

Let's Celebrate!

What holidays are people from other countries celebrating this season?

This month, millions will observe special holidays. But many people around the world will be celebrating holidays you might never have heard of during November and December.

Junkanoo

In the Bahamas, *Junkanoo* is held on December 26 and January 1. The Bahamas are islands that make up a nation in the Atlantic Ocean near Florida.

Junkanoo begins before the sun comes up. That's when the Junkanoo parade starts. Dancers in costumes take to the streets. People along the parade route are invited to join in with the dancers.

Junkanoo grew popular during the 16th and 17th centuries. African slaves were given a special holiday after Christmas. They were allowed to leave the fields and observe the holiday with their families. They celebrated with African music, dance, and costumes. After the slaves were freed, people in the Bahamas continued the Junkanoo tradition.

Day of the Dead

In Mexico, *El Día de los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead") isn't about ghosts. It is about remembering relatives and celebrating life.

On the Day of the Dead, family members gather in cemeteries. They decorate family members' graves with colorful flowers. They tell stories about past relatives. They also have a picnic with lots of great food. On this holiday, death is not seen as something to fear. Instead, it is seen as just another part of life.

"Our relatives wouldn't want us to cry," said Miguel, a Mexican boy. "So we are happy instead." The Day of the Dead is held on the first or second of November.

Loy Krathong

In Thailand, *Loy Krathong* is held during the full moon in November. Thailand is a country in Southeast Asia.

Before the festival, people make *krathongs*. A krathong is a small boat made of a banana leaf. Each krathong contains a flower, a candle, and three incense sticks. Incense sticks produce a pleasant smell when burned.

During the festival, people light their candles and float their krathongs down rivers. Loy Krathong also includes feasts and fireworks.

Boxing Day

In several countries, the day after Christmas is a holiday. In those countries, that day is called *Boxing Day*. The holiday began in Britain.

According to old stories, wealthy people gave boxes of gifts to servants on Boxing Day. Other stories say that servants take boxes to work on the day after Christmas. Their bosses placed coins in the boxes as special year-end gifts.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What holiday is held on December 26 and January 1 in the Bahamas?

- A. Junkanoo
- B. the Day of the Dead
- C. Loy Krathong
- D. Boxing Day

2. What does the text list and describe?

- A. The text lists and describes events that took place in Britain during the 16th century.
- B. The text lists and describes famous people in the history of Mexico.
- C. The text lists and describes holidays around the world.
- D. The text lists and describes bodies of water in Thailand.

3. Reread the section of the text under the subheading "Junkanoo."

Based on the information in this section, what can you conclude about the people who celebrated Junkanoo in the 16th and 17th centuries?

- A. The people who celebrated Junkanoo in the 16th and 17th centuries probably enjoyed having picnics.
- B. The people who celebrated Junkanoo in the 16th and 17th centuries probably liked burning incense.
- C. The people who celebrated Junkanoo in the 16th and 17th centuries were probably slaves.
- D. The people who celebrated Junkanoo in the 16th and 17th centuries probably owned slaves.

4. Reread the section of the text under the subheading "Loy Krathong."

Based on the information in this section, what can you infer about when Loy Krathong takes place?

- A. Loy Krathong probably takes place at dawn.
- B. Loy Krathong probably takes place at noon.
- C. Loy Krathong probably takes place in the middle of the afternoon.
- D. Loy Krathong probably takes place at night.

5. What is the main idea of the text?

- A. The Bahamas are islands that make up a nation in the Atlantic Ocean.
- B. Many people around the world celebrate different holidays.
- C. The Day of the Dead and Loy Krathong are holidays celebrated in November.
- D. Boxing Day is a holiday that began in Britain.

6. According to old stories, who received boxes of gifts from wealthy people on Boxing Day?

7. Compare Junkanoo with Boxing Day. Support your comparison with information from the text.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

People in the Bahamas continued the Junkanoo tradition _____ the slaves were freed.

- A. because
- B. instead
- C. before
- D. after

9. Use the following vocabulary word in a sentence: tradition.

10. If you and your friends go out for pizza one Friday afternoon, is that a tradition for your group of friends? Why or why not?
