



# Multi-Culture and Diversity Newsletter

Dec 2023

## *Hanukkah (Jewish)*

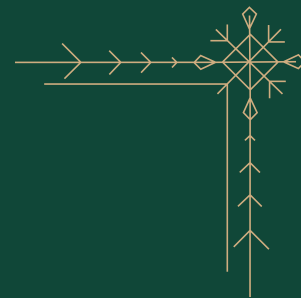


**Dec 7-15-** This Festival of Lights is celebrated for eight days. It begins previous sundown at 6pm. Approximately in 164 B.C., Maccabees, a small group of Jews fighting for religious freedom won victory over the Syrians. The legend goes to rededicate the temple, they found only one jar of holy oil and miraculously the candelabra remained lit for 8 days. An 8 candle menorah is lit.

## *Bodhi Day (Buddhist)*

**Dec 8-** In Japanese Zen, Bodhi Day is called "Rohatsu" and is the observance of enlightenment of the historical Buddha. Zen monasteries observe this day with a meditation retreat lasting several days. On the last night of a Rohatsu sesshin, monks and students often sit in meditation until dawn, as the Buddha did 25 centuries ago.





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## Posadas (Mexico)

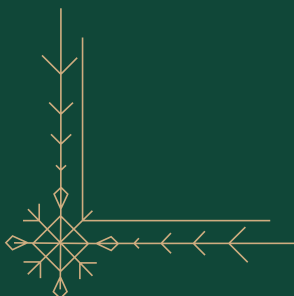


**Dec 16-24-** A nine-day traditional celebration throughout Mexico. Processions of pilgrims go door to door asking for posada, which means shelter, commemorating the search by Mary and Joseph for shelter.



## Yule (Wicca)

**Dec 22-** During the winter solstice – the longest night of the year, the rebirth of the sun which is life sustaining is celebrated. The Yule tree is decorated with fruit and candles are lit to represent the sun.





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## Christmas Day (Christian)



**Dec 25-** This day celebrates Jesus Christ's birth over 2000 years ago. Customs include lighting candles, exchanging gifts and using evergreen decorations to celebrate this day, the most widely observed Christian festival of the year. In most communities it is a family day.



## Kwanzaa (African-American/ Canada, USA)

**Dec 26-** A professor who wanted to encourage African Americans to celebrate their heritage started Kwanzaa's in California in 1966. Kwanzaa means first fruit in Swahili and is a harvest festival. Families exchange gifts and have African-style feasts. Seven-pronged candleholders are lit on each consecutive night for the seven principles: unity, self-determination, working together, sharing, purpose, creativity and faith. The celebration continues till January





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## Rizal Day (Philippines)



**Dec 30-** This day commemorates the death of Jose Mercado rizal in 1896, a Philippine doctor and author whose books denounced Spanish administration. He was an inspiration to the Philippine nationalist movement.



## Omisoka (Japan)

**Dec 31-** To usher in the new year, families clean their homes, eat toshikoshi buckwheat noodles in the hope that one's life will be stretched out as long as these noodles. As midnight approaches, Shinto temples around the country begin ringing out the old year, sounding the temple bell 108 times, signifying the 108 human worldly desires removed by the striking of the bell. Most offices are closed Dec 30 - Jan 4 or Dec 29 - Jan 3.



## Reference

Khanna, A., Mody, P., Powers, S., Raza, R. (2023). *Multicultural Calendar 2022*. Toronto: O