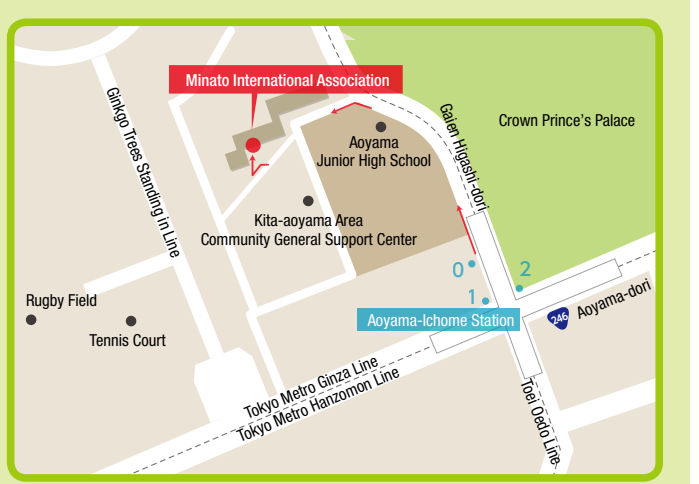
**Would you like to interact with people from various countries?**  
**Information about the Minato International Association**

Minato City is home to more than 80 embassies, and welcomes a large number of overseas residents and visitors. Hence, there are countless opportunities for exchanges between Japanese and non-Japanese people. Intercultural exchanges and interaction between people help to enrich the mind and spirit.

The Minato International Association (MIA) aims to create opportunities for such exchanges, and provides support for foreigners through various events, language classes, and in other aspects of life.

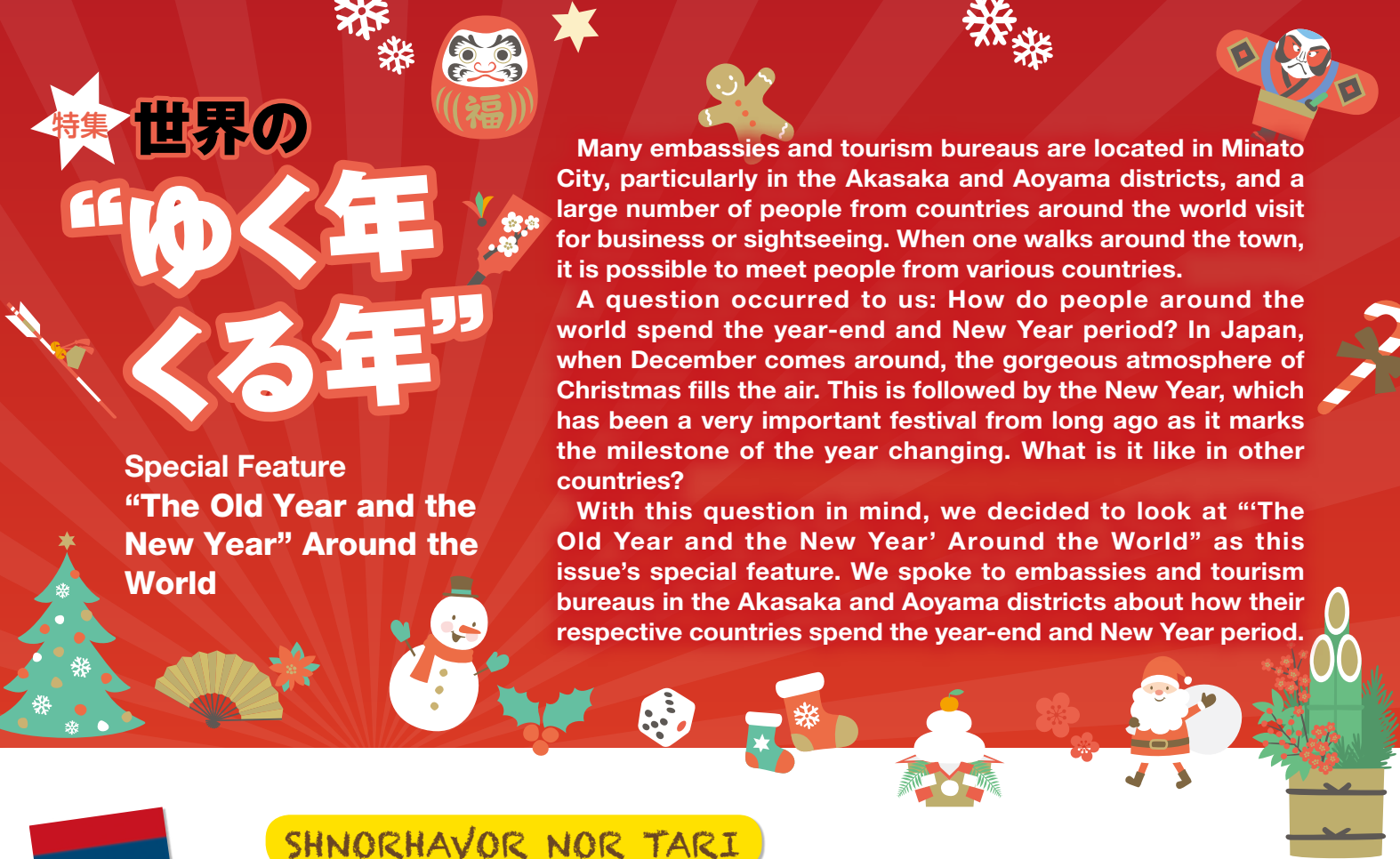
Anyone may participate in the events and utilize the support services. In addition to foreign residents who may be experiencing some anxiety about their everyday lives in Japan, Japanese people who wish to interact with foreigners and offer them support are also welcome to participate. Please join in the events first to get a feel for the atmosphere. A membership system has also been set up, allowing members to participate in various events at members’ prices. Please feel free to inquire.

