Celebrations, Holidays, and Traditions
December 2008

December 1:

Liberation Day: (Albania) - a public holiday that commemorates the liberation of Albania.

Independence Day: (Barbados) - an annual celebration commemorating the anniversary of Barbados achieving independence from Britain in 1966.

National Day: (Romania) - a national holiday in Romania celebrated with festivals and parades.

Liberty & Democracy Day: (Chad)

Bonifacio Day: (Philippines) - the birthday of Andres Bonifacio and a public holiday in the Philippines. He is regarded as the "Father of the Philippine Revolution" and one of the most influential national heroes of his country.

St. Andrew’s Day/Scotland: (United Kingdom) - celebrated by flying the Scottish flag on public buildings some people have a day off work, but it is not universal. In Edinburgh, there is a week of celebrations, concentrating on musical entertainment and traditional ceilidh dancing. A ceilidh is a social event with couples dancing in circles or sets (groups of eight people). In Glasgow city center, a large shindig, or party, with traditional music and a ceilidh are held. In Dumfries, songs are performed in the Burn's night tradition.

December 2:

National Day: (Laos) - a national holiday in Laos celebrated with festivals and parades.

December 3:

Eid al Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) - Saudi Arabia - a religious festival celebrated by Muslims and Druze worldwide in commemoration of the willingness of Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to Allah.

National Days: (United Arab Emirates) - national holidays in United Arab Emirates that is celebrated with festivals and parades.

December 4:

King Tupou 1 Day: (Tonga)
December 5:

Meeting of Nine Evils: (Bhutan)

Farmer’s Day: (Ghana)- introduced by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, National Farmers' Day was organized as a day’s activity for the nation to honor its hard working farmers. In 1988, the first Friday of every December was set aside by the government as Farmers' Day and is celebrated as a statutory Public Holiday.

Gospel Day: (Marshall Islands)

King’s Birthday: (Thailand)- a public holiday to celebrate King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

December 6:

Quito Day: (Ecuador)- celebrated with festivals, feasts, drinking, music, rituals and rhythmic dance; a fascinating week-long celebration in honor of Founders Day in Quito.

Independence Day: (Finland)- a national public holiday held to celebrate Finland’s declaration of independence from the Russian empire in 1917.

Constitution Day: (Spain)- a holiday to honor the creation of Spain’s constitution which provided Spain a democratic system in 1978.

December 7:

Arafat Day: (Bahrain)- the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah is called the Day of Arafat. This day is the culminating event of the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Houphouet-Boigny Day: (Cote d'Ivoire)- a day to commemorate Felix Houphouët-Boigny (1905-1993), president of the Ivory Coast, was one of the first leaders of a successful nationalist movement in the French West African Federation.

Heroes’ Day: (East Timor)

Haj Day: (Maldives)- a day on which many Muslims begin the trip to Mecca, which Islam states worshippers are obliged to make (health and finances permitting) at least once during their lifetime.

Kurban Bayramy Eve: (Turkey)

December 8:

Bakrid/ Feast of Sacrifice: (India)- a religious festival celebrated by Muslims and Druze worldwide in commemoration of the willingness of Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to Allah.
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- **Pukapuka Gospel Day**: (Cook Islands)
- **Battle Day**: (Falkland Islands)
- **Lady of Camarin Day**: (Guam) - celebrates the patron Saint of Guam and the Northern Marianas.
- **Saint Kliment Ohridski**: (Macedonia)
- **Constitution Day**: (Uzbekistan) - a holiday to honor the constitution of Uzbekistan adopted in 1992.
- **Mother’s Day**: (Panama) - a day to celebrate Mother’s in Panama.
- **Bodhi Day**: (Buddhism) - a day to commemorate Siddhartha Gautama’s realization and presentation to his fellow seekers of the Four Noble Truths.

- **December 9:**
  - Heroes Day: (Antigua)
  - Independence Day: (Tanzania) - an annual celebration commemorating the anniversary of Tanzania’s independence in 1963.

- **December 10:**
  - Human Rights Day: (Cambodia) - celebrates the rights of people in Cambodia.
  - Constitution Day: (Thailand) - commemorates the constitution of Thailand of 1932.

- **December 11:**
  - National Day: (Burkina Faso) - a national holiday in Burkina Faso celebrated with festivals and parades.
  - Kurban Bayramy (Feast of Sacrifice): (Turkey)

- **December 12:**
  - Jamhuri (Independence) Day: (Kenya) - a holiday to mark the date of Kenya’s establishment as a republic on December 12, 1964. Kenya also gained full independence from the United Kingdom one year earlier on December 12, 1963. Jamhuri Day is a double event and is regarded as Kenya's most important holiday.
Lady of Guadalupe Day: (Mexico)- a holiday Mexicans join together for the festivities of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is one of the most important dates in the Mexican calendar.

Unduvap Full Moon Poya Day: (Sri Lanka)- Poya Day is the name given to a Buddhist public holiday in Sri Lanka which occurs every full moon day. The Full moon is important to Buddhists all around the world, who have adopted the Lunar Calendar for their religious observances.

Neutrality Day: (Turkmenistan)-a holiday that symbolizes Turkmenistan's aspiration to peace and security in the region and in the world. It is significant that Turkmenistan's Neutrality Day is celebrated right after the International Human Rights Day.

