



The Vasquez Post



Veritas, Aequitas, Spiritus

New Year Traditions

New Year's is a very special time. It is the first day of the next year, starting the 365 day cycle all over again. Like every other holiday, many people have traditions to celebrate the coming of the New Year. An example of this would be New Year's resolutions, which are goals you have for yourself in the upcoming year. There are all types of resolutions people make; one might be losing that stubborn belly fat or waking up a little earlier in the morning. Although these are great resolutions, study shows that only 9% of people complete their resolutions for the year. But, the rarely successful acts of making New Year's resolutions are a lot older than many might think. Over 4,000 years ago, the Babylonians made promises to the gods as part of Akitu, a festival that celebrated the new year. Meanwhile, in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, a common New Year's challenge involves attempting to eat 12 green grapes before a clock finishes tolling 12 times to signal midnight. It is said that if a person is able to complete the challenge successfully, they will be blessed with good luck throughout the New Year.

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Different Holidays around the world

Christmas is celebrated and known by many people all around the world. Many people still celebrate it, even though they might not be religious and just do all the other traditions that come with it. These traditions consist of gift giving and get-togethers. Christmas is celebrated to remember the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time that gives an opportunity to pause and give thanks for the love, hope and joy found in friends and family around us. It symbolizes love, kindness, and giving. Traditions like decorating trees, sharing gifts, and spending time with loved ones have become part of this special occasion bringing joy to people around the world are all things that are done.

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American from December 26th to January 1st that is based on African Harvest traditions from West, East, and Southeast Africa. It is a week-long tradition where each night, a candle is lit. The first day is Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuuma (creativity), and Imani (Faith).

Each night there are different lit candles such as one black, three red, and three green. Red symbolizes the blood that was spilled in the struggle of liberation, green is for the future, and black is for the people. It was officially created in the 1960s by Maulna Karenga who was a nationalist who later became a college professor; he had created the holiday to unite and empower the African-American community after the Watts Rebellion.

Kwanzaa is one of the many holidays that surround many foods from West, East, Southeast Africa, the Caribbean, and the southern United States. Foods like Collard Greens, Jollof Rice, Fried Okra, Jerk Chicken, Shrimp Creole, etc. are most enjoyed throughout the celebration. On the last day of Kwanzaa, gifts are given but usually a gift is given each day.

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that shows the ideals of Judaism and commemorates in particular the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the lighting of candles on each day of the festival. The Hebrew word "Hanukkah" means dedication and this holiday commemorates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The 8 days of Hanukkah stand for the Jewish people when they only had enough oil to keep the flame burning for a single day and the flames lasted for eight nights. At that time, the Jewish were able to find other oil supplies, and were inspired to dedicate an eight day festival in celebration of the miracle. Each night one candle is lit by the Shammash until all eight candles are lit together on the final night of the festival. Other Hanukkah traditions include singing Hanukkah songs, playing the game of dreidel and eating oil based foods, such as latkes and sufganiyot.

Ulysses Miron and Lina Rodriguez

Holiday Movies

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Considered widely the greatest Christmas movie of all time, *It's a Wonderful Life* is an absolutely amazing film. George Bailey, a bank owner who has always longed to travel but has never been able to, is a man who has spent his life selflessly giving to his small town. After his uncle who works for his bank misplaces \$8,000, Bailey realizes he may be going to jail, and the town will go over to the greedy and cruel Mr. Potter. Bailey feels his family and town would be better off if he was dead, and contemplates suicide on Christmas Eve...until the prayers of everyone who loves him bring an angel to show him what the world would be like if he never existed.

Elf (2003)

A classic since its debut in 2003. When a baby called Buddy finds himself crawling into Santa's bag of toys at an orphanage, he is taken in by the elves when he makes it back to the north pole. After a life of being an outcast, a now adult Buddy decides to journey to the real world, to meet his birth father. After he arrives in New York, he marvels in the real world and hopes to reconnect with his father.

The Polar Express (2004)

On Christmas Eve a young boy gets on a train called "The Polar Express" and joins a magical adventure. Along the way he learned about the meaning of Christmas and friendship.

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All Artwork by Sofia Hernandez

Gift traditions

Secret Santa -

Secret Santa is a gift exchange where participants randomly draw names and anonymously give a gift to the person they selected. It's popular for groups, with a price limit often set to keep things fair and fun. The giver's identity is typically revealed after the gift is opened.

White Elephant -

White Elephant is a gift exchange game where participants bring inexpensive gifts or humorous gifts. Players take turns choosing a wrapped gift or "stealing" an opened one, creating a fun and unpredictable swapping experience.

Hanukkah -

Hanukkah gift-giving varies by family but often includes one small gift per night for eight nights. Traditional gifts include chocolate gelt, dreidels, or meaningful items like books and games. Some families emphasize experiences, charitable giving, or sharing traditions over material presents.