- These are some of the activities that we organize!**
- New Year party
  - Hiking
  - Introduction to Japanese culture
  - Conversing in the Japanese language
  - Japanese language seminars/Seminars in various foreign languages
  - Consultation services for foreigners, etc.



**Inquiries: Minato International Association**  
**Tel:** 03-6440-0233 **Web site:** http://www.minato-intl-assn.gr.jp/  
**Address:** Toei Kita-Aoyama 1-Chome Apartments, Bldg. 3, B1; 1-6-3 Kita-Aoyama; Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0061  
**Access:** A five-minute walk from Exit 0 of the Aoyama 1-Chome subway station on the Tokyo Metro Ginza and Hanzomon Lines and the Metropolitan Oedo Line.





# 世界の“ゆく年くる年”

## Special Feature “The Old Year and the New Year” Around the World

Many embassies and tourism bureaus are located in Minato City, particularly in the Akasaka and Aoyama districts, and a large number of people from countries around the world visit for business or sightseeing. When one walks around the town, it is possible to meet people from various countries.

A question occurred to us: How do people around the world spend the year-end and New Year period? In Japan, when December comes around, the gorgeous atmosphere of Christmas fills the air. This is followed by the New Year, which has been a very important festival from long ago as it marks the milestone of the year changing. What is it like in other countries?

With this question in mind, we decided to look at “The Old Year and the New Year’ Around the World” as this issue’s special feature. We spoke to embassies and tourism bureaus in the Akasaka and Aoyama districts about how their respective countries spend the year-end and New Year period.

## Republic of Armenia

### What? New Year celebrations in the Republic of Armenia last from New Year’s Day to Christmas?!

“Christmas is on 6 January in Armenia.” This interesting insight was offered by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Japan, H.E. Mr. Grant R. Pogosyan.

