

January

New Years Day

January 1st is considered New Years Day in today's society. But this is a fairly new concept because up until the time of Julius Caesar, the Romans celebrated the New Year in March because it was the first month in the Roman calendar. However, January 1 marked the time when the Romans changed their governmental figures and new consuls were inducted into office. And, they had games and feasting to help celebrate the new officials. But, they still used March 1 as their official mark of the new year and had a festival to their god, Mars (God of War). It was Caesar who changed the Roman New Year's Day to January 1 in honor of Janus, (God of all beginnings and gate keeper of heaven and earth). Janus was always depicted with two faces: One looking back to the old year (past) and one looking ahead to the new year (future). One of the customs in the festival honoring Janus was to exchange gifts and then make resolutions to be friendly and good to one another. When Constantine ruled the Romans and accepted Christianity as their new faith, they kept the Festival of Janus as the New Years Day (not March as before) and turned it into a day of prayer and fasting and not parties etc. It was a day for all good Christians to turn over a new leaf. However, the Romans may have accepted January 1 and Janus as the New Year, but many did not accept the turning over a new leaf, prayer and fasting part of it. However, even in 1582, Great Britain and the English colonies in America still kept March for the beginning of the year. It wasn't until 1752 that Britain (and it's colonies) adopted the new Gregorian calendar and January 1 as the beginning of the year. But many Puritans in New England felt Janus was an offensive pagan god and chose to simply ignore January 1 as a New Years Day. Instead they just made the entire month of January as "The First Month" of the months. And, today no one really considers January 1st a fasting day. Ironically, for many it is a major day of feasting on junk food and watching football games on television.



Twelfth Night - January 5th or 6th

The Twelfth Night or Epiphany Eve is celebrated either on January 5 or January 6. It is observed in the United States, Great Britain and throughout Europe mostly. The Twelfth Night marks the ending of the traditional 12 Days of Christmas or the Christmas season. But why 12 days you may ask. Many feel the custom of closing the Christmas season on January 5 or 6 comes from the pagan custom of marking the Winter Solstice for a certain number of days. This was a very popular tradition in Europe back in the 11th century. I know it's hard to imagine today with all the clocks and calendars we have around us; but, back then it was important to know days and time. But the technicality of when exactly this season ends is still a mystery today. For some, Twelfth Night means the evening

before the Twelfth Day or January 5. To others it stands for the evening of the Twelfth Day exactly or January 6. January 5 is also considered by some the Old Christmas Eve according to the Olde Style Calendar or Julian Calendar. Why? Because Christmas on this calendar fell on January 6. In some remote areas of Great Britain today, there are people who still observe ancient customs of the Old Christmas Eve.



Ever since the Middle Ages, the Twelfth Night has been observed with games, masquerades and other revelries. The Lord of Misrule (see below) along with his assistant, a Fool, was the mock official of the Twelfth Night celebrations. These often involved singing, dancing, pantomimes and feasting. In some areas of England, they also include bonfires, masques and a custom known as "wassailing" the fruit trees. What's that? Basically it's means carrying jugs of cider to the orchards and offering toasts to the apple trees to ensure a good yield.

In France, Germany and the Low Countries, young boys dress up in exotic costumes and wear paper crowns as representatives of the Three Kings or Magi. They then would go begging house to house, carrying paper star lanterns and long poles. By the 18th Century the lavish Twelfth Night parties started to lose their popularity. And by the 19th Century, they almost died out, with a few remnants surviving in small areas.

In Belgium, Portugal, England, France, Germany and the Netherlands, the King of the Bean remains a popular Twelfth Night tradition. In the United States, Twelfth Night pageants remain popular which include masked figures, costumed musicians and performing traditional English dances such as the Abbots Bromley Antler Dance or Horn Dance. In New Orleans, the Twelfth Night marks the beginning of the Carnival and ends on Mardi Gras, the day before Ash Wednesday.