Ping An Ye -

Ping An Ye (Christmas Eve in China), people often give apples as gifts because the word for apple sounds like "peace". These apples, often beautifully wrapped, symbolize wishes for peace and safety. Small gifts or treats may also be exchanged.

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New Year Traditions continued from the front side

Now in the US the tradition of dropping a giant fluorescent ball in New York City to celebrate the New Year can be traced back to a newspaper boss. In 1907, New York Times publisher, Adolph S. Ochs hired sign-maker company, Artkraft Strauss to build a large, extravagant ball that could be lit up and lowered to celebrate the beginning of 1908. The first ball designed by builder Jacob Starr was made of iron and wood, and weighed around 700 pounds. In Ecuador, it is a popular tradition to celebrate the new year by setting fire to a scarecrow-like doll called a monigote or el año viejo (literally, “the old year”). The tradition is said to represent getting rid of regrets or letting go of the bad things from the previous year. In recent times, it has become popular for children to design the effigies after cartoon characters or superheroes. For the adults, the effigies may often resemble people they don’t like, such as political figures or members of hated sports teams, for exactly the reasons you would expect.

Article by Mason Berger, Domenic Olmos, and Elijah Hernandez

Holiday Recipe

Chicken tamales- 6 ounces dried corn husks (about 35), 1 1/2 pounds tomatillos, husked and halved, 1 Spanish onion, cut into 1-inch wedges, 3 garlic cloves, peeled, 2 serrano chiles, stemmed, 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, 1/3 cup fresh lime juice, 1/4 cup packed cilantro leaves, kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper, 1 (4 1/2- to 5-pound) chicken, cut into 8 pieces, 6 cups Tamale Dough

Information provided by Abby Garcia



Holiday Movies continued from the front page

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)

This movie follows the king of Halloween Town, Jack Skellington. Throughout the movie he discovers Christmas and tries to bring the holiday to Halloween Town which causes major confusion.

A Charlie Brown Christmas (1965)

When the commercialism of Christmas starts to get to poor Charlie Brown, he tries his best to find the real spirit of Christmas. After failing at directing the Christmas play, and finding a subpar Christmas tree for the stage, Charlie feels depressed. But after all his friends come together and decorate the sad little Christmas tree he’s found, the holidays start to turn around for him. A heartwarming animated classic.

The Grinch (2018)

set in a town named Whoville where Christmas is celebrated heavily. The Grinch is known to hate Christmas. So, as Christmas rolled around, he designed a plan to take everybody’s presents while dressed as Santa. After taking all the presents on his sleigh he decided to have a change of heart and after everyone woke up he came down and returned all the presents.

A Christmas Story (1983)

An eighties Christmas comedy, where little Ralphie tries to convince everyone around him to get him the gift of his dreams...a Red Ryder Ranger 200 Shot BB gun. Despite just about everyone telling him he’ll shoot his eye out with it, Ralphie is determined to get the gun on Christmas Day. A Christmas Story is a forever timeless and hilarious holiday film.

Home Alone (1990)

Maybe the most popular Christmas movie ever, Home Alone follows an eight-year-old Kevin McCallister, who is left home alone after his family have a hectic morning to try and make it to the airport on time for their vacation. Kevin’s initial excitement soon fades as two burglars target his house, and he must defend it with a series of elaborate booby traps.

Article by Charlotte Hernandez and Liam Byrne

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snowman
tradition
celebrate
Kwanzaa

caroling
holidays
ice

Hanukkah
gifts
Christmas

wind
evergreen
cocoa

Gift Traditions continued from the front side

Hogmanay -

Hogmanay, Scotland’s New Year celebration, traditionally focuses on hospitality rather than gift-giving. The key tradition is first-footing, where the first visitor to a home after midnight brings symbolic gifts, such as coal (for warmth), Shortbread, whisky (for cheer), or black bun (a rich fruit cake). These gifts are meant to bring good luck for the year ahead

Information provided by Khloe Roque

The History of Christmas

Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December and is a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide holiday culture. Christmas has been a federal holiday in the United states since 1870. Christmas, the cherished festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. In many churches the origin of this day dates far back into ancient times. Many people were uncertain regarding the day Jesus was born. December 25th was the universally accepted day for Christmas. They also choose the date by using another holiday the Romans used to have, a holiday called Saturnalia. It was dedicated to Saturn, The Roman god of agriculture and the harvest. The holiday was spent festing and giving gifts and people would also decorate their houses with wreaths and other plant decorations. The church adopted traditions of several Pagan winter traditions and holidays. After they went on to take the mistletoe traditions from the Vikings and trees being brought in from the Saxons. For a long time Pagan traditions and Christmas coexisted until eventually they merged into one holiday still called Christmas. In the 19th century, Christmas changed a lot. During this time holidays were getting a lot more recognizable to modern folks.

Article by
Adam
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