

Hannukah

Commemorates the defeat of the Greeks by the Maccabees, and when they reclaimed the holy temple in Jerusalem, they found there was only a one-day supply of oil to light the menorah. According to the Jewish tradition, that oil lasted miraculously for 8 days. It's worth noting that Hannukah is NOT one of the high holy days for Jews.

Kwanzaa

Created in 1966, Kwanzaa is a time when families and communities come together to share a feast, to honor the ancestors, affirm the bonds between them, and to celebrate African and African American culture. It is based on 7 principles drawn from community values throughout the African continent (Swahili words)- Umoja **oo-MOH-ja** (Unity), Kujichagulia **koo-jee-chah-kah-LEE-uh** (Self-determination), Ujima **oo-JEE-muh** (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa **oo-JAH-muh** (Cooperative Economics), Nia **NEE-ah** (Purpose), Kuumba **kuh-UM-buh** (Creativity), and Imani **EE-ma-nee** (Faith). Held between Christmas and New Year's Day, a candle is lit to highlight one of the principles each day.

Bodhi Day (bow-dee)

Bodhi Day is the Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that Gautama Buddha (Shakyamuni) is said to have attained enlightenment. There are different traditions, but all agree that on the 3rd night, Siddhartha, through meditation, found the answers he was looking for, became enlightened, and experienced Nirvana. This is when he became a Buddha. Celebrations can take many forms- meditation, study of the Dharma, chanting Buddhist texts, performing kind acts to other beings, or a traditional meal of tea, cake, and readings.

Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe

Celebrated in Mexico and the United States, it commemorates the day in 1531 when the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego (now a saint) and asked him to go to the bishop and tell him that the Virgin Mary, Mother of God asked him to build a church on top of Tepeyac Hill. This was instrumental in spreading the Catholic Church throughout the Americas. People celebrate by going to the site, attending Mass, erecting an altar to the Virgin Mary in their homes, or shooting fireworks, and, of course, eating.

Boxing Day

Started in England during the Victorian Era (and spread throughout the commonwealth) and held on December 26, it marked the time when the upper class would box up money, goods, or leftover food and give them to their tradesmen and servants for their reliable service, in other words, holiday bonuses. In church, the alms (charity) boxes would be opened and given to the poor. Today, watching sports, shopping, and visiting friends (with a possible box with food goodies inside) rule the day.