Years ago in England it was a custom to go out in a wheat field and light 12 small fires and one large one as a way to protect it from disease. In Ireland, they would set a sieve of oats as high as possible, with 12 lighted candles being set in the grain with one larger one in the middle. The meaning of these customs has basically been forgotten. Some people say that these fires were to symbolize Jesus Christ and His 12 Apostles. Others continue to view them as simply the survival of heathen sun worship. In Westmoreland, a holly bush or young ash tree would have torches fastened to the branches. The torches were lit and the tree was carried throughout the village accompanied by music. When the torches finally burnt out, two rival groups would fight for the remains of the tree and the rest of the night would be spent having fun.

In the United States, the tradition is that on the Twelfth Night you take down your Christmas tree and other greenery used to decorate your home during the holiday season.

Then you pile it up outside and burn it on this night. This custom of lighting bonfires on the Twelfth Night is gaining in popularity in the U.S.

Appointing a king to rule over the Twelfth Night festivities goes all the way to the reign of King Edward II in England. The custom was to make a special cake, called either the King's Cake or *Gateau des Rois*, to conceal either a bean, coin or pea inside of it. Then the cake would be cut into pieces (as many as there were guests) on the Twelfth Night feast. The youngest member would pass out the pieces of cake. Whoever got the piece with the bean (or pea or coin) inside would then become crowned as The King of the Bean or Lord of the Misrule. Now, what if a woman got this? Apparently women weren't allowed to rule over the Twelfth Night Festivities. So if a woman got the piece, she'd have to pick a guy to become the King of the Bean. The mock court (for the King) was created by drawing pieces of paper with character descriptions on them from a hat. These characters would have to be maintained throughout the entire evening. This custom was kept in observance into the 19th Century. But, later it was dropped because as time went on, too many crass and offensive characters had been introduced into the custom. But, elaborately decorated Twelfth Night cakes remained popular (even though the parties got cancelled) up until the late Victorian era. Many cakes are still prepared and served today in some parts of Europe.

For many, many years, miracle plays held in church sanctuaries about the Three Kings were held at this time of year. Later on, as the performances became too secular, the plays were held outside the church. Soon the religious dramas were replaced or joined by plays of popular tragedies, comedies or historical significance. The play by William Shakespeare, "Twelfth Night" is believed to have first been performed for Queen Elizabeth I at Whitehall Palace in 1601. The Twelfth Night pageants that are performed in the United States today are usually more modest and less elaborate than the Elizabethan ones in England. However, many of the dances and characters incorporated into the modern plays can be traced back to the medieval days.

In Latin counties it is *Dia de los Reyes Magos*. It was on this night that the three kings made it to Bethlehem to present their gifts to the newborn Jesus--gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In Latin countries, on January 5th the three wise men are added to the nativity scene and children leave their shoes by the door and hope for fruits, candy, and trinkets to be left inside them by the Wise Men. Some countries give presents on this day rather than on Christmas Day. In Mexico, *la Rosca de Reyes*, a sweet circular cake is served with a doll baked inside representing the baby Jesus (similar to the Mardi Gras Kings Cake) and is served with hot chocolate. The person who finds the baby in their slice is to host the forthcoming celebration *Candelaria* or



Candlemas on February 2nd. It is on Candlemas that the nativity scene and all the Christmas decorations are put away.

The popular song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" refers to the custom of giving one gift every day from Christmas until January 6th or Twelfth Night. Many people link the gifts to Christian symbols. Can you remember all the gifts? How would you like to receive these gifts? I'm sure we would all like to receive golden rings, but what about those geese, turtle doves, partridges, drummers, maids, and lords?

Try this recipe for the Rosca de Reyes cake.

Rosca de Reyes

1 packet yeast
1/4 cup lukewarm milk
3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cups granulated sugar
7 eggs
1/3 cup melted butter
dash of salt
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon aniseed
1/2 cup raisins
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup chopped candied figs
1/4 cup chopped candied orange
1/4 cup chopped candied lemon
1/4 cup chopped candied cherries
1/4 cup chopped candied citron
1 egg, beaten
granulated sugar

Dissolve yeast in five tablespoons lukewarm milk and let sit five minutes. Add the flour, sugar, eggs, melted butter, the remaining milk, salt, cinnamon, aniseed, raisins and vanilla. Combine and knead into a ball.

Grease dough with some butter set rest and rise until the dough doubles in size, about 2-1/2 hours.

Grease a baking sheet.

Punch down dough and knead until soft and pliable. Now form dough into a ring or "rosca".