Before delving into the main topic, let us take a look at the profile of Armenia. Located in the southern part of Caucasus, Armenia is a landlocked country surrounded by Turkey to its west, Georgia to its north, Azerbaijan to its east, Iran to its south, and touching the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, which is an enclave of Azerbaijan. It is one of the countries with the oldest cultures in the



### Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Japan, H.E. Mr. Grant R. Pogosyan

Taught at International Christian University as a mathematician and information scientist from 1991, and was appointed as the first Ambassador of Armenia to Japan in 2012.

- **What are your impressions of New Year in Japan?** “Many people in Japan follow the custom of waking up early on New Year’s and visiting a Shinto shrine, and I think that it is a good practice. Although I am not a Buddhist, my wife and I visit Jindaiji on New Year’s Day every year. We also like the practice of returning the old amulets (omamori) and receiving new ones. In particular, I think that the tradition of burning the amulets at Jindaiji, surrounded by its beautiful natural surroundings, is a sight that is resplendent with Japanese beauty.”
- **What did you find surprising about New Year in Japan?** “There was nothing particularly surprising about the New Year customs. Many Japanese people share the customs of watching the “Kohaku Utagassen” singing competition on New Year’s Eve every year, and eating the traditional New Year food together on New Year’s Day. In a certain sense, the Japanese people become one through the New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day customs, and I think that this is very interesting.”

### Welcome at any time during the weeklong celebrations!

The New Year celebrations commence from midnight of New Year’s Eve, and the holiday continues for one week till Christmas. For this reason, each family goes to much trouble to prepare for the holiday meals. Moreover, they do not only prepare food for the family. During the celebration period, it is customary for relatives as well as friends and neighbors to drop by without prior invitations, and partake in dining and wining with the family. Surprisingly, homes are not locked during this period so that guests can visit at any time! This is a country with good public security, and a national character of benevolence and generosity.

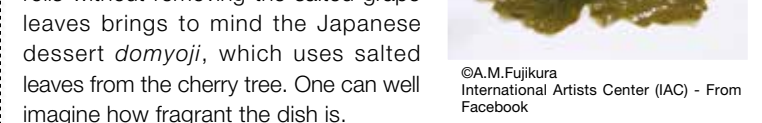
To ensure that the household is ready to receive any number of guests at any time, the womenfolk begin food preparations in earnest several days before. Meats such as pork, beef, and mutton are smoked or roasted so that they can last for a longer period of time. Colorful vegetables are stewed or used to make salads, and a rich variety of cakes, dried fruits, and nuts are also prepared.

The men go out shopping for wine and cognac. Several people will drive to a farm without making any prior appointments, ask if they make wine, and sample the wine there and then. While visiting different farms and sampling the wine, they sometimes drink too much and become drunk. Of course, the driver endures the temptation and refrains from drinking. Apparently, in the past, the Ambassador had also been asked to get as much as 100L of wine in large glass bottles.

### Representative Christmas dish: *dolma*

By the time of Christmas on 6 January, one’s stomach may be feeling a little queasy as a result of the continuous eating, and people begin to desire lighter meals. In Japan, something like seven-herb rice porridge would probably come to mind. *Dolma* is a dish by wrapping and rolling a well-mixed filling of minced meat, rice, and herbs in salted grape leaves, and cooking the rolls in soup. These are served covered in garlic-flavored yoghurt sauce for a light and refreshing taste. Eating the rolls without removing the salted grape leaves brings to mind the Japanese dessert *domyoji*, which uses salted leaves from the cherry tree. One can well imagine how fragrant the dish is.

The same applies for the date for Christmas. In principle, in the Eastern Orthodox Church such as the Russian Orthodox Church, the birth of Christ is celebrated on 25 December according to the ancient Julian calendar. This is the same date as 7 January in the modern Gregorian calendar that is used today. On the other hand, the Armenian Apostolic Church, which follows the Armenian traditions, has kept to the old practices and celebrates the birth of Jesus on 6 January.



