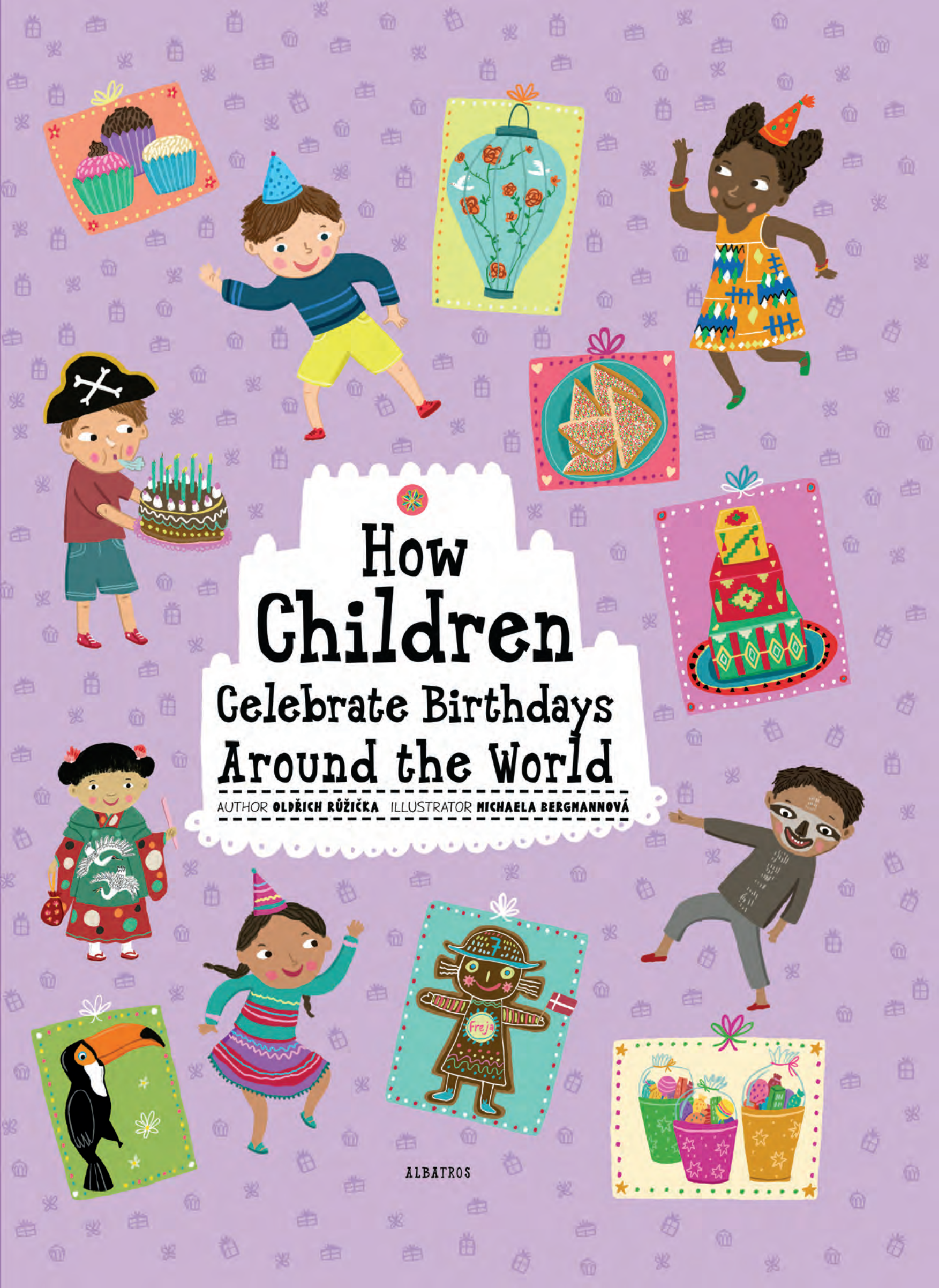




How Children Celebrate Birthdays Around the World

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ALBATROS

1 Good Luck Starts on Your Nose!

Canada

Hi! MY NAME IS **Liam**.