Insert the baby figurine.

Place the dough ring on baking sheet. Decorate the top with the candied fruit.

Let the dough rise again until doubled.

Preheat oven to 360°F.

Brush with the beaten egg and sprinkle with granulated sugar.

Bake 40 minutes or until done.

Iroquois Mid-Winter Ceremony

The Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony is held in either January or February. When the dipper constellation appears in the sky directly overhead, you then wait for the new moon to be seen. This is when the spiritual year begins. You then wait 5 days after the new moon to begin the ceremony. The celebration lasts 9 days with a lot of traditional events, as well as choosing new council members for the next year. This celebration is observed among the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy or The Six Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora. This is also known as the "New Year's Ceremony" because it marks the beginning of a new ritual year. The "Big Heads" announce this ceremony. They are masked messengers who visit the longhouse (a bark covered structure where the Iroquois used to live) now used as a public activity space. The Big Heads invite everyone to participate.

There is no specific order to this ceremony. Each tribe has their own way of doing it. But the usual custom is to first begin with the "Stirring of the Ashes" as a symbolic gesture of showing gratitude for all the blessings bestowed during the previous year. There is a public naming event where all the children born during the previous year are now given their Indian names. There are also two traditional Indian dances, The Bear Dance and the Feather Dance.

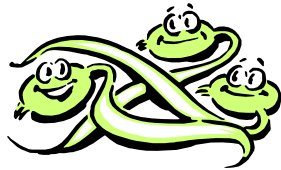


Tobacco is an important element in many Native American celebrations. In the Midwinter Ceremony, they have a Tobacco Invocation ceremony that represents a way of communicating to the Creator, both a message of thanksgiving, as well as a plea for a successful growing season for the new year.

The Iroquois also believe that dreams are not just fantasies. They feel dreams represent a cure for diseases and mental disorders. So they have a Dreamsharing Ritual. They feel that by getting people to share their dreams in public, getting opinions on what those dreams might mean, the Iroquois believe that they are better able to resolve whatever problems or conflicts gave rise to the dreams in the first place. They have a group of medicine men known as The False Face Society, who perform the appropriate curing ritual once these dreams have been interpreted.

The Midwinter Ceremony ends with a speaker who gives a summation of the 9 days of the celebration. He also gives a brief thanksgiving address. It is at this time that the new council members (who have been chosen for the upcoming year) are introduced to the crowd at the longhouse. The rest of the tribe's members are now purified and released from the burden of their dreams. And a new year is now welcomed.

Powamu Festival



The Powamu called the Bean or early February. (The celebration lasts 8 days and is mainly celebrated by the Hopi Indians in Arizona.

Festival is the mid-winter ceremony and also Planting Festival. It is observed in late January

The Hopis call their ancestral spirits, Katchinas. They believe that for 6 months of the year, these spirits leave their mountain homes and visit the tribe. When they do this, they bring along with them good health to the Hopi and rain for their crops. The Powamu Festival celebrates the spirits return, just like the Niman Katchina ceremony in July celebrates their departure. The preparations for the ceremony include repainting of the masks that will be worn by those Hopi who impersonate the Katchinas. On the third day, young men bring baskets of wet sand that they leave near the entrance to the kiva, the ceremonial meeting room. A hot fire also burns in every kiva of every Hopi village the entire 8 days of the Powamu Festival. Blankets are also stretched across the opening so that the atmosphere inside is similar to a hothouse. Each man who enters the kiva during this period carries a basket (or bowl) of sand into it. He also plants a handful of beans, which sprout really fast due to all the heat and humidity inside the kiva.

The Powamu comes to its conclusion with a dance that takes place in the nine kivas that dot the northeastern Arizona mesa. The bodies of the dancers are painted red and white and they wear squash blossoms in their hair. These are really yucca fibers twisted into the shape of a squash blossom. They also wear white kilts and sashes, plus leggings with a fringe of shells tied down the side. The dance takes place inside the hot kiva and is done in two lines. When the dance is over, the dancers then leave for the next village's kiva, and another group arrives. So, by the time the night is over, each group will have danced at all of the nine kivas. Then, the Katchinas arrive the next morning wear masks and painted bodies. They bring dolls and rattles for the girls; and, bow and arrows for the boys. Both of the boys and girls get the green bean sprouts that have been growing in the hot kivas. Clowns run around making jokes, tripping each other and performing pantomimes for everyone's pleasure and fun. The conclusion of the Powamu ends with a feast in which bean sprouts are the main ingredient.

