

# Holidays and traditions



## Ideas for classroom activities (Level: A2)

The photos on the calendar can be used for a variety of activities: warmers, fillers or longer speaking activities. Here are some ideas:

- Choose one of the holidays and brainstorm vocabulary. This can be done in plenary or in small groups. For ideas, you can look at the texts on the next page: Next to each text is a list of key words associated with the holiday. You can ask students to write a five-line poem with the words they have brainstormed (alone, in pairs or as an entire class), following a fixed formula, such as in the example on the right.

### A holiday poem

**Halloween.** (the name of the holiday)

**Scary, dark!** (two adjectives)

**Costumes, pumpkin, sweets.** (three nouns)

**Scream, laugh, hide, eat.** (four verbs)

**Fun!** (one-word summary)

- Around a specific holiday, take the opportunity to pick up on some of its traditions: Have your students write Valentine's or Christmas cards to each other. Find a recipe for brownies (for the Fourth of July) or pumpkin pie (for Thanksgiving) on the Internet and/or bring some to class. Create rituals for students' birthdays. Have a small Christmas party: Sing carols and read Christmas stories.
- As a lead-in to any of the activities, you might bring an object that is associated with a holiday (a stocking, a piece of Halloween candy, a green hat) and ask students what they think this is for.

You can also work with the copymaster on the following pages. When a specific holiday is coming up, cut out the corresponding text and the key words and let students complete it. They can refer to the glossary at the bottom of the text if they don't know a word. Then ask them to decide which photo on the calendar goes with this holiday.

You can also use several texts (or all of them) to have a longer session on holidays:

- **PRE-READING:** Ask your students what they know about some of the holidays, e.g., *Where do people celebrate Waitangi Day / Holi / Thanksgiving / ...? How do they celebrate? When is it?* This is a good opportunity to revise months, ordinal numbers, dates and country names.
- **READING:** Have your students work in pairs or small groups. Make one copy of the copymaster for each pair or group. Cut out the texts on the left and the key words on the right and let the students match them. Then ask the students to complete the texts with

the words. They can refer to the glossary at the bottom of each text if they don't know a word. If you think this is too difficult, you can leave the texts and the key words together and ask your students to simply fill in the gaps. Then ask students to match the texts to the photos on the calendar (to make this easier, you can write numbers next to the photos on the poster or stick Post-its with numbers next to the photos).

□ **POST-READING:** Have the students ask each other questions in pairs or small groups, for example:

- ◆ *How do you celebrate your birthday?*
- *I often have a big party and invite my family and my friends. How about you?*
- ◆ *I normally go out for dinner with my parents and my boyfriend.*



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<h2>New Year's Eve</h2> <p><b>When?</b> On _____.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In many countries all over the world.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> On _____, the last evening of the year, many people go out to parties or for dinner.</p> <p>At _____, there are many beautiful _____ and people say "_____!" In many English-speaking countries, they sing "Auld Lang Syne", an old _____ song about friendship.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> <b>Eve</b> Vorabend • <b>fireworks</b> Feuerwerk • <b>friendship</b> Freundschaft</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> December</p> <p>fireworks</p> <p>Happy New Year</p> <p>midnight</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p> <p>Scottish</p>
<p>_____</p> <p><b>When?</b> On 6<sup>th</sup> February.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In _____.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> Waitangi Day is the _____ of New Zealand. There are many _____ events on this day, in which _____ art and _____ play an important role. New Zealanders often invite friends and family on Waitangi Day and have dinner together.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> <b>national holiday</b> Nationalfeiertag • <b>Maori</b> Ureinwohner Neuseelands</p>	<p>cultural</p> <p>Maori</p> <p>national holiday</p> <p>New Zealand</p> <p>traditions</p> <p>Waitangi Day</p>
<h2>Valentine's Day</h2> <p><b>When?</b> On _____.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In many countries all over the world.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> Lovers give each other small _____ or _____ and send greeting cards. The cards have _____ and flowers on them. You might also receive a Valentine's card from a _____ that ends with "_____ " instead of his or her name.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> <b>secret admirer</b> heimlicher Verehrer • <b>instead of</b> anstelle von</p>	<p>14<sup>th</sup> February</p> <p>chocolates</p> <p>hearts</p> <p>presents</p> <p>secret admirer</p> <p>Your Valentine</p>



<p>_____</p> <p><b>When?</b> In the spring season.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In _____ and Nepal.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> Holi is an important _____.</p> <p>It is the festival of _____: people throw coloured _____ or water on each other. They want to welcome _____, the season of colours.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> powder Pulver • (to) welcome willkommen heißen • season Jahreszeit</p>	<p>colours</p> <p>Hindu festival</p> <p>Holi</p> <p>India</p> <p>powder</p> <p>spring</p>
<p>_____</p> <p><b>When?</b> On _____.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In Ireland and many other countries all over the world.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> 17<sup>th</sup> March is the death date of Saint Patrick, the national saint of _____, who brought the Christian faith to Ireland. In many countries, there are _____, festivals, dancing and – often – lots of alcohol. People wear _____ clothes and _____.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> death date Todestag • faith Glaube • shamrock Kleeblatt</p>	<p>17<sup>th</sup> March</p> <p>green</p> <p>Ireland</p> <p>parades</p> <p>Saint Patrick's Day</p> <p>shamrocks</p>
<h2>Easter Sunday</h2> <p><b>When?</b> In _____.</p> <p><b>Where?</b> In many countries.</p> <p><b>What is it about?</b> Christians all over the world go to _____ on Easter Sunday. There are many popular traditions: people _____ eggs as a symbol for life. Children in many countries go on _____ – they look for chocolate eggs that the _____ has hidden. In some cities, like New York City, for example, there are colourful Easter _____.</p> <p><b>Glossary:</b> hunt Jagd • bunny Hase • hide (p.p. hidden) verstecken (3. Form versteckt)</p>	<p>church</p> <p>decorate</p> <p>Easter bunny</p> <p>egg hunts</p> <p>parades</p> <p>spring</p>



