

## Human Vitality

- Foster Human Rights
- Preserve Culture & Diversity
  - Handmade & Homemade
  - **Holidays & Events**
  - Traditionally-Made
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## New Traditions this Holiday Season

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Multiculturalism is a beautiful thing: it exposes us to new influences that make for a richer, more dimensional experience of life. Every November through January, a variety of exciting cultural traditions in America take place, and each celebration represents a particular and distinct point of view. Whether religious or cultural (or both), learning what **these holidays** are and how to enjoy them will likely be very fulfilling and educational.

At Hearts, we love collaborating with our artisans and learning about their cultures in the process. To help you experience a little of the same joy of collaboration, we've compiled some helpful facts, suggestions and resources to open up new possibilities for winter fun in novel and very **meaningful ways**. Enjoying a truly multicultural America is a wonderful way to expand your horizons this winter.

### Quick Facts: Winter Holiday Traditions in America

- **95% celebrate Christmas:** December 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas celebrations are observed by decorating Christmas trees, attending religious ceremonies, and exchanging gifts by 95% of the population.<sup>[i]</sup>
- **5.2+ million celebrate Hanukah:** Sometimes spelled Chanukah, this tradition is celebrated by between 5.2 and 5.4 million Jews living in America<sup>[ii]</sup> through religious observances, family gatherings, gift exchanges, and the lighting of menorahs. This Festival of Lights Jewish revolves around the victory of the Jewish people over their oppressors.<sup>[iii]</sup>
- **5+ million celebrate Kwanzaa:**<sup>[iv]</sup> Kwanzaa is a seven-day festival that honors African culture from December 26<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>[v]</sup> This non-secular holiday includes lighting candles, gathering with loved ones, and listening to (or participating in) traditional African drum performances.<sup>[vi]</sup>
- **Greatest American partisan gap in 25 years:** 2012 saw greater polarization than we've seen in the past 25 years, with partisan gaps doubling since 1987.<sup>[vii]</sup> In fact, former POTUS Jimmy Carter **has suggested** that America is currently more polarized today than it has during the days of Abraham Lincoln and the American Civil War.<sup>[viii]</sup> <sup>[ix]</sup>
- **Greater tolerance through multicultural experiences:** Learning more about other multicultural holidays instills greater tolerance by assisting us in letting go of ill-conceived prejudices, making it easier to form reasoned judgments about people from those cultures, rather than stereotyping them.<sup>[x]</sup>

### Take Action! Have a Multicultural Wintertime



1. **Ask to participate in another family's traditions:** Sometimes, the best way to begin participating in another family's traditions is by asking them to participate in yours. For example, have people from diverse background over during the winter holidays, explain your cultural traditions, and then ask them which rituals are a part of their cultural or religious traditions during this time of year. If you follow this warm and friendly strategy, your friends may include you in their winter holiday celebrations. To learn the basics of multicultural etiquette during the winter holiday season, visit [RandomctsofKindness.org](http://RandomctsofKindness.org).
2. **Attend the religious services of another tradition:** To familiarize yourself with other winter rituals, consider attending

the religious services of other faiths. To learn more about these cultural and religious traditions in America, check out [Holidays in the United States via timeanddate.com](#).

3. **Join cultural museums or community centers activities:** To experience diversity in your own community, seek out cultural museums or community centers that offer a wide array of ethnic and religious activities during the busy winter holiday season (and year-round). Find listings of such organizations via [The International Council of Museums](#) or the [Museums in the United States via the University of Michigan](#).
4. **Take classes on traditional holiday cooking:** To learn the basics of preparing a range of tasty and multicultural treats this winter holiday season, take a class offered by a local restaurant or cultural center. Alternatively, visit a website such as [Jini's Ethnic Gourmet](#) that offers free recipes, tips, and tutorials.
5. **Join the movement for greater cultural tolerance:** Fostering multiculturalism in your own community or online will be easier when you join action groups devoted to the cause, such as the [National Association for Multicultural Education](#) or the [American Civil Liberties Union](#). These groups fight racism and advocate for diversity in America.

## Dig Deeper: Diversity and Ethnic Holiday Traditions

- Examine the value of diversity and multiculturalism by reading [Cultural Diversity – Towards a Whole Society](#).
- Learn more about the dangers of polarization and how it can be eradicated in [Ending Polarization](#).

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