From this time until their departure in July, the Katchinas appear regularly in masked ceremonies performed in the Hopi villages.

Why a festival that honors bean sprouts? The Hopi believe that bean sprouts represent fertility. Because the Hopi rely strongly on the Katchinas to bring rain (and other good weather conditions) essential to the growth of their crops, bean sprouts also symbolize the approaching spring too.

Martin Luther King's Birthday - January 15th

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday is January 15, 1929. But the observance is always the third Monday in January, regardless of what date it falls on. Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.? He was a PK, or preacher's kid. His father was Martin Luther King, Sr. and the pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Martin Luther King did not achieve national importance until 1955 when he led the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. The boycott was focused around a black seamstress named Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat to a white male passenger and was fined \$14. Mr. King's intention for this boycott was to end segregation in the city's transit system.



Later, in 1960, Martin Luther King was chosen to head the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This organization gave him his foundation he needed to expand his civil rights campaign throughout the South. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized many protests and marches. His most famous was his 1963 "March on Washington" where he delivered his famous speech titled, "I Have A Dream."

Throughout his entire life, he practiced nonviolent resistance and promoted peaceful protest against segregation practices in the United States. Four years later, he was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Martin Luther King, Jr. had come to help organize a strike of the city's sanitation workers who were mostly black. While standing on the balcony outside his motel room, James Earl Ray shot him. In over 120 American cities, riots broke out that year! This violence escalated into the type that Martin Luther King, Jr. had worked so hard to prevent.

U.S. Representative John Conyers (D -Michigan) called for a holiday honoring Dr. King 8 days after he was killed. The bill got stalled in Congress. So a petition of over 6 million names was then submitted. Resubmissions were then presented by John Conyers and also

Shirley Chisholm (D- New York) at every subsequent session of Congress. It took 15 years for his birthday to become a holiday. In 1983 Congress passed the legislation and President Ronald Reagan signed it into law. One of the hassles of getting this enacted was the date January 15. Many said it was a holiday too close to Christmas and New Years. So, to compromise, it was decided to make it the third Monday in January. This moving of the date, helped get the holiday passed.

Not everyone was happy about this holiday, regardless of the date it was on. Many said that Martin Luther King, Jr. (one man) did not deserve to have his own holiday. Instead, that the civil rights movement (representing a group) should somehow get honored. Because of this, some states renamed it Human Rights Day or Civil Rights Day. States were not so eager to adopt this holiday when it officially went into effect in 1986. By 1989, 44 of the 50 states adopted it. And, in 1999 New Hampshire was the last state to adopt Martin Luther King's Birthday Holiday.

Of course, Atlanta, Georgia was the first city to designate his birthday as a paid holiday for all city employees in 1971. But it was the state of Illinois, in 1973, that was the first to declare January 15 a statewide holiday.

January 15, 1981 would have been Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 52nd birthday. At the Washington Monument in D.C. over 100,000 people gathered to rally in support of a national holiday. Legislation was finally passed 2 years later, in 1983, declaring the third Monday in January to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. This is the 10th national holiday that Congress has approved. And, it's the ONLY holiday honoring an American, other than a past president.

Some feel that Martin Luther King, Jr.'s greatest talent was giving speeches. His speech on August 28, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in D.C. on the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation instantly became a symbol for the civil rights movement at the time. Approximately 250,000 people heard this speech at the memorial. They had assembled there during the famous March on Washington to win the support of Congress and the president for pending civil rights legislation. At age 35, in 1964, he became the youngest man, 2nd American and 3rd black man to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He divided the \$54,000 he received among different civil rights organizations. That same year, president Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law. Soon thereafter, on August 6th, 1965, a voting rights bill was passed giving African Americans the right to vote. The impact Dr. King had in motivating these events into action is immeasurable.