**When?** On 4<sup>th</sup> July.

**Where?** In \_\_\_\_\_.

**What is it about?**

It celebrates the \_\_\_\_\_ Declaration of Independence. Another typical name for this holiday is the Fourth of July. There are many official events, such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Many people get together with their friends or family and have picnics or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Glossary:** Declaration of Independence Unabhängigkeitserklärung • fireworks Feuerwerk

American  
barbecues  
fireworks  
Independence Day  
parades  
the USA

## Halloween

**When?** On \_\_\_\_\_.

**Where?** In many countries all over the world.

**What is it about?** \_\_\_\_\_ in many countries wear scary \_\_\_\_\_ – they dress up as \_\_\_\_\_, vampires or witches and walk to people’s homes asking for \_\_\_\_\_. People sometimes put lanterns made from \_\_\_\_\_ in front of their houses.

**Glossary:** scary gruselig • witch Hexe • lantern Laterne, Windlicht • pumpkin Kürbis

31<sup>st</sup> October  
costumes  
ghosts  
pumpkins  
sweets  
children

## Thanksgiving

**When?** On the fourth Thursday in November.

**Where?** In \_\_\_\_\_.

**What is it about?** On Thanksgiving, families have big \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ foods are roasted and stuffed \_\_\_\_\_, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweetcorn and \_\_\_\_\_. The tradition goes back to the first \_\_\_\_\_ who came from Europe to America.

**Glossary:** roasted gebraten • stuffed gefüllt • turkey Truthahn • mashed potatoes Kartoffelbrei • sweetcorn Mais • settler Siedler

dinners  
pumpkin pie  
settlers  
the USA  
traditional  
turkey



## Christmas Eve / Christmas Day

**When?** On 24<sup>th</sup> / \_\_\_\_\_.

**Where?** In many countries all over the world

**What is it about?** In many English-speaking countries, \_\_\_\_\_ is for decorating the \_\_\_\_\_, singing \_\_\_\_\_, going to midnight church services, or just going out to a pub. Children hang up \_\_\_\_\_ and go to sleep. On the next day, Christmas Day, they open the \_\_\_\_\_ that Father Christmas (or Santa Claus) has put in their stockings (or next to them). In Britain, people have a big dinner on Christmas Day with Christmas pudding, a Christmas cake or mince pie.

**Glossary:** **Eve** Vorabend • **carols** Weihnachtslieder • **church service** Gottesdienst • **stockings** Strümpfe • **Christmas pudding** gekochter Pudding mit Rosinen, Nüssen und Brandy • **mince pie** mit Früchten und Gewürzen gefülltes süßes Törtchen

25<sup>th</sup> December  
carols  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas tree  
presents  
stockings

## My birthday

**When?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is it about?** Some people like to have big parties with friends or family, others do not like to \_\_\_\_\_ their birthdays at all. A good \_\_\_\_\_ has: a birthday cake with \_\_\_\_\_ on it, music, \_\_\_\_\_, and, of course, lots of presents! If you can \_\_\_\_\_ all the candles on your cake at once, your birthday \_\_\_\_\_ will come true!

**Glossary:** **candle** Kerze • **at once** auf einmal

birthday party  
blow out  
candles  
celebrate  
decorations  
wish

## Key (Level: A2)

**New Year's Eve:** 31<sup>st</sup> December, New Year's Eve, midnight, fireworks, Happy New Year, Scottish

**Waitangi Day:** Waitangi Day, New Zealand, national holiday, cultural, Maori, traditions

**Valentine's Day:** 14<sup>th</sup> February, presents, chocolates, hearts, secret admirer, Your Valentine

**Holi:** Holi, India, Hindu festival, colours, powder, spring

**Saint Patrick's Day:** Saint Patrick's Day, 17<sup>th</sup> March, Ireland, parades, green, shamrocks

**Easter Sunday:** spring, church, decorate, egg hunts, Easter bunny, parades

**Independence Day:** Independence Day, the USA, American, fireworks, parades, barbecues

**Halloween:** 31<sup>st</sup> October, Children, costumes, ghosts, sweets, pumpkins

**Thanksgiving:** the USA, dinners, Traditional, turkey, pumpkin pie, settlers

**Christmas Eve / Christmas Day:** 25<sup>th</sup> December, Christmas Eve, Christmas tree, carols, stockings, presents

**My birthday:** celebrate, birthday party, candles, decorations, blow out, wish