©Sakurako Abe International Artists Center (IAC) - From Facebook



©A.M.Fujikura International Artists Center (IAC) - From Facebook

*Dolma* is a representative Armenian dish served during the Christmas celebrations. A well-mixed filling of minced meat, rice, and herbs is wrapped and rolled in salted grape leaves, then cooked in soup. The rolls are served covered in garlic-flavored yoghurt sauce.

**DATA**

**Republic of Armenia**

- Area: 29,800 km<sup>2</sup> (Approx. 1/13 of Japan. Smallest in the former Soviet Union)
- Population: 3 million
- Capital: Yerevan
- Religion: Mainly Christian (Armenian Church under the Eastern Church system)
- Language: The official language is Armenian

## BONNE ANNÉE New Caledonia

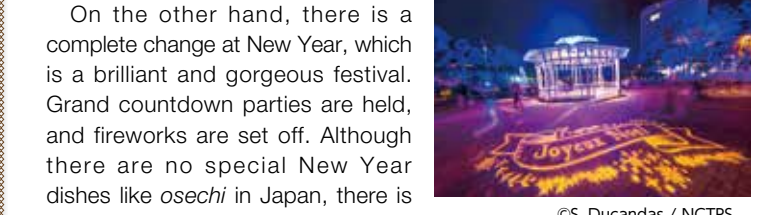
Located about 7,000km south of Japan, New Caledonia is an island floating in the South Pacific, east of Australia. It is a popular resort area that is known as the “island closest to heaven,” and is also popular among the Japanese people. We spoke to Yoshiaki Maruyama through a recommendation from the tourism bureau of New Caledonia.

### A tranquil year-end and New Year period when families enjoy going on vacation

As New Caledonia is located in the Southern Hemisphere, the year-end and New Year period falls during the midsummer period. During this period, many people take leave from work corresponding with their children’s summer holidays (two months from mid-December to mid-February), and have fun by going on family vacations. For example, they take part in marine sport activities on the beaches, charter yachts, or stay over at floating bungalows (cottages) at remote islands. They enjoy a tranquil year-end and New Year period.

The people of New Caledonia spend Christmas and New Year in a way that is completely opposite from the Japanese people. As the majority of the people are Christians, they spend Christmas quietly. One starts to feel the Christmas atmosphere from the beginning of December. During this time, Christmas trees and lights can be seen in town and at homes. Even so, these are not the gorgeous decorations that we imagine, but apparently look unspectacular and plain. A postbox for sending letters to Santa is also set up in Place des Cocotiers, located in the heart of the capital Noumea. On Christmas day itself, families have a quiet day, while devout Christians attend mass at church.

On the other hand, there is a complete change at New Year, which is a brilliant and gorgeous festival. Grand countdown parties are held, and fireworks are set off. Although there are no special New Year dishes like *osechi* in Japan, there is abundant seafood as the island is surrounded by the sea. In particular, New Caledonians consume even more prawns than the Japanese people, and the quantity of prawns they eat increases during the New Year period.



©S. Ducandas / NCTPS

Under the midsummer sun, everyone crowds around the dining table to enjoy classic dishes such as *braai* and stews. *Braai* refers to barbecue of meat and fish, as well as abalone and lobsters caught by the residents themselves. In particular, a large spiral sausage of diameter 20–30cm known as *boerewors* is indispensable. In South Africa, members of a family share strong bonds, and it is common to spend the usual Saturdays with family. During times other than Christmas, they also enjoy having *braai* at parks and their gardens at home. Most of the stores are closed during the Christmas season. Schools also go on break, so it is typical to take about three consecutive weeks of holiday during this period, and to spend some relaxing time at a beach resort.

### Two-week holidays once every two months!

A surprising fact that I learnt during this interview was that there are many school holidays in New Caledonia that span a long period of time. In addition to the year-end and New Year holidays that I touched on earlier, there are also two-week breaks once every two months. Of course, these are in addition to the weekend breaks every week. After hearing about this, an image of the leisurely lifestyles and slow passage of time in the South rose in my mind’s eyes.