When King was assassinated 5 years later, his "I Have A Dream" speech also became a symbol of his lifelong effort to end segregation through nonviolent means. While giving his speech, King repeated "I have a dream" several times, each time building the intensity of his message. Those close to King at the time, say before he gave this speech he spent

days working on it. He would agonize over every paragraph, sentence and punctuation mark. It was almost as if he knew this speech would be the one he would most be remembered for.

Today, excerpts from the "I Have A Dream" speech can be heard on television and radio around the time of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s holiday. Many times, the speech is also accompanied by the song "We Shall Overcome" which is also widely regarded as the civil rights movement theme song. Below is an excerpt from his speech:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

To read the entire speech, visit the Martin Luther King, Jr. page from Stanford University's website.

January 18th is Winnie the Pooh Day

Go to www.winniethepoohbear.net for online games, cards to send friends, recipes, maps, and pictures.



January 20th is Inauguration Day

On this date the president will take the following oath as specified in Article II, Section I of the Constitution of the United States: **"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."** George Washington first took this oath on April 30, 1789 in New York City. Through 1933, the inauguration took place in either March or April (unless a president died in office and a vice president was sworn in). President Franklin Roosevelt was the first president to take the oath of office on January 20th.

Inaugural Traditions

The First Inauguration gave rise to many traditions that continue today. For example, President Washington followed his swearing-in with an Inaugural Address, a special speech written for the occasion. In 1793, the oath of office for Washington's second term was administered by William Cushing, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and the first in a long line of Supreme Court Justices to preside over Presidential Inaugurations.

Thomas Jefferson was the first to be sworn in as President in Washington, D.C., the location chosen for the permanent capital and the site of all but a handful of Inaugural ceremonies. Jefferson showed his taste for simplicity by going on foot to the Capitol for the oath taking and returning to his boardinghouse afterwards for dinner. After his second Inauguration, however, Jefferson rode on horseback from the Capitol to the President's House (the name then used for the White House) amid music and a spontaneous gathering of mechanics from the nearby Navy Yard - a procession that grew into today's Inaugural Parade.

Jefferson's second Inauguration also began the tradition of the Inaugural Open House, when the executive mansion was opened to all who wished to greet the President after his swearing-in. The popularity of the Open House would later cause our seventh President, Andrew Jackson, to flee through a window after a mob of well wishers stormed the White House, ruining furniture and breaking china in their eagerness to see him. In 1865, despite growing concern about safety, Abraham Lincoln shook some 6,000 hands after his second Inauguration. President Grover Cleveland, realizing that the White House could no longer accommodate such crowds, instead held a review of the troops from a flag-draped grandstand just outside, adding another element to the Inaugural Parade.

Presidents have celebrated in many ways since George Washington danced the minuet after his Inauguration in 1789. James Madison, America's fourth President, and his wife, Dolley, were the guests of honor at the first official Inaugural Ball, held at Long's Hotel in Washington, D.C. Martin Van Buren's Inauguration featured two balls, and President William Henry Harrison held three to meet the ever-growing demand for tickets. Later Inaugurations have featured specially built pavilions for dancing, balls held at several sites throughout the capital, and even Inaugural parties in other cities. Modern Inaugural festivities reflect not only the President they honor, but also the desire to include the many Americans who want to take part in celebrating our nation's rich history and the transfer of presidential power.

People look forward to seeing what the new First Lady will wear to the Inaugural Ceremony and to the balls that follow. Go to the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, DC

to see the display of First Lady ball gowns and learn more about the causes she championed. Check out the following websites too: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/youmus/ex12ladi.htm>, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies>. How soon do you think we will have a woman president and a First Man?

Inaugural Addresses

In 1817, James Monroe, our fifth President, became the first to give an Inaugural Address to an assembled public crowd. Since that time, the traditional Inaugural Address has been an opportunity for the President to speak directly to the American people. George Washington said just 135 words after his second inauguration in 1793, while William Henry Harrison gave the longest Inaugural Address ever, taking almost two hours to deliver 8,445 words.

Inaugural Addresses are often remembered as reflecting a particular time in history. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln called on Americans to "...finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds," while in 1933 Franklin Roosevelt reached out to citizens discouraged by the Great Depression, saying, "This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper." He also told the nation "So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..." President John F. Kennedy inspired a generation of young people in 1961 when he urged, "...ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." And in 1993, President Bill Clinton reassured a nation in transition after the end of the Cold War by stating, "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America."

