

THE CELAC STUDENT VOICE

Festivals in Taiwan

by Ying Nian (Tina) Chen

I think in most people's thoughts, Taiwan and China have similar cultures, and we have almost the same ancestors. As time goes by, the Taiwanese have had our own celebrations and cultures that are a little different from the Chinese. We have lots of National Holidays, and here I am going to introduce three of my favorite festival holidays. All of these festivals' dates are from our lunar calendar.

May fifth is Dragon Boat Festival. This festival is to commemorate Qu Yuan who was not willing to see his homeland invaded, so he jumped into Miluo River. We will do something to commemorate him on this day. People hold the Dragon Boat Race to disperse fish to distract the fish from eating Qu Yuan's body. We hang wormwood on doors and then use it to bathe in to pray for good health. Also, on Dragon Boat Festival, we eat Zongzi (sticky rice dumpling) which ancient people used to throw into the Miluo River, so the fish would not eat Qu Yuan's body.

August fifteenth is Moon Festival. There are lots of stories about this festival, such as Chang E ascending to the Moon and Wu Gang chopping the Osmanthus Tree. On Moon Festival, we usually have barbecue parties; most people think a barbecue party takes a long time so that our family and friends can promote relationships. We also eat pomelos and moon cakes during Moon Festival. Besides, folk legend says if we stay up at night longer, our mothers would live longer. Also, this night has a full moon, so accompanying the full moon, family can share the joy all night long.

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Christmas in Honduras

by Belkis Garcia

Christmas in Honduras is similar to Christmas in America in some ways. We both have Christmas trees that are decorated with ornaments and lights. We both gather together with family, and we enjoy making special food at Christmas, sharing the tradition of making and eating holiday tamales like the in the U.S. Southwest. Finally, both celebrate the birth of Christ on December 24, and we both celebrate the end of the year and the beginning of New Year.

However, some of our traditions in Honduras are different. Beginning December 1, we celebrate Las Posadas. This is a tradition where every day in the month of December, we go to a different house in the village to eat and share time with each other to celebrate the life of Jesus. We sing Christmas songs together, and we read The Bible. On Christmas Eve, everyone goes to church to celebrate midnight mass and to await the birth of Jesus. At midnight, everyone hugs each other and shares in the joy of Christmas, exchanging greeting and will wishes. The Christmas food tradition in Honduras is tamales, like in much of the American Southwest. Only fresh corn that hasn't been dried in the sun can be used for the masa. Chicken pieces with the skin and bone are used as filling along with rice and potatoes. There are many other, different ingredients used for tamales, like garbanzo beans, peas, and green olives.

Unlike the American Southwest, no Chile is used, but some people eat their tamales with ketchup. Also, unlike the traditional southwestern tamales that are wrapped in corn husk, our tamales are wrapped in banana leaves that are steamed. They are so good to eat!

New Year's Eve in Honduras is a time for family to spend time together. We spend the evening inside our house with family, listening to music, playing games, joking around, and waiting for the excitement that always happens at the stroke of midnight. Each house stuffs a dummy with paper and firecrackers. It is fun to create and to see the different scarecrow type dummies from each house. Some are wearing wigs, some are holding a beer in their stuffed hands, but all are part of the fun of New Year's Eve in Honduras.

Festivals, cont.

January first is the Chinese New Year (Spring Festival). We will have at least six days off during Spring Festival. On this festival, we have numerous things to do. December thirty-first we call New Year's Eve; on this day, every family member needs to go home and have a big meal together. Besides, elders will give every child a red envelope with some money inside. On January first, we decorate our houses with red paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of good fortune, happiness, health, and longevity. During this week, we can see the dragon dance near temples at daytime and light the firecrackers at nighttime. Moreover, not only adults but also kids will play mahjong or poker. Sometimes, people play games for gambling, but mostly it is for fun.



In short, Taiwan has many different festivals and holidays, and they all have their own meaning and stories. As a Taiwanese, I really enjoy each festival and holiday with family and friends. As a foreigner, I welcome you to travel to Taiwan for certain festivals to experience our culture



In conclusion, the traditions that I feel are the most interesting about Christmas and New Years in Honduras are different from in the U.S. I feel the tradition of Las Posadas helps keep family and friends in touch with other. In addition, our New Year's Eve tradition of burning a scarecrow is much more fun than anything I have seen in America, so far. The firecrackers shoot up into the sky with so many rainbow colors. It's beautiful.