If everyone visits New Caledonia with such knowledge, wouldn’t it add to your enjoyment of the trip? We also heard that the accommodation facilities become crowded during school holidays, so do take note of that.

**DATA**

**New Caledonia**

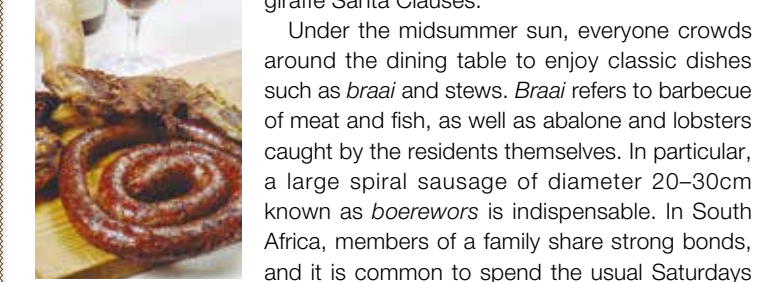
- Area: 18,577 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population: Approx. 270,000
- Capital: Noumea
- Religion: Christianity
- Language: French

## Umnyanga O Mhambi Republic of South Africa

The Republic of South Africa is located on the southern tip of the African continent, and is a member of the British Commonwealth. It is known as the “Rainbow Nation,” and is a country with diverse peoples of different cultures, such as the Ndebele people and the Zulu people. We spoke to Yuka Kondo from the South African Tourism Japan Office about how the year-end and New Year period is spent in the Republic of South Africa.

### Christmas in midsummer in the Southern Hemisphere!

Christmas happens at the height of summer in South Africa, because it is located in the Southern Hemisphere. Christmas is the most important event of the year, and an important day that the entire family spends together. South Africa is known as the “Europe of Africa.” There are nine tribes, but there are hardly any customs that are unique to any tribe. Approximately 80% of the people are Christians, so they spend their Christmases with customs that are modeled after Christianity, such as having meals with their families and exchanging presents. Even so, as it is Christmas in summer, there are no snow-themed decorations. Rather, green Christmas trees are decorated with bead ornaments and other things, while Christmas cards often come with animal illustrations, such as giraffe Santa Clauses.



The giant sausage, boerewors, is a classic part of braai

Under the midsummer sun, everyone crowds around the dining table to enjoy classic dishes such as *braai* and stews. *Braai* refers to barbecue of meat and fish, as well as abalone and lobsters caught by the residents themselves. In particular, a large spiral sausage of diameter 20–30cm known as *boerewors* is indispensable. In South Africa, members of a family share strong bonds, and it is common to spend the usual Saturdays with family. During times other than Christmas, they also enjoy having *braai* at parks and their gardens at home. Most of the stores are closed during the Christmas season. Schools also go on break, so it is typical to take about three consecutive weeks of holiday during this period, and to spend some relaxing time at a beach resort.

### Grand fireworks set off for New Year’s Eve!

Grand fireworks are set off in various parts of the country on New Year’s Eve, and people welcome the New Year with countdown events.

On 1 January, a costume parade and the carnival known as the Cape Minstrel Carnival is held. This is a festival for the so-called “colored” people of mixed races such as Indian or Asian. While it used to be a parade organized by the Malays with the connotation of a political protest. However, it has developed to become a festival for all “colored” races, and is now a seasonal tradition of Cape Town.

**DATA**

**Republic of South Africa**

- Area: 1,220,000 km<sup>2</sup> (approx. 3.2 times of Japan)
- Population: 52,980,000 (2013: World Bank)
- Capital: Pretoria
- Religion: Christianity (approx. 80% of the population), Hinduism, Islam
- Language: English, Afrikaans, Bantu languages (Zulu, Sotho, etc.), making a total of 11 official languages

※The formal name may differ depending on the official language.