I'M 8 YEARS OLD, AND TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY. I LIVE IN CANADA, A LAND OF DEEP FORESTS AND ENORMOUS LAKES. I GO TO SCHOOL, PLAY HOCKEY, RIDE MY BIKE IN THE SUMMER, AND BUILD SNOWMEN IN THE WINTER. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO MY BIRTHDAY ALL YEAR BECAUSE MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE COMING OVER, AND OUR HOUSE IS ALWAYS FULL OF FUN.

CANADA IS A BILINGUAL COUNTRY. PEOPLE HERE SPEAK BOTH ENGLISH AND FRENCH. I LIVE IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PART OF CANADA.

Happy Birthday

**Happy Birthday to you.
Joyeux anniversaire.**

1 Themed Parties

Themed birthday parties are very popular here. One year, my friends and I become pirates searching for hidden treasure. Another year, we dress up as princesses, superheroes, or dinosaurs. Every birthday is a brand-new adventure.

2 For Good Luck

We have a really funny birthday tradition. Someone secretly puts a little butter on the tip of my nose. The more unexpected it is, the better! Everyone laughs, and they say it will bring me good luck all year long.



Why Butter?

According to an old tradition, anything bad simply slips right off a buttered nose. And since butter doesn't stay on your nose for long, the whole thing usually turns into a lot of laughs! In Canada, it's harder to protect your nose than your birthday cake!

4 Gifts

After blowing out the candles, it's time for presents. I love getting books, building sets, sports equipment, and board games. Then the real fun begins with games, challenges, and lots of laughter.

The Best Gift.

Presents aren't the most important part of a birthday. What I look forward to most is laughing, playing together, and

**spending time with
my family and friends.**

That's what makes
birthdays so unforgettable.

Hi, I'm
Liam

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4

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3 Cake and Treats

There's always a birthday cake with candles on the table. Chocolate and fruit cakes are popular, but everyone has their favorite. Along with the cake, we also enjoy cookies, fresh fruit, and other tasty treats.

Song

When they bring out the birthday cake, everyone starts singing:

Happy Birthday to You,
Happy Birthday to You,
Happy Birthday, dear Liam,
Happy Birthday to You!

7 A Day Full of Joy!

Great Britain

Hello! MY NAME IS **Harry**.

I'M 9 YEARS OLD, AND TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY. I LIVE IN GREAT BRITAIN, WHERE THE WEATHER CHANGES ALMOST EVERY DAY. BUT WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A BIRTHDAY PARTY, NOBODY CARES ABOUT THE WEATHER. WHAT MATTERS MOST ARE FRIENDS, GAMES, LOTS OF FUN, CAKE, AND SURPRISES.

I BET YOU'LL WANT TO TRY SOME OF OUR BIRTHDAY GAMES TOO!

Happy Birthday!

Home Party

We usually celebrate birthdays at home. In summer, the garden is the perfect place. It's decorated with balloons and colorful bunting. But what I look forward to most are the games we play together. We love running games and fun guessing games.

1 Statues

My favorite game is **Statues**. The music starts, everyone dances, jumps around, and makes up funny moves. The sillier, the better! But watch out! As soon as the music stops, everyone must freeze like a statue. No moving. No laughing. If someone loses their balance or starts laughing, they get a funny challenge, like doing a silly dance. Then they jump right back into the game. The most important thing is that everyone has fun.

Hip, Hip, Hooray!

When the birthday cake is brought out, everyone sings „**Happy Birthday to You**.“ Then one of the grown-ups shouts, „Hip, hip!“ and everyone answers, „**Hooray!**“ We usually do it three times, getting louder each time.

Birthday Swing

Friends or family sometimes grab my arms and legs and gently swing me back and forth once for every year of my age. It's another funny birthday tradition!



3 Party Food

The table is filled with little sandwiches, sausage rolls, chips, vegetable sticks, jelly, homemade cakes, and, of course, the birthday cake. It's usually colorful and very sweet. At the end of the party, every guest gets a **party bag** filled with candy and little surprises as a thank-you for celebrating with me.



Pass the Parcel

Another favorite game is **Pass the Parcel**. We sit in a circle and pass around a parcel wrapped in lots of layers of paper. When the music stops, whoever is holding it unwraps one layer. Each layer hides a little surprise, and the final layer holds the main prize.



2 Birthday Wishes

In Great Britain, birthday cards are a big tradition. Everyone tries to write something kind, funny, or thoughtful. Sometimes the card is almost as special as the present itself.