Superstitions

by *Alejandra Trillo*

Superstitions have been present in many cultures and told from generation to. But what is a superstition? Superstitions are beliefs that have no rational basis or scientific evidence and consist in believing that some actions can give bad or good luck. Superstitions are very present in Latin American culture, so, as a Mexican, I grew up listening to all kinds of superstitions such as Friday the 13th or a black cat giving bad luck. Apparently, about 24% of the Mexican population believes in superstitions. Although there is a big dilemma about if superstitions are true or not, Mexican culture is full of them. In this essay, I will tell you the most believed superstitions in Mexico.

Some of the most famous superstitions are about love. For example, have you ever felt a ringing in your ear? Well, according to the beliefs, when you hear the ringing in the left ear, someone is talking bad things about you, but if you hear the sound in the right ear, someone loves you in secret and thinking of you at that moment. Second, if you want to get married someday, I recommend you stay away from the brooms; according to believers in superstitions, if someone sweeps your feet, you will never get married. Third, if your dreams are to get married or find the love of your life, the most popular superstition to make it come true is to put an upside-down an effigy of Saint Antonio. However, superstitions are not just about love.

There are many superstitions that will help you get good or bad luck with your financial status. First, if you use a purse, never put it on the floor because if you do, you could never be a millionaire, so be careful! Another superstition that many people believe and which I have always heard is that if you hit your elbow, you should not touch it, even if it hurts too much because if you do, you will have bad luck for a long time, and you will not have money. Third, if you find money on the floor, draw a cross immediately, and you will find more money in the future. Finally, if you feel itchy in your right hand, do not hesitate to scratch, because if you do, you will have good luck in your economy.



In conclusion, superstitions are beliefs that people do to get good luck or prevent bad luck. Even though I grew up surrounded by people who believe in this, I have never believed it. I don't think your future depends on where you put your bag or if your feet are swept. However, I think it is a very interesting topic which is also part of the different cultures and thoughts. What about your country, are superstitions very common? Do you believe in them?

My experience learning English in the U.K. and the U.S.

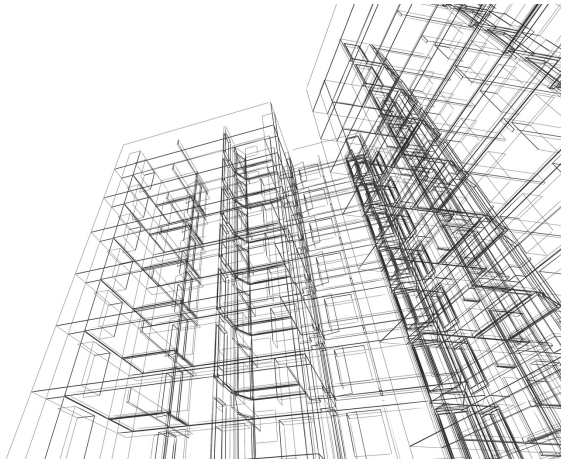
By *Huda Safhi*

It is my pleasure to talk about my experience of learning English at the English Language Institute of TIG (United Kingdom) and CELAC in UNM (The United States of America). It is no secret that America and Britain are among the leading countries in the academic field of English. I decided to go to Britain to study English and was able to study at the primary level. I didn't speak English at the time and didn't understand what I was told. I stayed at the institute for only 6 months. I had a teacher named Fournick who taught me English grammar and encouraged me to speak without fear or shame and to have a trust in myself. The Institute had a meeting room for students, where students met during the course. the dining hall where students ate daily, and a Chapel equipped with a prayer mat. The activity room had many fun activities for students and there were month-to-month tours.

Now, I remember some rules and when I was in class and talking to my friends. In our conversation classes our teacher was very patient and gave us a chance to participate. Finally, I benefited from that experience a lot, but I couldn't spend a long time in the U.K., so I decided to come home.

