

Happy Holidays from Canada!



I hope you're enjoying the crisp autumn weather in lovely Japan. In Canada, we're already getting ready for the Christmas season, which begins in November, and continues until the first week of January.

At the beginning of the Christmas season, we decorate the outside of our homes with hundreds of colourful little lights. The lights are hung along the frames of houses, and also around doors and windows. Some houses even put lights on trees in the yard. Every year, my mother puts her Christmas lights up outside of her house on Prince Edward Island. She lives in an old farmhouse in the countryside. There are no other houses near her house, so when it is decorated, all the little lights sparkle brightly at night. *It is beautiful!*

I love to sing Christmas music. The songs always remind me of Christmases past, and all the wonderful times I've shared with the people I love. On Prince Edward Island, we often get together to sing Christmas carols. Sometimes, we go from house to house, with the snow softly falling, singing Christmas carols for our neighbours. We sing one or two songs at each house, and sometimes the owner of the house invites us to come inside for a warm drink. Afterwards, we go to the next house. Carolling is one of my favourite traditions.

On Christmas Eve, I like to take some time in the afternoon to wander along the beach alone. Of course, it's freezing cold, but I love to watch the powerful waves come crashing in over the icy shore. I then rush home to finish decorating the Christmas tree and wrapping presents. At midnight, my mother and I go to church, and afterwards, we gather at my aunt's house for a big family party. The party continues late into the night, with lots of eating and singing.

On Christmas morning, my family gathers together in our living room to see what Santa brought us on Christmas Eve, and to open our presents. In the afternoon, our relatives arrive for my mother's magnificent turkey dinner, which includes potatoes and gravy, carrots, turnips, broccoli, stuffing, cranberries, jelly and much more. For dessert, we eat my aunt's delicious plum pudding, which is the traditional Christmas Day dessert. It's a true feast!

Christmas is my favourite time of year! It's a time when family and friends from far away return home to be together. I live in Toronto, but my hometown is a small village on Prince Edward Island. On December 22nd, I'll fly home to be with my family. *I can't wait!*

Many of you will be travelling near and far to celebrate the New Year holiday with family and friends. I would like to wish you a safe and joyous holiday season, and much happiness throughout 2006!

Happy Holidays!

Nicole Bellefleur
Toronto, Canada



PS: I recently introduced Christmas and New Year lessons. If you want to learn how to wish your English-speaking friends and colleagues a happy holiday season, please visit www.manabi.st and look for my profile.