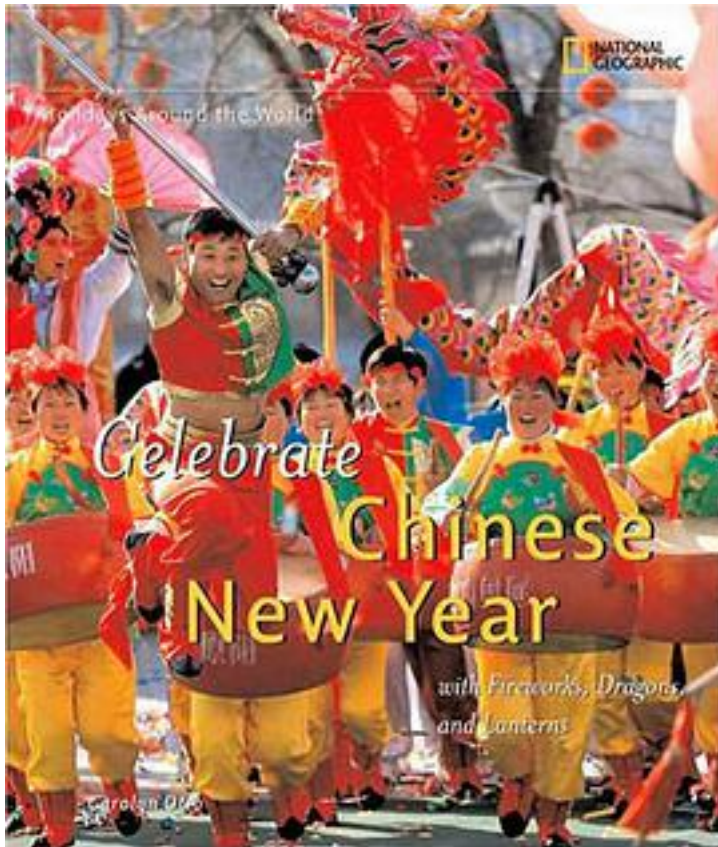


Holidays Around the World



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出版者:

出版时间:2007-12

装帧:

isbn:9781426302145

In the mood for love? Whose heart has not been won over on February 14the day reserved for celebrating love in its many formsaround the world.

Celebrate Valentine’ s Day focuses on historical and cultural aspects of this holiday and the international traditions, food, and celebrations associated with it. This celebration of love includes fun facts; a recipe; a map showing the location of all

photographs; a resource list of books, videos, and Web sites; and a note from an expert consultant, aimed at parents and teachers, which deepens our understanding of the holiday’ s importance and meaning.

The history of the holiday is shrouded in mystery, but we do know that Valentine’ s Day wasn’ t always a time for red roses, candy hearts, and frilly greeting cards. Readers learn that some historians trace the feast of the patron saint of love to ancient Greek and Roman festivals that signaled the beginning of spring, which officially began in February in ancient Rome. We discover how, according to one legend, St. Valentine was a priest imprisoned for defying the emperor. Before being put to death, he sent the first "valentine" a letter that he signed "From your Valentine," words still used on cards today.

Readers discover a range of international Valentine’ s Day traditions: making and exchanging cards decorated with hearts, lace, and ribbons; giving flowers, candy, balloons, and other gifts to friends and loved ones; attending special parties at school; and baking of cookies and other treats. We learn how the holiday’ s popularity has grown around the world, particularly in Korea and Japan, where office workers give chocolates to their co-workers on Valentine’ s Day.

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