9 The Land of Birthday Cake

Germany

Hallo! MY NAME IS Lukas..

Happy Birthday!

Alles Gute zum Geburtstag!

I'M 6 YEARS OLD, AND TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY. I LIVE IN GERMANY, A LAND OF CASTLES AND HISTORIC TOWNS. WE LOVE TRADITIONS AND DOING THINGS A CERTAIN WAY. OUR BIRTHDAYS HAVE THEIR OWN SPECIAL CUSTOMS, AND WE ALL LOOK FORWARD TO THEM.

YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THE BIRTHDAY CAKE TRADITION BEGAN RIGHT HERE. COME AND SEE HOW IT ALL STARTED!

Birthday Child

German birthdays aren't about big parties. They're about traditions that have been passed down for many years. Since I'm the birthday child today, I don't have to help around the house, and I get to wear a paper birthday crown all day. Today is all about me. That's the best part of birthdays!

2 Train

A wooden birthday train often sits on the table. Each little train car holds one candle, and together they show how old I am. I make a quiet wish before blowing them out. We use the same train every year, and it's often passed down from parents to children.



1 Birthday Cake

Germany is where the birthday cake tradition began. As early as the 1700s, children celebrated at special festivals called Kinderfeste, where cakes with candles were an important part of the celebration. Each candle stood for one year of life, and blowing them out was believed to bring good luck. From Germany, this tradition spread to almost the whole world.



Too Early!

In Germany, people believe it's bad luck to wish someone a happy birthday before their birthday. That's why everyone waits until the big day.

King for a Day

My favorite part of a German birthday is feeling like a real king for one whole day. And after I blow out the last candle, I can't wait for my next birthday!



Party Favor

When the party is over, every friend takes home a little gift, maybe some candy, a sticker, a small toy, or a balloon. It's a way of saying thank you for celebrating with me.



