



Kwanzaa Festival of first fruits

Kwanza is an African holy day celebrated throughout the world since African people now live in all parts of the world. Kwanza is the celebration of the first harvest, the fruition of the year's labor and of the seeds that have been planted.

The first Kwanza was celebrated by the ancient Egyptians; scenes depicting Kwanza were found on the Pyramid of Gizeh. Evidence of Kwanza is also found in the writings of Sundiata and in books found in the ruins of Timbuktu. It is also mentioned in the writings of the Sumarians.

Today Kwanza is celebrated from sunrise on December 26th through midnight of January 1st.

Each of the seven days stands for the Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles

pals which are the corner-stones of black solidarity. The principals are:

1. *Umoja*—Unity: commemorated on December 26th.
2. *Kujichagulia*—Self-determination: December 27th.
3. *Ujima*—Collective work and responsibility: December 28th.
4. *Ujima*—Sharing: December 29th.
5. *Nia*—Purpose: December 30th.
6. *Kuumba*—Creativity: December 31st.
7. *Imani*—Faith: January 1st.

December 26th through December 31st are days of fasting—days of commitment to work and study for world liberation. After sundown fruits, vegetables and nuts are eaten.

The night of December 1st is traditionally an all-night feast consisting of food, drink, music, dance, conversation, ceremony. Everything is done in the traditional style—cooked in the African manner and eaten without European utensils. Traditional African music, dance and stories prevail. Everyone drinks from the *Kikombe* (unity cup), each saying "Harambee!"

Gifts are given to the children on the last day of Kwanza, January 1st. The presents represent the fruits of the labor of the parents and the rewards of the seeds sown by the children. Parents commit their children to goodness in the coming year and reward them according to how they live up to their commitments. Acts, thoughts and values are only valid if they benefit the community.



Kids view Kwanzaa

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Kwanzaa is a time when Black people get together and celebrate. The children get presents and we celebrate Kwanzaa seven days instead of one. Kwanzaa means the seven principles. We like to dance and sing.
Lateef Smith, Age 9

We don't celebrate Christmas. We celebrate Kwanzaa. We read books. We made the sun. I made a Kwanzaa book. I made the fruit. I made the candleholder. We made the paper that has the mshumaa and the Kwanzaa present. I like Kwanzaa. We know there isn't any Santa Claus.
Aladdin Smith, Age 5

I like Kwanzaa because of all the things that Black people get to do. They get to dance and they get to have a feast and get to have joy.
Patrece Smith, Age 6

Kwanzaa means a feast. On Kwanzaa we play and on the first night the children do a program. For Kwanzaa we made red, black and green decorations.
Chinue Richardson, Age 5

For Kwanzaa we have a Kinara and fruit and corn and the ankh. We have the sun and the zawaki and the mshumaa. We made a coloring book and the Kwanzaa table. We get zawadi and we get to light the candles. We say the seven principles. I like Kwanzaa.
Jamila Harris, Age 5

Kwanzaa is important because it feels good! At Kwanzaa you get to dance, eat, sing and watch movies. What does Kwanzaa feel like to you? Kwanzaa feels good to me!
Jumoke Askari, Age 6

To me, Kwanzaa means a feast and Black people eating and dancing and singing and having fruits and vegetables. It means having friends over and letting the children decorate with red, black and green.
Halle Richardson, Age 6

I like Kwanzaa. All children love it. They can dance and sing songs, too. They eat dinner together. We celebrate the seven principles of Blackness.
Thabiti Waters, Age 6

It is nice to have Kwanzaa. I like Kwanzaa. I like to hear Kwanzaa songs. I want to sing Kwanzaa songs everywhere I go. I like Kwanzaa because Santa Claus is not real.
Nikki Blake, Age 5

On Kwanzaa we have a feast and we dance and sing and have fun. Kwanzaa celebrates the seven principles of Blackness. It lasts for seven days. We dress in our Afrikan clothes and we have fun. We help people. We make people feel good.
Phillip Thomas, Age 8

Kwanzaa is a feast. You make lots of food like noodles and turkey. You can dance at a feast and cook the food. I like Kwanzaa because we get lots of zawadi. The seven principles are umoja, kujichagulia, ujima, ujamaa, nia, kuumba and imani. The seven candles are for the seven principles. You get lots of food on Kwanzaa. You get presents that help you learn.
Ellitta LeDuff, Age 6

Kwanzaa means love and life. I like Kwanzaa because you make things for your mother. On Kwanzaa you do things for people.
Aisha Daniel, Age 5

Kwanzaa is happy. Happy Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is for children. You get presents. We made Kwanzaa patterns. Kwanzaa just comes once a year. On Kwanzaa you cook and play and open up your Kwanzaa presents. Kwanzaa lasts for seven days. You have seven candles for the seven principles.
Makesi Ormond, Age 5

Kwanzaa is for Black people. We dance. We have fun. We play. We get presents. We decorate the house with the things we make at school. We feel happy and we eat. We spend the night at school and we take our presents home. Kwanzaa is our happy time.
Rashidah Hagg, Age 5

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