

# Holiday Celebrations

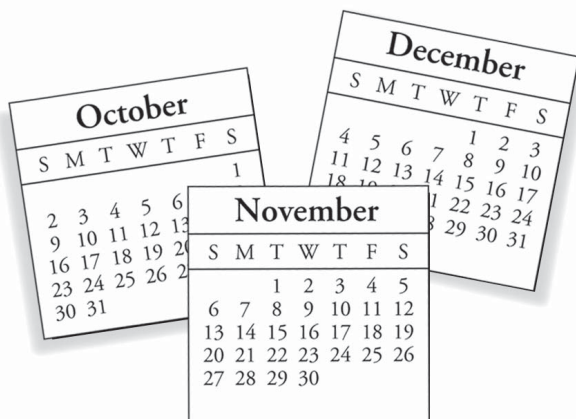
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## Introduction

Holidays are celebrated every day by people throughout the world. In fact, Earth Calendar (1998-2004) defines “holiday” as any day that recognizes a cultural event. This valuable resource identifies multiple holidays for each day of the year. The holidays are categorized by date, country, religion, and lunar phases. This program topic focuses on multiple celebrations in the United States and gives more details about a select number of cultural and ethnic celebrations. The specific purpose is to increase your knowledge of the holidays celebrated by different cultural groups in our society. In addition, this topic will help you become involved in cultural and ethnic celebrations and with different cultural or ethnic groups in the United States.

## A Socialization Function

Celebrations serve a significant socialization function. In many cases, they have ceremonial qualities that include such rituals as chronicling. Chronicling involves conversations about past and current events. Such conversations serve to update information about the past and encourage group identity (Gavin and Brommel, 1999). In this regard, they help to preserve family values and attachments. In addition, they help to preserve important parts of our American culture for future generations.



The following ethnic heritage months have been proclaimed:

- Black History Month – February
- Irish American Heritage Month – March
- Women’s History Month – March
- Asian/Pacific Heritage Month – May
- Hispanic Heritage Month – September
- Italian American Heritage Month – October
- Native American Heritage Month – November

## Some December Holidays

**Chanukah**, Festival of Lights, also referred to as Hanukkah, an eight-day celebration in December.

**Christmas** is celebrated on the 25th day of December by Christians throughout the country.

**Kwanzaa** is an African American holiday celebrated during the last days of December each year. It was created in 1965 as a reaffirmation of the United States’ need to respect, celebrate, and build on the rich resources of its diverse people and cultures; to see itself as an ongoing multicultural project to create a truly just and good society; and to embrace an ethics of sharing – shared space, shared wealth, shared power, and shared responsibility by all peoples to conceive and build the world they want to live in.

– continued –

## 2005 Cultural Holidays and Celebrations

### JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day
- 6 Feast of the Epiphany
- 11 Deepawali (Hindu Festival of Lights)  
<http://hinduism.about.com/library/weekly/aa110599.htm>
- 17 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 21 Eid al-Adha (Islam)

### FEBRUARY (National African-American Heritage Month)

- 8 Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
- 9 Ash Wednesday, Tet (Vietnamese New Year), Hsin-Nien (Chinese New Year)
- 10 Muharram (Islamic New Year)
- 13 Race Relations Sunday
- 15 Susan B. Anthony's Birthday
- 21 Presidents' Day

### MARCH (National Women's History Month)

- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 Palm Sunday
- 21 Nau-Roz (New Year's Day Bahai)
- 24 Holy Thursday
- 25 Good Friday
- 25 Purim (Jewish) [www.ahavat-israel.com/ahavat/torat/festivals.asp](http://www.ahavat-israel.com/ahavat/torat/festivals.asp)
- 27 Easter

### APRIL

- 24 - May 1 Passover (Jewish)
- 21 Mawlid an-Nabi (Islam) <http://islam.about.com/library/weekly/aa062599.htm>
- 24 Armenian Martyrs' Day

### MAY (National Asian American Heritage Month)

- 5 Cinco de Mayo (Mexican Independence Day from the French), Ascension Day
- 6 Yom Hashoah (Jewish)
- 8 Mother's Day
- 15 Pentecost
- 31 Memorial Day

### JUNE

- 14 Flag Day (US)
- 12 Anne Frank's Birthday
- 19 Father's Day

### JULY

- 4 Independence Day (US)
- 9 Martyrdom of the Bab
- 15 Bon Odori (Japanese Buddhist)

### AUGUST

- 15 Feast of the Assumption
- 19 Raksha Bandhan

### SEPTEMBER (National Hispanic American Heritage Month)

- 5 Labor Day
- 19 San Gennaro Day
- 23 Native American Day

### OCTOBER

- 4 Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
- 5 Ramadan
- 10 Columbus Day Observance
- 13 Yom Kippur
- 18 Sukkot [www.ahavat-israel.com/ahavat/torat/sukkot.asp](http://www.ahavat-israel.com/ahavat/torat/sukkot.asp)
- 24 United Nations Day
- 31 Halloween, Reformation Day

### NOVEMBER (National Native American Heritage Month)

- 1 All Saints' Day
- 4 Eid al-Fitr
- 11 Veterans' Day
- 12 Bahauallah Birthday (Bahai)
- 24 Thanksgiving Day
- 27 First Sunday in Advent

### DECEMBER

- 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- 12 Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 15 Bill of Rights Day
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26-Jan. 2 Hanukkah (Jewish)
- 26-Jan. 1 Kwanzaa

## Conclusion

Holidays serve a major social purpose in our society. They provide a way to celebrate our past and our accomplishments. In addition, holidays serve a socialization function in that they help pass on important values and beliefs from one generation to another. Moreover, they serve as a means of embracing our diverse and multicultural society.

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