Can you find the answers to the following questions?

INAUGURATION TRIVIA HUNT

1. Who was the first president to be inaugurated on January 20?

2. Who was the first president to be inaugurated at the Capitol, in Washington, D.C.?

3. Who was the first president to take the Oath of Office in the White House?

4. Who was the first president to ride in a car to and from his inaugural ceremony?

5. Who was the first president to have his inauguration broadcast on television?

6. Who was the first president to have his inauguration broadcast live on the Internet?

7. Who was the first president to wear long pants for his swearing-in ceremony?

8. Which president's inauguration is believed to have been the first one photographed?

9. Who was the first president to have his inauguration broadcast on radio?

10. Who was the first president to take the Oath of Office outdoors in Washington, D.C.?

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January 21st is National Hugging Day. Give the people in your life that you love a hug and let them know how special they are to you!





The Hajj ending in Eid-ul-Adha - 21st - 24th January

Eid-ul-Adha ('Celebration of Sacrifice'), also known as the Greater Eid, is the second most important festival in the Muslim calendar. It marks the end of the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca). It takes place on the 10th day of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar. Although only pilgrims to Makkah can celebrate it fully, Muslims elsewhere also mark the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

The Hajj is the [Fifth Pillar of Islam](#) and therefore a very important part of the Islamic faith. All physically fit Muslims who can afford it should make the visit to Makkah, in Saudi Arabia, at least once in their lives. Every year around 2 million Muslims converge on Makkah. They visit a shrine in the city known as the *Ka'bah*, built by Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isma'il (Ishmael) at the command of Allah (God). It is a place for all who want to reaffirm their faith.

Eid-ul-Adha celebrates the occasion when Allah appeared to Ibrahim in a dream and asked him to sacrifice his son Isma'il as an act of obedience to God. The devil tempted Ibrahim by saying he should disobey Allah and spare his son. As Ibrahim was about to kill his son, Allah intervened: instead Allah provided a lamb as the sacrifice. This is why today all over the world Muslims who have the means to, sacrifice a sheep (alternatively a goat or cow can be used), as a reminder of Ibrahim's obedience to Allah. They usually share out the meat with family and friends, as well as the poorer members of the community. As a sign of consecration, they wear very simple white clothes. The men wear seamless long white robes while the women wear plain white dresses with scarves. These are symbolic of the equality of all people in the eyes of Allah.

Eid-ul-Adha is a 1-3 day celebration and in Muslim countries is a public holiday. It starts with Muslims going to the Mosque for prayers, dressed in their best clothes, and thanking Allah for all the blessings they have received. It is also a time when they visit family and friends as well as offering presents. At Eid it is obligatory to give a set amount of money to charity to be used to help poor people buy new clothes and food so they too can celebrate.

Celebrate National Hot Tea Month

Recent research exploring the potential health attributes of tea is leading many scientists to agree that tea, both black and green, may contribute positively to a healthy lifestyle.

"Fruits, vegetables, and tea all contain important antioxidants. Research suggests these phytonutrients may contribute substantially to the promotion of health and the prevention of chronic disease. For example, recent research studies reveal the antioxidants in tea may inhibit the growth of cancer cells and support cardiovascular health," stated Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D., F.A.C.N, Chief of the Antioxidants Research Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

Did you know that tea was found by Emperor Sheng Nung of China in 2737 BC and that counting herbal tea there are only 5 basic tea types? Next to water, tea is the most popular beverage in the world. Both the tea bag and ice tea were invented in the United States. Ireland consumes the most tea per capita in the world!

Afternoon teas were a part of society in the time that Juliette Low grew up. Hold a tea for your troop, a girl and her special adult tea, or SU tea. Try some of the recipes below.

During Queen Victoria's 64-year reign, afternoon tea became a beloved English tradition. This simple, very pretty sponge cake, filled with a layer of jam and whipped cream, was one of the queen's favorites.

