

# Eye On the Holidays

## December Festivals: Kwanzaa

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Many Americans think Kwanzaa originated from Africa, but Kwanza celebration is not a festival originating in any of the 55 African countries. Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday about the festival of the first harvest of the crops and the celebration of the people, their culture and their history. It begins on December 26 and lasts for seven days.

Dr. Maulana (Ron) Karenga, the creator of Kwanzaa, introduced this festival in 1966 as a response to the commercialism of Christmas. The name Kwanzaa, sometimes spelled Kwanza, comes from a phrase which means "first fruits" in Swahili, an East African language. It is a time of celebration, reverence, community gathering, commemoration and reflection. A time of endings and new beginnings.

The foundation of Kwanzaa are the Seven Principles, or Nguzo Saba (It's Kiswahili for Seven Principles). The principles utilize most Swahili words: unity (umoya), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective work and responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), purpose (nia), creativity (kuumba), and faith (imani). Each of the seven candles signifies the principles. Like the Jewish Hanukkah, candles are used to represent concepts of the holiday.

The symbols of Kwanzaa includes crops (mzao) which represents the historical roots of African Americans in agriculture, the mat (mkeka) lays the foundation for self-actualization, the candle holder (kinara) reminds believers of ancestors, corn (muhindi) signifies children and the hope associated in the younger generation, and gifts (Zawadi) represent commitments of the parents for the children. The unity cup (Kkimbe cha Umoja) is used to pour libations to the ancestors. Finally, the seven candles (mishumaa saba) remind participants of the several principles and the colors in the flag of African liberation movements -- 3 red, 1 black, and 3 green.

Gifts are exchanged. On December 31 participants celebrate with a banquet of food often cuisine from various African countries. Participants greet one another with "Habari gani" which is Kiswahili for "How are you?"

You too can participate in celebrating Kwanza by throwing a little party made of variety cuisines and drinks on 31st night and calling friends over. Greet them with "Habari gani?" and have a blast into the New Year.

## Best Online Shopping Sources

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As the holidays quickly approach, the malls are sure to be jam-packed with joy filled strangers listening to holiday music and getting in the holiday spirits. Although this sounds great, not everyone considers these festive times special. Some view shopping in December as a time to walk a mile in the blistering cold because that was the only parking spot you could find, standing in lines out the door for that popular gift you have to get, and finding out the person in front of you just took the last one. One solution for people who don't like the crowds is online shopping.

5. Ebay.com -Unused items for good prices, as long as you are prepared to bid.
4. Walmart.com - Free Shipping; Everything you find in the store, you can find online.
3. Bestbuy.com - Free Shipping, pre-order, sales and products same as in the store.
2. Amazon.com - link for "Today's Deals" showing gifts ranging from 8% to 68% off regular price - one day delivery until December 22nd.
1. Overtstock.com - With site links for: holiday gift finders, clearance bin, and steals of the week, best price guarantee, 30-70% off over 1000 products, and \$1 shipping state wide.

## December Festivals: Hanukkah

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Hanukkah is the annual Jewish festival celebrated on eight successive days beginning on the 25th day of Kislev, the third month of the Jewish calendar. It is also known as the Festival of Lights, Feast of Dedication, and the Feast of the Maccabees. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabee in 165 BC after the Temple had been profaned by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria and overlord of Palestine.

More than twenty-one centuries ago, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who sought to forcefully idolize the people of Israel. Against all odds, a small band of faithful Jews defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of God. When they sought to light the Temple's menorah, they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks; miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity. To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah. At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah lighting. Chanukah customs include eating foods fried in oil (like potato pancakes and doughnuts) and the giving of Chanukah gelt (gifts of money), to children.

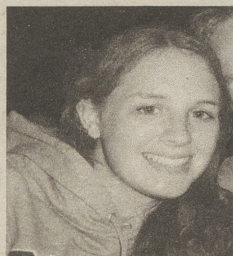
Q: What is the present you really want for the holidays?

## People Poll

By Brittany Neimeth



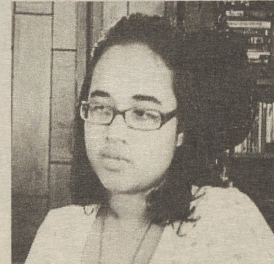
**Rebecca Olley**  
Corporate Communications  
Just to enjoy spending time with my family and friends. As cheesy as that sounds it's the best kind of gift.



**Patti Wray**  
Elementary Education  
Clothes and shoes and money for Italy!



**Alyce DiLauro**  
Communications  
A down comforter, grippy gloves, a laptop, ink cartridges, an external hard drive and an undated wardrobe.



**Crystal Paulino**  
Psychology  
The softest stuffed animal ever!!!



**Antoinette Brooks-Thomas**  
English  
An Ipod Nano