## SREČNO NOVO LETO Republic of Slovenia

### What kind of country is Slovenia?

Slovenia gained independence in 1991, and is a young country with just 24 years of history. It is possible to enjoy abundant nature, beautiful scenery, and diverse cultures throughout the year, making it an attractive place for visitors. Incidentally, when it is spelled out in alphabets as “Slovenia,” it is the only country in the world to contain the word “Love,” as if inviting one to feel the love of Slovenia...

We spoke to Cuk Mirjam Moishi from the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Tokyo, about how the people of Slovenia spend the year-end and New Year period.

### What is the year-end and New Year period like in Slovenia?

“Happy December, Slovenia!” Today, Slovenia has become a democratic country. As one may expect, many of the events are associated with Christianity. Christmas is the second most important festival after Easter.

From sunset on 5 December, in the capital city of Ljubljana, all the Christmas trees are lit at the same time, while the entire city becomes illuminated with lights. Stalls are set up, and the gorgeous atmosphere of Christmas can be felt everywhere.

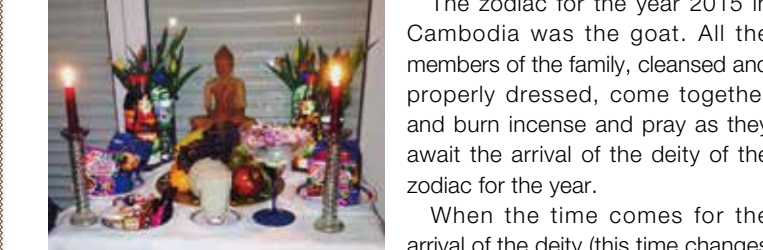
## Susaday Chhnam Thmei ! Kingdom of Cambodia

New Year in Cambodia lasts from 13 April (New Year’s Eve) to 16 April. This New Year, celebrated in April, is the same as in Thailand, Myanmar, and India. In Cambodia, everyone returns home during this period, and it is common for people to spend the holiday with their families back in their hometowns. The urban areas thus become very quiet at this time.

We spoke to Mr. Chhay Makara from the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Japa about New Year in Cambodia.

### Moha Songkran The day for welcoming a new deity (zodiac): 1st day

First, to prepare for the New Year, people carry out major housecleaning, go shopping at the market, and buy offerings for the gods and ingredients for New Year dishes.



Offerings to welcome the deity for the New Year

The zodiac for the year 2015 in Cambodia was the goat. All the members of the family, cleansed and properly dressed, come together and burn incense and pray as they await the arrival of the deity of the zodiac for the year.

When the time comes for the arrival of the deity (this time changes from year to year), everyone wishes others “Happy New Year!” and New Year celebrations are broadcast on television at the same time.

Due to the time difference, Cambodians living overseas check the correct time for the start of New Year with their families back at home, and commence celebrations corresponding with that time.

In homes, shrine-like installations known as “cribs” are made of old trees, dead branches, and stones. The insides are covered in moss, and ceramic dolls, goats, and sheep are placed on top of the moss. The cribs are regarded alongside the Holy Family, and are lit from 6:00 p.m. on the evening of 24 December. After that, the family sits around the dinner table and celebrates by sharing *potica*, a sweet baked good that comes as a roll or a round shape and filled with walnut paste. At midnight, the family attends mass.

On 25 December (a public holiday), children exchange the eagerly anticipated presents, and spend the holiday with their families. The following day, 26 December, is the day of independence and unity. Friends also visit one another on this day.

According to Ms. Moishi, the “white Christmas” of Slovenia is more wonderful than anything else. She also commented that it is a pity that the volume of snow in the country has decreased in recent years as a result of global warming.