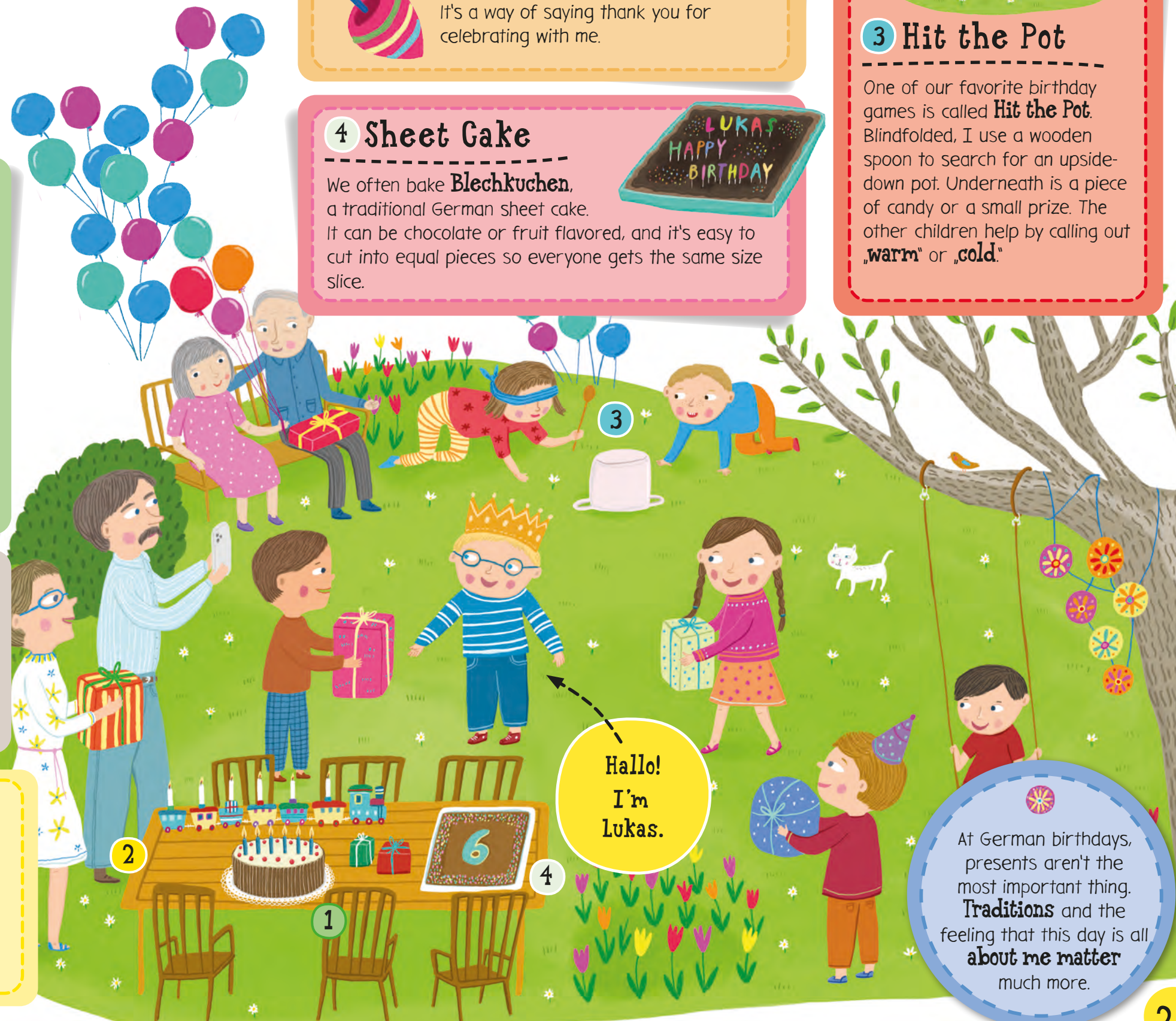
4 Sheet Cake

We often bake **Blechkuchen**, a traditional German sheet cake. It can be chocolate or fruit flavored, and it's easy to cut into equal pieces so everyone gets the same size slice.



3 Hit the Pot

One of our favorite birthday games is called **Hit the Pot**. Blindfolded, I use a wooden spoon to search for an upside-down pot. Underneath is a piece of candy or a small prize. The other children help by calling out "warm" or "cold."



Hallo!
I'm
Lukas.

At German birthdays, presents aren't the most important thing. **Traditions** and the feeling that this day is all **about me matter** much more.

11 Birthdays Full of Gratitude

Ghana

Akwaaba! MY NAME IS **Ama.**

I'M 10 YEARS OLD, AND TODAY I'M CELEBRATING MY BIRTHDAY. I LIVE IN GHANA, WHERE THE SUN SHINES BRIGHTLY AND CHEERFUL MUSIC IS EVERYWHERE. I LOVE SINGING, CHATTING WITH MY FRIENDS, HELPING MY MOM COOK, AND LEARNING NEW DANCES. MY FAVORITE MOMENTS ARE WHEN THE WHOLE FAMILY GATHERS AT OUR HOME.

COME AND SEE HOW WE CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS IN GHANA!

We Start Early

For us, birthdays aren't just about presents or cake. They're about joy, gratitude, and spending time together. Everything begins first thing in the morning with breakfast.

Thank You, Mom!

The first person I thank is my mom for giving me life. I give her a hug and often a small gift, or simply tell her how much I love her. In Ghana, we believe birthdays aren't just about celebrating the birthday child. They're also a way to thank the people who brought us into the world. This is my favorite birthday tradition. I think it would make moms in many other countries happy too.



Oto Breakfast

On my birthday, I have oto, a special breakfast made with sweet potatoes, onions, palm oil, and boiled eggs. Sometimes plantains or roasted peanuts are added. We believe it brings blessings and good luck.



Joy Everywhere

Once the singing and drumming begin, neighbors often join in. In Ghana, a joyful celebration is for everyone.

3 Cake

The bright colors of **kente** cloth often appear on the birthday cake too. The whole celebration is filled with colorful decorations, just like our music and dancing.



When you celebrate your birthday, try **thanking** someone too. You might discover it's a wonderful **birthday tradition**.

Akwaaba!
I'm
Ama.

1 Ampe

Then it's time to play games. My favorite is **Ampe**. We clap, jump, and each kick one foot forward. If we both show the same foot, the leader scores a point. If our feet are different, we switch roles. It's a fast, lively game full of laughter.

2 Kente Cloth

For special celebrations, we sometimes wear clothes made from colorful **kente cloth**. Every color has a meaning. Green stands for health, yellow for wealth, red for strength, and black for respect for our ancestors.