Victoria Sponge

Yields: 1 7-inch, 2-layer cake , Work Time: 20 minutes Total Time: 50 minutes

The Cake:

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
3 large eggs, room temperature
1 tablespoon milk, room temperature
2/3 cup sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
Salt

Confectioner's sugar

The Filling:

1 cup heavy cream
5 tablespoons strawberry or raspberry jam



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Grease and flour 2 7-inch round cake pans.

Melt butter in a small saucepan over low heat, or in a microwave. In a medium bowl, beat together eggs and milk. Add sugar and beat hard until thoroughly combined. Sift together the flour, baking powder, and a pinch of salt, then fold gently into egg mixture. Stir in

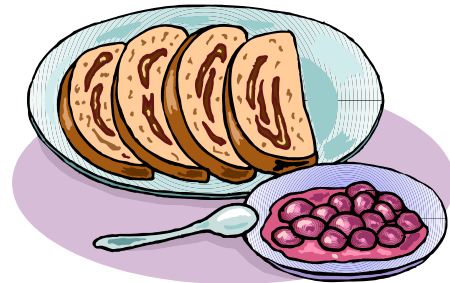
melted butter and mix well with a wooden spoon just until the butter is thoroughly incorporated into the batter.

Divide batter between the 2 prepared pans. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until the cakes have risen and turned golden. They should spring back when pressed lightly with a finger. Remove from oven. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to cool completely before filling.

Choose one of the cakes as the bottom layer. If necessary, trim the top with a knife so it is flat. Whip the cream until stiff. Spread top of bottom cake layer with jam. Spread a layer of whipped cream on top of jam. Place the second cake flat side down on top of filling. To decorate, place a 7-inch doily on cake top and lightly sift confectioner's sugar over it. Carefully remove doily, leaving a lacy pattern on cake. If strawberries are available, an alternative decoration is to pipe a ring of whipped cream rosettes around cake, setting a single lush strawberry in the center of each rosette. Cut in wedges to serve.

Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup chilled, unsalted butter
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream



In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut the butter into small pieces and blend into the flour mixture with a pastry blender. The mixture should look like coarse crumbs. In a small measuring cup combine the whipping cream, beaten egg and vanilla. Add this mixture to the flour mixture. Stir until just combined. Do not over mix this mixture.

Knead dough gently on a lightly floured surface. Roll or pat the dough into a circle that is 7 inches round and about 1 1/2 inches thick. Cut this circle into 8 triangular sections. Alternatively, you can cut the dough into rounds with a cookie cutter. Place the scones on a parchment paper lined baking sheet or else a lightly greased pan. Make a mixture of one well-beaten egg with 1 tablespoon heavy cream. Brush the scones with this mixture. Bake at 375 degrees for approximately 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. These scones freeze very well.

This recipe is very good as is but there are ways to jazz it up a little. When adding the fruit or chocolate chips do so just before adding the cream mixture: You could add 1/3 cup of dried red tart cherries, or 1/3 cup of miniature chocolate chips, or 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel and 1 tablespoon poppy seeds, or 1 tablespoon poppy seeds and teaspoon almond extract instead of the vanilla extract. Sprinkle top of scones with flaked almonds after you have brushed them with the egg mixture.

The scones should be cut into rounds and served with Devonshire Cream (rich cream) and jams (raspberry, strawberry, apricot, etc.) You can buy the Devonshire at some specialty stores or else make it yourself. Alternatively, you could also serve lemon curd (can be bought at specialty stores or made yourself). The scones can be served in a napkin-lined basket or doily-lined platter.

Devonshire Cream

8 ounces mascarpone cheese
2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups heavy whipping cream (not ultra pasteurized)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons sugar
small pinch salt

Put all the ingredients in a large stainless steel bowl. Whisk the cream until it holds its shape. Refrigerate the cream until ready to use. This cream should be used within an hour of being made or else you will have to rewhip it.

MOCK DEVONSHIRE CREAM *

1 3 oz. Pkg. Cream cheese, softened
1 tbs. Powdered sugar- sifted
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Vanilla
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream

Beat cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in sugar and vanilla. Gradually beat in enough cream to make a spreading consistency. DO NOT OVER BEAT! Cover and chill 2-24 hours. Makes 1 cup.

Note:

This devonshire recipe is better than the real thing, and cheaper too!!!

