

Oriental style

day mood. Japanese Christians go to church services on Holy Night, and many non-Christians join them.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

This Pacific island nation, influenced by settlers and missionaries, has nearly one million Christians. In addition to church Masses, many take part in inspirational choral festivals, singing the familiar Christmas carols in Tungog, the national language.

THAILAND

In Bangkok, a city of glittering Buddhist temples, Christmas carols drift from clubs and hotels. Shops do a booming gift business.

AUSTRALIA

Christmas comes here in midsummer. The typical observance centers around the family. Relatives return home and family members gather to renew family ties.

NEW ZEALAND

Both Christians and Maoris celebrate the day in the spirit of aroha — sharing religious values that embody love, family unity and friendship.

IF YOU'RE PLANNING to spend your holidays abroad, chances are you'll enjoy the unique festivities where ever you travel.

To help prepare for your trip, James Hildebrandt, senior vice president of Desk-Perera Southeast, offers these tips:

• Before you arrive, be sure to have adequate local currency handy, at least

for the first two days of your trip. Remember, as soon as you step off the plane, the porter, taxi driver and bellhop at your hotel will expect to be paid — or tipped — in their country's currency.

• When you exchange your dollars or dollar-denominated traveler's checks abroad, go to a bank. Rarely will hotels, shops and restaurants offer a favorable rate.

• It's wise to estimate approximately how much you'll be spending in each country you plan to visit and buy an adequate amount of traveler's checks denominated in those currencies before you go. That way you'll avoid paying a fee for cashing dollar-denominated traveler's checks. But shop around before you buy some outlets offer them commission-free, which saves you money.

• "Most people are unaware that once in Europe they'll be required to pay a 15 percent value-added tax on all goods they purchase. Although this is required, most are unaware that the European retailer is required to refund that money, but only if you ask," Hildebrandt reports. "When you make purchases overseas ask the retailer for a value-added tax form. Before leaving the country have a customs agent stamp and approve it, then mail it to the retailer who will send you a refund check in his country's currency. Upon receipt of your check, take it to a reputable foreign currency dealer that provides check cashing services."

If you read about the destinations you plan to visit beforehand, you'll make your Christmas holiday more enjoyable.

Thursday, November 24, 1983 Christmas Gift Guide

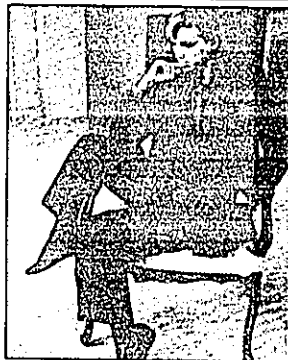
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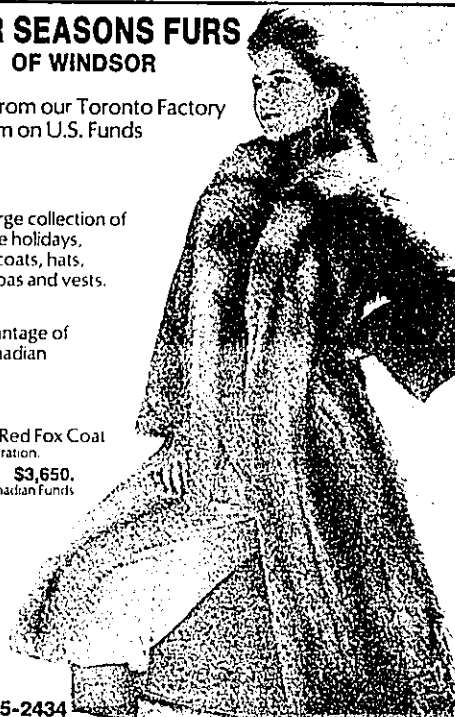
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