14 A Special Day for Children

Japan

Konnichiwa! MY NAME IS **Aiko.**

I'M 7 YEARS OLD, AND TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY. I LIVE IN JAPAN, WHERE WE ENJOY PEACEFUL MOMENTS WITH OUR FAMILIES. I LOVE DRAWING, GOING FOR WALKS, FOLDING ORIGAMI, AND HELPING MY MOM AT HOME. THIS YEAR'S BIRTHDAY IS ESPECIALLY SPECIAL BECAUSE I HAVE JUST TURNED SEVEN. COME AND SEE WHAT THIS SPECIAL DAY HAS IN STORE FOR ME.

Happy Birthday!
Otanjōbi omedetō!

This is how we write the greeting in Japanese characters.

お誕生日おめでとう!

My birthdays aren't the biggest or the loudest.

They're filled with peace, family, and wishes for **health and happiness** in the year ahead.

Three, Five, Seven

People in Japan believe that the third, fifth, and seventh birthdays are important milestones in a child's life. That's why they're celebrated a little differently from other birthdays. At these ages, children enjoy a beautiful celebration called Shichi-Go-San.

Shichi-Go-San

This festival is a time to give thanks that children are growing up healthy and happy. This year, I celebrate it as a seven-year-old girl. It's a truly special day I've been looking forward to for a long time.

1 Kimono

I put on a beautiful **kimono**, a long traditional Japanese robe with colorful patterns. Today I feel almost like a princess. Then my family and I visit a shrine or temple to give thanks for all the wonderful years I've already had.

2 Chitose-ame

After the ceremony, I receive a long candy called chitose-ame. The longer the candy, the longer and happier the life it is meant to symbolize. It's made from sweet syrup and comes in a colorful bag decorated with cranes and turtles for good luck.

Omamori

During Shichi-Go-San, we receive a protective amulet called an omamori. It is meant to protect us and bring good luck in the coming year.

Cake

One of Japan's favorite birthday cakes is a light sponge cake with whipped cream and strawberries. It's simple, beautiful, and delicious.



Sekihan

On my special day, my mom prepares sekihan, a festive rice dish with red beans. In Japan, we eat it on special occasions because the color red is believed to bring good luck.



Konnichiwa!
I'm Aiko.

15 Birthdays for Everyone

Vietnam

Xin chào! MY NAME IS Minh.

Happy Birthday!

Chúc mừng sinh nhật!

I'M 7 YEARS OLD, AND I LIVE IN VIETNAM, A LAND OF GREEN RICE FIELDS, COLORFUL LANTERNS, MOTORBIKES, AND DRAGON BOATS. I LOVE PLAYING SOCCER AND FLYING KITES. YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT, FOR A LONG TIME, PEOPLE HERE DIDN'T CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS ONE BY ONE. EVERYONE GREW ONE YEAR OLDER ON THE SAME DAY.

Different Birthdays

Today, children in Vietnam celebrate birthdays much like children in other countries. In the past, though, the exact date of your birth wasn't important. Everyone celebrated together during Tet. That's why people used to say we all became one year older on the same day.

Tet

The most important holiday in Vietnam is **Tet**, the Vietnamese New Year. The whole family gets together, we wish each other good luck, and welcome the new year. People say the first day of the year sets the tone for the whole year. That's why everyone tries to stay in a good mood.

1 Parades

During **Tet**, celebrations happen not only at home but also in the streets. Red banners, lanterns, flowers, and lights are everywhere. Everywhere you look, there's something to celebrate.

2 Dragon

During the celebrations, a long colorful dragon dances through the streets to the beat of drums. People believe it brings happiness, strength, and a good harvest.

Family First

Tet is a holiday for the whole family. We visit our grandparents, light incense, and remember our ancestors. My favorite moments are when we're all together.

Birthdays Today

Today, especially in cities, children often celebrate birthdays with cake, candles, and friends, just like in many other countries. Even so, Tet is still the most important holiday of the year for us.

Cakes

For Tet, we make square rice cakes called **bánh chưng**. They're wrapped in green leaves and cooked for many hours. The whole family makes them together, and that's what I enjoy the most.



Li Xi

Children receive red envelopes with money called **Li Xi** for good luck. It's not about the amount of money. It's a wish for happiness, good health, and a good start to the new year.

