

'Happy Holidays'

CAN MEAN MANY THINGS

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News-Press NOW

This time of year is filled with holidays, both religious and non-religious. Several religions and cultures celebrate special feasts or commemorations from November through January. Some — like Christmas — are familiar to a wide range of people. Others, though, are known mostly by adherents to a particular faith.

Here are some key holidays with 2020-21 dates:

Nov. 14: DIWALI

This is a festival of lights for Hindus, Jains and Sikhs. It is a colorful festival filled with lights and fireworks, where people dress in their finest clothes and honor the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

Nov. 20-21: MAWLID EL-NABI

This Muslim feast celebrates the birth of the Prophet Mohammed. Mohammed was born in 571 A.D., in Mecca.

Nov. 29-Dec. 25: ADVENT

This season for Christians is a time of anticipation leading up to Christmas Day.

Dec. 2-10: HANUKKAH

This is the Jewish Festival of Lights, commemorating a time of Jewish independence from 167-160 B.C. It is an eight-day celebration where a candle is lit each day and presents are exchanged.



Hanukkah

Dec. 6: St. NICHOLAS DAY

This is a Christian feast celebrating the patron saint of children, St. Nicholas. This saint became the model for Santa Claus.

Dec. 8: IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

This is a feast specific to Roman Catholics that celebrates what Catholics believe to be the conception of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Dec. 25: CHRISTMAS DAY

This is the commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Gifts are normally exchanged.

Dec. 26-Jan. 1: KWANZAA

This is a cultural holiday celebrating African heritage, unity and culture. Kwanzaa is modeled after African harvest celebrations — the name of the holiday is Swahili for “first fruits.” Red, black and green and the number seven are important symbols of the holiday.



Kwanzaa

Jan. 6: EPIPHANY

For Christians, it commemorates the end of the Christmas season and celebrates the visit of the Magi (“wise men”) to Jesus recorded in the Christian Gospels.

Jan. 24: BODHI DAY

On this day, Buddhists celebrate Buddha's decision to sit under the Bodhi tree until he reached spiritual enlightenment. It is a reflective commemoration of what it requires to achieve the enlightenment that Buddhism emphasizes.



Bodhi Day

Of course, this is not an exhaustive lists of the holidays people celebrate at this time of year. Many other cultural and political holidays allow people to pause, reflect and celebrate together.

The holidays listed above remind us that when someone says “Happy Holidays” at this time of year, it could mean a wide range of things.

Whatever holiday(s) you celebrate, especially in this time when being together in the same place is limited, may we be reminded of the many things for which we give thanks. Also, may these kinds of celebrations bring us together in creative ways, whether physically or in spirit.

Holiday Baking Word Find

Find the hidden words in the puzzle.

BAKING CANDY CANE CHIPS COOKIES	DECORATE EGGNOG GINGERBREAD HOLIDAYS	ICING SPRINKLES SUGAR SWEETS
D T S H I E T R K S S G	J A E T G V A E E E P H	D P E G E G C N E L I C
A E N R U E A N J K H O	L O C S B C W H Q N C O	G M W O Y R U S Z I E K
A F P D R C E G P R H I	O G N I K A B G I P B E	V A E A R E T W N S B S
C N B E J E X E U I M G	H O L I D A Y S T G G H	K S B I C I N G Y M O U

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Be safe, wear masks, stay distanced: we will get through this. Thank you. Mae