



NCR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cultural Observances, Awareness Information and Events

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December 2023

Religious Holidays Celebrated In December

What Religious Holidays Are Celebrated in December 2023?

St. Nicholas Day (Dec. 6) Christian. This holiday honors the birth of Saint Nicholas, the saint who serves as a role model for gift giving and is commonly known as Santa Claus.

Hanukkah (Dec, 7-15) Judaism. Eight-day Jewish festival of lights that celebrates Maccabees revolt in Israel. Eight candles are lit with a menorah to honor the holiday. In Hebrew, Hanukkah means "Dedication"

Immaculate Conception Day (Dec. 8) Catholic. This holiday honors Jesus' mother Mary.

Bodhi Day (Dec. 8) Buddhist. This holiday celebrates the historical Buddha's decision and vow to sit under the Bodhi tree until he reached spiritual enlightenment. Celebrated through meditation, similar to how Christians celebrate Christmas to honor Jesus Christ.

Feast Day of Our Lady Guadalupe (Dec. 12) Catholic. Mainly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who honor the reported appearance of the Virgin Mary in Mexico City.

Posadas Navidenas (Dec. 16-25) Christian. Primarily a Hispanic Christian holiday that commends Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

Dhanu Sankranti (Dec. 16) Hindu. A festival that marks the crossing of the sun over the zodiac sign Sagittarius. It is celebrated by worshipping Lord Surya, the god of light, and lord of Jagannath, who is considered a form of Vishnu.

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Simbang Gabi (Dec.18) Christian. This is a Filipino Catholic tradition. A series of nine Masses leading up to Christmas. During Mass people will be in a procession with star shaped lanterns which represent the star that guided the three wise men to Bethlehem.

Winter Solstice (Dec.21) Yule, Litha, Wicca/Neo Pagan. This is when the earth is most inclined away from the sun.

Pagans and Wicca believers honor the winter-born king, symbolized by the rebirth of the sun. It's a celebration of family, friends and nature.

Litha is a time to enjoy having outdoor activities to connect with the land and build kinship with friends. Yule is a time to stay indoors, discuss our plans for the new year and reflect on what we've accomplished over the course of the year. Yule is about rebirth and ensuring family and friends make it through the long winter to the new year to begin.

Gita Jayanti (Dec. 22) Hindu. The Birth of Bhagavad Gita, the Song of God.

Christmas Eve (Dec.24) Christian. Celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus.

Christmas (Dec. 25) Christians. Celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

Kwanzaa (Dec 26-Jan.1). A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and it's continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" means "first fruits (of harvest)" in Swahili.