### Three Santa Clauses

There are actually three Santa Clauses in Slovenia. The first Santa Claus is St. Nicholas, who comes on 6 December, followed by the red Santa Claus who turns up on 25 December and who is also a familiar figure in Japan, and

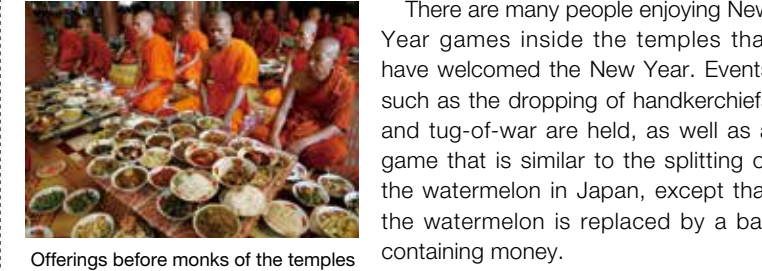


Potica, eaten during special celebrations such as Christmas

## Wanabat The day for giving alms: 2nd day

On the second day, the people go to the temples (Pagoda) to pray. They also donate a generous amount of food to the monks at the temples. The monks pray to the Buddha and deities for the happiness of the people as their expression of gratitude for these alms.

Alms are also given to the poor. These customs are unique to Cambodia, where there are many devout Buddhists.



Offerings before monks of the temples

There are many people enjoying New Year games inside the temples that have welcomed the New Year. Events such as the dropping of handkerchiefs and tug-of-war are held, as well as a game that is similar to the splitting of the watermelon in Japan, except that the watermelon is replaced by a ball containing money.

On this day, children also give their parents gifts of money, clothes, and fruits. While this resembles the practice of giving money (*otoshidama*) at New Year, the giver and the receiver are opposite from that in Japan.

### Tanai Liang Saka The day that marks a new beginning: 3rd day

On the third day, children wash their parents’ bodies with water as a mark of respect toward their parents. They then receive blessings from their

the third Santa Claus comes on 1 January. Slovenia had formerly been a socialist country, and was not allowed to celebrate Christmas. Because of that, the “grandfather of winter” would come on 1 January to distribute presents to children. Traces of this tradition still remain, and there are families that give presents to children on 1 January even today.

Fireworks are set off at midnight on 31 December, while parties are held at town squares everywhere on New Year’s Eve. As a result, many people have to take the following day off as well. On 1 January, parties are also held where people wish one another “Happy New Year” with specialty wines.

Finally, when I asked Ms. Moishi about the year-end and New Year period in Japan, she felt that the New Year *osechi* was simply too sweet.

**DATA**

**Republic of Slovenia**

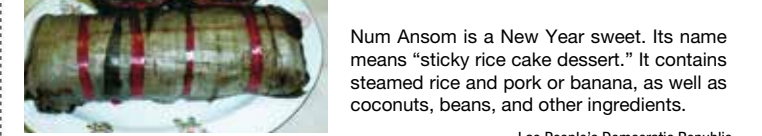
- Area: 20,273 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population: Approx. 2,062,000
- Capital: Ljubljana
- Religion: Catholicism, Islam, Serbian Orthodox, Protestantism, etc.
- Language: Slovenian

## Kingdom of Cambodia

parents. To the Cambodians, the parents are people of great importance. Hence, bathing one’s parents with water has the same significance as washing the statues of Buddha at the temples with water.

On the third day of the New Year holiday, the people play Cambodian pop music and folk music and dance, and have a good time drinking with others. While expressing their love and respect toward the gods and their parents, the lively New Year in Cambodia that is spent with family and friends is, again, somewhat different from New Year in Japan. It is an important seasonal festival that gives a strong sense of the national traits of the Cambodian people.

According to Mr. Makara, “We believe that spending New Year together with family and those whom we are close to brings us happiness for the year.”



Num Ansom is a New Year sweet. Its name means “sticky rice cake dessert.” It contains steamed rice and pork or banana, as well as coconuts, beans, and other ingredients.

**DATA**

**Kingdom of Cambodia**

- Area: 181,000 km<sup>2</sup> (approx. slightly less than half of Japan)
- Population: 14.7 million (government statistics from 2013)
- Capital: Phnom Penh
- Religion: Buddhism (Islam for some minority tribes)
- Language: Cambodian

※The yellow balloons on the right side of the country names show “Happy New Year” in the language of the country.