Tea Sandwiches

To make proper tea sandwiches, the bread must be very thin. If you are slicing the bread yourself, partially freeze the bread first to make slicing easier. You can flatten the bread further by using a rolling pin. After making the sandwiches, cut the crusts off and cut into triangles, squares, or else rounds (use a round cookie cutter). To serve, place the sandwiches on an iceberg lettuce-lined platter (lettuce has a high water content which will keep the sandwiches moist), or use a hollowed-out loaf of bread, also lined with the lettuce. Try some of the ideas below, or make up your own! Before spreading fillings on bread, spread a very thin layer of softened butter on each slice, to prevent sandwich from becoming soggy.

Mix Dijon mustard in whole cranberry sauce, and flavor to taste. Spread on a slice of bread and then add a small slice of smoked turkey; add a top layer of bread.

Whip a soft block of cream cheese with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of celery and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of chopped walnuts. Spread the mixture on whole wheat bread to serve.

Thin a block of cream cheese with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of milk, and then add one cup finely chopped pineapple and spread on Boston Brown Bread.

Mix three parts of cream cheese with one part apricot preserves. Spread the mixture on a bread slice, and top with thinly-sliced ham. Garnish with $\frac{1}{4}$ sliver dried apricot. Try substituting cherry preserves in place of the apricot.

Spread softened butter on bread. Thinly slice cucumber slices and place on bread. Garnish with chive or mint. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Try these activities at your tea party:

Tussie Mussies

What you need: Paper doilies or cloth (round)

The paper doilies are available in white, gold, Victorian print and assorted pkgs., at any craft supply store.

glue gun/glue sticks

Tulle rounds

small Dried or silk floral bunches

1/2" ribbon

Decorative buttons or charms (available at craft supply stores)

What to do:

1. Roll doily into a cone and glue at center front.
2. Glue 4-6 small strips of ribbon over center front glue point. Allow ribbon strips to hang loosely down front of tussie cone.
3. Glue decorative button or charm over ribbon.
4. Push center of tulle round into bottom of cone. If desired, you may place a small amount of glue on center of tulle round before inserting it to keep it secure.
5. Place small floral bunches into tussie mussie.

Buy some teacups from the Paint-Your-Own Ceramics store, and let the guests paint their own teacups. Take the teacups back to the store to bake them, and hand them out as gifts.

Make picture frames from cardboard, decorate them with fancy foil wrapping paper, and use them for Polaroid snapshots of the Mother-Daughter pairs.

Play some games when the talk dies down!

After you're done chatting, play "How Well Do You Know Your Mother/Daughter?" Write down questions for the pairs to answer about each other, such as "What time does your mother usually get up?" "What is your daughter's favorite TV show?" "What is your mother's favorite outfit?" "What does your daughter like to do after school?" Read the questions, have the pairs answer them on paper, then read the answers aloud to see which Mother-Daughter team knows one another best!

Healthy Weight Week is celebrated in January.

The National Center for Health Statistics finds the number of overweight children in the U.S. has risen to 15 percent for ages 6 to 19, up from just 5 percent in the 1960s. For African American, Hispanic, and American Indian youth, the figures are even higher.

At the same time the Youth Risk Behavior Survey reveals alarming rates of hazardous weight loss practices. Eating disorders affect at least 10 percent of high school students, and nutrition monitoring reveals that a majority of teen girls consume less than two-thirds of their nutrient needs. One fourth are seriously undernourished or malnourished. Weight issues are an obsessive concern for American children of all ages, of every racial and ethnic heritage. Clearly it is a national health crisis when harmful attempts at weight loss are common in the third grade. It is a crisis when more than two-thirds of high school girls are dieting, one in five take diet pills, and both girls and boys are using laxatives, diuretics, fasting and vomiting in desperate attempts to lose weight.

Work on some of the nutrition activities from the service project Building U and check out the cool resources listed on pages 12 -14. Take a look at the following badges: to Make It, Eat It Try-It, Food Power Junior Badge, and Creative Cooking IP.

Did you know....

That Louis Braille was born on January 4, 1809? He was the blind teacher who invented the Braille system of communication. Girl Scout hand books are available in Braille.

Sources:

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