

## How to *fend off* your conspiracy obsessed relatives during the holiday season

It's the holidays: time for *eggnog*, ironic Christmas sweaters, and interactions with relatives you'd avoid like the plague if you didn't share DNA.

fend off 避开; 挡开

eggnog 蛋酒

Perhaps in past years, you've argued politics over the dinner table. But thanks to our internet echo chambers, things may now get even weirder.

You could find yourself not just arguing over Donald Trump's impeachment, but also over whether the president and Robert Mueller were secretly teaming up to expose Tom Hanks as a *cannibal*; or whether Meghan Markle is a robot.

cannibal 食人者; 凶残的

So what do you do if, after a few drinks, Uncle Ted starts screaming that the world is flat?

Experts say the best approach is a gentle one, and you probably won't change anyone's mind in one night. Listen to your relative rather than *relegating* her to *pariah* status, and ideally come equipped with accurate information rather than just telling her she's wrong.

relegate 贬职; 降级

pariah 贱民

Mick West, author of *Escaping the Rabbit Hole: How to *Debunk* Conspiracy Theories Using Facts, Logic, and Respect*, writes that the goal is to present the conspiracist "with information that they are lacking, and doing it all in a manner that will encourage them to look at what you are presenting without rejecting you as an idiot".

debunk 揭穿; 暴露

In other words, when you're explaining to your aunt that Australia does, in fact, exist, be ready with accurate information about kangaroos — and accept that she might not be convinced before dessert.