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**CultureBound**  
**MAGAZINE**

## Culture in Tradition

How do people celebrate holidays? What cultural traditions exist around the world?

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 **Holiday Traditions**  
Terry Steele discusses holiday traditions around the world. Family is an important part of them all.
  
- 8 **Cultural Traditions**  
Not all traditions are around holidays! Read about traditions of greeting and more around the world.
  
- 12 **Holiday Spending Around the World**  
People invest a lot of money into traditions every year. Take a look at the top holiday spending in the world.
  
- 14 **CultureBound + You**  
This season, as a Thanksgiving tradition we want to share our blessings and gratitude for a great year.

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Every culture has its own traditions. Every family within those cultures has their own traditions.



# Holiday Traditions

**Dr. Terry Steele, Ph. D., Dr. of Missiology**

I love the holiday season, especially Christmas. My mind recalls days past, events that mark my childhood—snowball fights and snowmobiling, baking Christmas cookies and watching Christmas lights.

Every culture has its traditions. Every family within those cultures has its own special traditions. These rituals mark the beauty of the season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Tradition tells us of the early Christian bishop, Saint Nicholas of Myra (modern-day Turkey), who had a habit of secret gift-giving. Along with his generosity, Nicholas was known for performing miracles in the name of God. Although the tradition of honoring Saint Nicholas started in Germany, the legend of Saint ‘Nick’ has spread throughout the world. Today he is known as Santa Claus.

The Jewish tradition of celebrating Hanukkah is observed throughout the world during the Christmas season. While not a gospel story, Hanukkah marks the celebration of God's provision for the altar of the temple during the sixth century. After the conquest of Macedonia, Greece and the death of Alexander, his vast empire was divided among four of his generals. One successor tried to "Hellenize" Israel, leading to a rebellion and war.

The freedom fighters were able to conquer Jerusalem and take back the temple mount but only had enough oil to relight the altar fire for a few days. The miracle of Hanukkah was that the fires stayed lit until oil could be processed to keep the fires burning.

In Caracas, Venezuela the people of the city rollerblade their way to church for the Christmas Eve services. Columbia celebrates 'Little Candles' Day (Dia de las Velitas) commemorating the Immaculate Conception and Mary, the mother of Jesus, by placing candles and paper lanterns in their windows, balconies, and front yards.

Children in France place their polished shoes in front of the chimney in hopes that 'Pere Noel,' Father Christmas, will fill their shoes with sweets. In Portugal, children await Baby Jesus, not Santa, to fill their shoes with goodies.

Italy started the tradition of publicly displaying the nativity scene. Germany is responsible for marking the Christmas season with a tree. Legend has it that Martin Luther himself is responsible for lighting the tree with candles. The Philippines have the tradition of hanging star-shaped lanterns, remembering the Bethlehem Star.

Traditions revolve around family. As more and more seasons come and go, they become more special as loved ones go on to meet Jesus face-to-face. The family remaining is privileged to think back to all those years when they were with us. Know that we will once more see our loved ones and the one who loved us enough to die for us. We will create new traditions where there will be no more tears and we will be able to glory in His presence forever.



# Cultural Traditions

When you hear the word “tradition,” your mind might go to the holidays. Tradition, however, encompasses any behavior with a significant meaning that is passed down through generations.

You might not think about how greeting others might be a tradition. There are many traditions associated with wedding ceremonies. Read about some traditions around the world that might surprise you.





Your wedding ceremony might have a special reading or dedication. In Germany, it is a common tradition to have people over to the new couple's house to smash pottery. As the bride and groom clean the mess up, they are believed to have good luck in their marriage.

In some parts of the world, arriving on time to meetings is expected. In Venezuela, it is a tradition to always arrive late. The belief in a relaxed pace drives this tradition.

Many people around the world celebrate the new year with fireworks, while in South Africa they celebrate by throwing furniture out the window and into the street. This tradition is carefully observed to make sure of safety.

In the United States, actions are done with either right or left hand. In the Middle East, using your left hand while eating or greeting someone is traditionally considered unsanitary. This would be avoided, even if you are left-handed.