**December 13:**

Republic Day: (Malta)- On December 13, 1974, the constitution of Malta was substantially revised, transforming the former British colony from a Commonwealth Realm into a republic within the Commonwealth.

Mangshir Purnima: (Nepal)

National Holiday: (St. Lucia)- a national holiday in St. Lucia celebrated with festivals and parades.

**December 14:**

**December 15:**

**December 16:**

National Day: (Bahrain)- a national holiday in Bahrain celebrated with festivals and parades.

Victory Day: (Bangladesh)- commemorates the surrender of the Pakistani army to the Mukti Bahini.

Eid Ghadir: (Iran)- one of the most celebrated events by Shiite Moslems. The event of Ghadir means the nomination of Ali by the Prophet Mohammad as his successor.

Independence Day: (Kazakhstan)- an annual celebration commemorating the anniversary of Kazakhstan becoming an independent statehood.

Reconciliation Day: (South Africa)- a public holiday in South Africa held annually to foster reconciliation between different racial groups. The holiday began in 1994 after the end of Apartheid.
Incwala Day: (Swaziland) - a holiday to celebrate the new year in Swaziland by a grand festival called Incwala. It is one of the biggest and most fascinating African festivals, also known as ‘Festival of the First Fruits’.

Posedas Novidenas: (Christian Dec.16-24)

December 17:

National Day: (Bhutan) - a national holiday in Bhutan. It is celebrated with festivals and parades.

December 18:

Republic Day: (Niger)

December 19:

Separation Day: (Anguilla) - a public holiday that celebrates the political separation of Anguilla from the islands of St. Kitts-Nevis.

December 20:

Macau SARE Day: (Macau)

Abolition Day: (Reunion)

December 21:

Dongzhi/Winter Solice: (Macau)

Sao Tome Day: (Sao Tome)

Yule: (Wicca/ Northern Hemisphere)

Litha: (Wicca/ Southern Hemishpere)

Yule: (Christian) - a winter festival identified with Christmas.

December 22:

Unity Day: (Zimbabwe)
**Hanukkah begins:** (Jewish) - an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BCE. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar.

**December 23:**

*Emperor’s Birthday:* (Japan) - the birthday of the current emperor is always a national holiday. The national holiday changes to the birthday date of the new emperor.

**December 24:**

*Christmas Eve:* the day before Christmas Day, the celebrated birthday of Jesus Christ.

*Independence Day:* (Libya) - an annual celebration commemorating the anniversary Libya became an independent statehood on this day in 1951.

*Yap Constitution Day:* (Micronesia)

**December 25:**

*Christmas Day:* (Christian) - an annual holiday celebrated on December 25 that marks and honors the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

*Family Day:* (Mozambique) - known as Christmas day in Mozambique.

*Quaid-e-Azam’s Birthday:* (Pakistan) - a national holiday to honor the Pakistani politician and leader of the All India Muslim League who founded Pakistan and served as its first Governor-General.

*Feast of Nativity:* (Orthodox Christian)

**December 26:**

*Kwanzaa Festival Begins:* (United States) - Kwanzaa celebrates the African American people, their culture, and their history. It is a time of reflection and community gatherings. Created by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga in 1966, during a time when African Americans were focused on a struggle to gain equality in America. It is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st.

*St. Stephen’s Day:* (Austria) - “the feast of Stephen”; a public holiday to commemorate St. Stephen.

*Second Day of Christmas:* (Germany, Aruba)

*Family Day:* (Namibia, Vanuatu)
Zarathosht Diso: (Zoroastrian) - a day to commemorate Zarathushtra’s death anniversary.

December 27:

Kayin New Year: (Myanmar)

Umuganda Day: (Rwanda)

December 28:

Islamic New Year: (Jordan) - a cultural event which Muslims observe on the first day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar. Many Muslims use the day to remember the significance of this month, and the Hijra, or migration, Islamic prophet Muhammad made to the city now known as Medina.

Holy Innocents: (Christian)

Feast of the Holy Family: (Catholic Christian) - a liturgical celebration in the Roman Catholic Church in honor of Jesus of Nazareth, his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and his foster father, Saint Joseph, as a family.

December 29:

El Hijra: (Egypt) - the Islamic New Year.

Rizal Day: (Philippines) - a holiday celebrated in the Philippines to honor the death of a hero named José Rizal who was killed on December 30, 1896.

New Year’s Holiday: (Japan, Dec.29/30)

Muharram: (Islam) - is the first month of the Islamic calendar. It is one of the four months of the year in which fighting is prohibited.

Hanukkah Ends: (Jewish)

December 31:

New Year’s Eve: the final day of the Gregorian year; a separate observance from the observance of New Year’s Day. New Year's Eve is celebrated with parties and social gatherings spanning the transition of the year at midnight.

Solidarity Day: (Azerbaijan) - a day to commemorate Azerbaijanis breaking down borders separating them from Iran. On this day Azerbaijanis celebrate and reunite with each other.

Government Christmas Holidays: (Falkland Islands)

Watch Night: (Christian) - the gathering in church on New Year's Eve usually beginning anywhere from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and ends at midnight with the entrance of the New Year.