On September 9, I went to Albuquerque with my husband to accompany him in his studies. I decided to go to school again at an institute affiliated to UNM. I found a lot of surprises at that time and many foreign students. I found myself surrounded by English speaking, reading, listening and writing. The teachers then told us about the four skills for any student who wants to learn a language. The practice is important to improve. For instance, to improve the conversation, you must talk daily. To improve reading, you should read daily English texts. To improve listening, should listen every day to anything in English, such as news, film, program To improve writing, you need to write.

To conclude, when I think about the need of my future career, I think I did a good job in learning English because it is important to be hired.



Amazing American Architecture

by Yanxu (Apple) Chen

When I arrived America, I was interested in two kinds of architectures.

The first American architecture is called Adobe. Why are those buildings named Adobe? Because those buildings use one of the oldest building materials, Adobe. What's more, if you want to build an adobe building, you must prepare some adobe soil, which has between 15% to 30% clay, and use some chopped straw or other fibers. Then, you can create your own adobe building with the shape you like. Adobe can hold heat and cold very well, so it is suitable for New Mexico's climate. If you want to see some Adobe buildings, please cross through Albuquerque; you'll see the city's famous Ancestral Pueblo Architecture. The Ancestral Pueblo Architecture only exists in New Mexico. This architecture belongs to Pueblo Indians, and their culture has existed since approximately AD 1500. Their buildings carry the history for humans right now; if we know this architecture, we can know history.

The second American Architecture is the New England Architecture; it also called American Colonial Architecture. The reason why America has this type of architecture is due to the European's arrival in the America. Europeans regard this era as the Age of Discovery. In the 15th to 17th centuries, Europeans started their world colonization and the British colonized America. Then, they brought their architectural knowledge to America and collected all the building materials to create their hometowns in this new place. Therefore, those colonizers created English colonial architecture in America. These two-storied dwellings can resist the turbulent weather of the U.S. East Coast. Today, if you want to see New England Architecture, you need to go to New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

I love these different architectural styles in America, and I enjoy their histories.





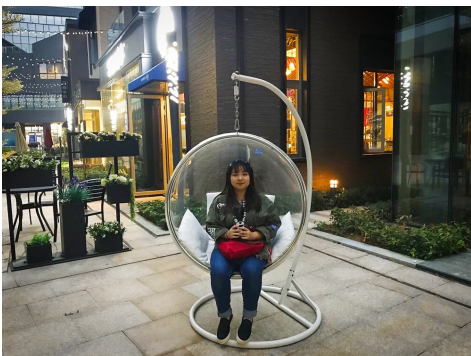
Alejandra

My name is Alejandra Trillo. I'm 19 years old, and I'm from Chihuahua Mexico. I like picnics and hiking in the woods. Have a nice day :)



Alexandra

I come from Bolivia the heart of South America. I have a degree in Marketing & Logistics and I am planning on obtaining an MBA with a concentration in Operations Management. My hobbies are watching futbol and football games, watching movies and dance Flamenco.



Apple

My name is Yanxu, you also can call me Apple. Before I became a Lobo, I studied Financial Management in BITZH. My hobby is being a photographer and traveling the world. If you want to know more about taking pictures and you want to be a photographer in the future, or you like taking pictures, please read my essay and have a contact with me.



Belkis

My name is Belkis Garcia. I'm from a famous coffee growing area in Honduras. I study English at the Center for English Language and American Culture. I like snorkeling and looking for seashells on the beach.



Huda

My name is Huda, and I am from Saudi Arabia. I like to take photographs, but I am not a professional. I love to travel alot.



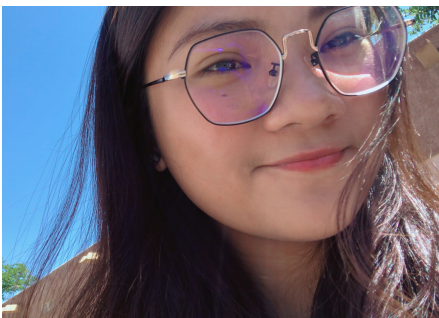
Nami

My name is Nami. I'm from Japan, Kumamoto. My major is Agricultural, so I love New Mexico's nature like the high desert. I definitely love camping and hiking but cooking also is interesting for me. Thank you.



Pam

My name is Pam. I come from China. My hobby is painting.



Tina

I'm from Taiwan. My major was Food Nutrition when I was in the university in my hometown. I like to watch videos, especially Korean dramas.