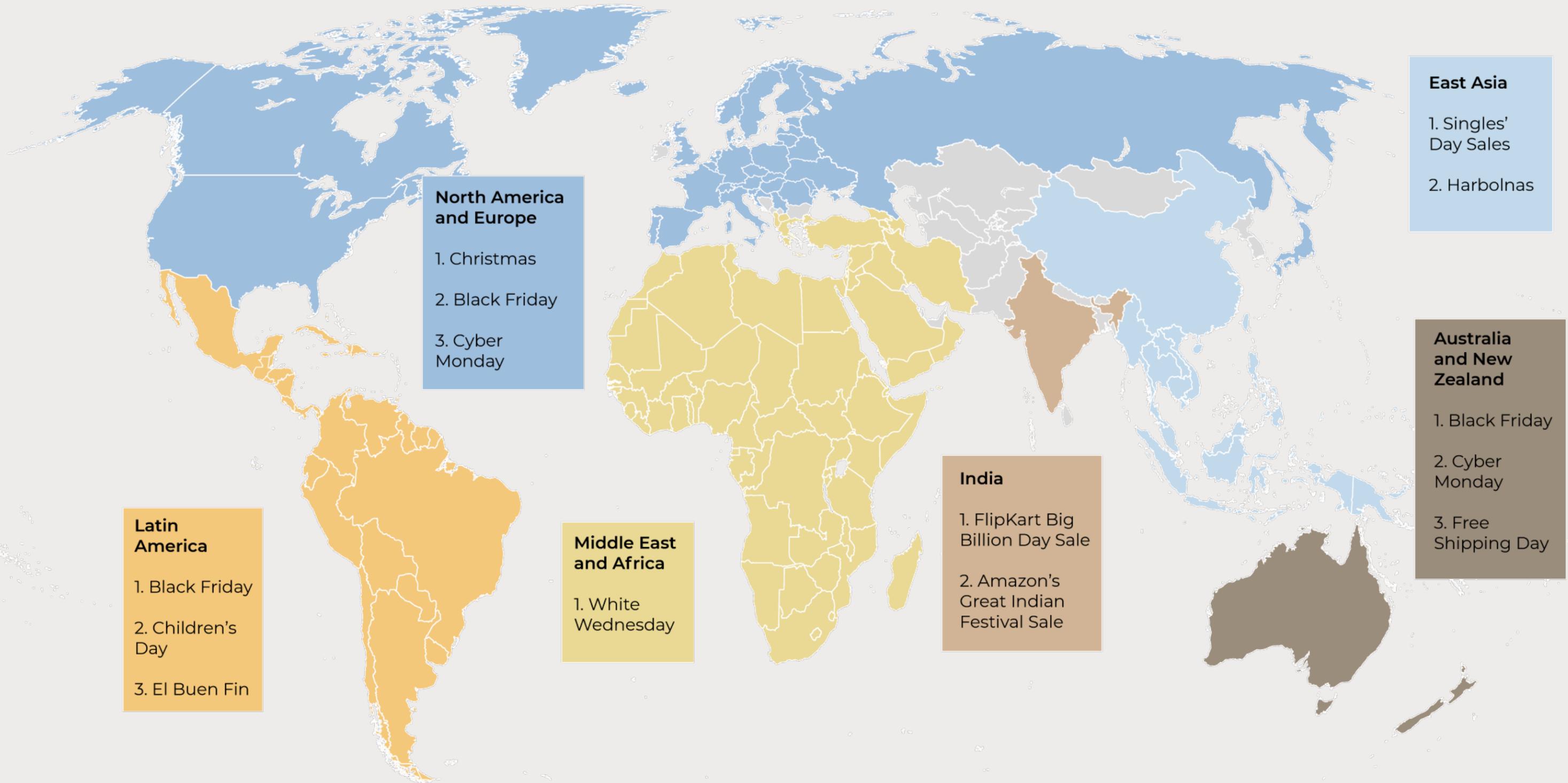
It is common to greet someone with a hug or handshake. In Kenya, the traditional greeting involves spitting. Spitting into hands before shaking is seen as a sign of good luck.

What are your traditions that you might not have realized before? It's easy to go through life without recognizing these behaviors, but when we look around the world we can appreciate the diversity in traditions.

To read more cultural traditions, visit this article: <https://brightside.me/wonder-places/15-traditions-from-different-countries-that-surprised-the-whole-world-732060/>

# Holiday Spending Around the World

As you get ready for the holiday season, think about the cost investment that goes into each tradition. Here are the holidays with top spending around the world. <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/how-holiday-spending-compares-around-the-world/>



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**We are thankful for you!**

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, it is a tradition to recognize your blessings and what you are thankful for. The team at CultureBound would love to share with you some of the things we are thankful for this year.

The greatest blessing we have received is the gift of Jesus dying to save us. Without this, we wouldn't do what we do! We praise God and thank him for his work in our ministry.





CultureBound is sustained by donors, course attendees, prayer partners, friends, family, and many more! Our ministry thrives with your help and support. We are so thankful for you! Thank you for continuing to help us accomplish the goal of sending people from everywhere to everywhere.

We are thankful for new ideas and opportunities. We have had the pleasure of introducing new courses. We are working on new projects including a book! We are also able to advance our current courses and offer them in multiple languages.

The CultureBound team is thankful for cohesion and partnership among staff. Our team works so well together and that is a gift from God. He has put us each in a unique position to use our strengths to further the Gospel. We are so thankful!

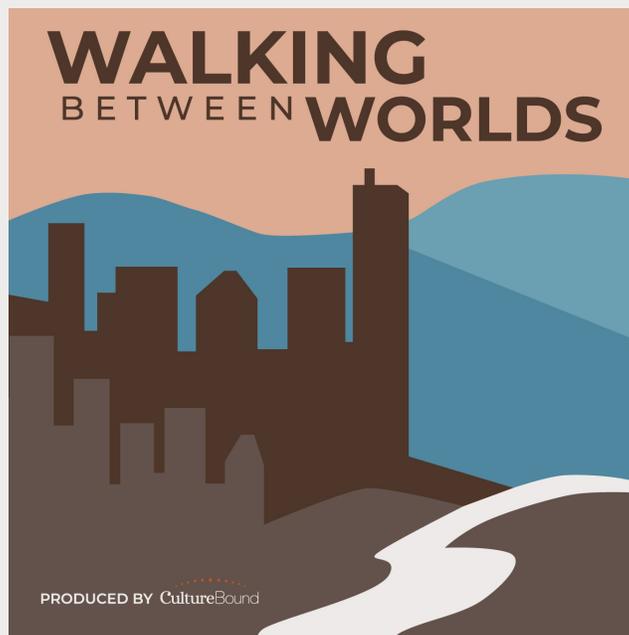
It might be easy to get swept up in the business of the holiday season. We challenge you to take some time and acknowledge what you are thankful for. Most importantly, thank God for all he has done in your life. We thank you again for your constant support and prayer for the ministry of CultureBound.

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