

DECEMBER HOLIDAYS

As American's living in the United States, we are given the opportunity and freedom to celebrate Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah or any other holiday we choose. That is not something all people's enjoy with the same liberty. As we take a look at these popular holidays we do notice some similarities with the traditions/ rituals of each. I think most of us have been exposed to Christmas, whether due to the marketing of retailers or because it is the holiday we celebrate this time of year. Hanukkah also has many traditions that we are familiar with. Kwanza is no longer foreign to us and perhaps you know someone that participates in this 7-day celebration.

As I was researching Kwanza for this article, I found such beauty in the meaning of this African American tradition. The word Kwanza is a Swahili word that means "first" and represents the first fruits of the harvest. There are 7 principles (Nguzo Saba) that all the activities of Kwanza are centered around. The seven principles together compromise the Kawaia or "common philosophy, a synthesis or nationalists, pan Africanists and social values.

Umoja	UNITY
Kujichagulia	Self-determination
Ujima	Collective work or Responsibility
Ujamaa	Cooperative Economics
Nia	Purpose
Kuumba	Creativity
Imani	Faith



KWANZA

Kwanza is based on the harvest festival traditions from various parts of West and South Africa. This is a celebration that spans over several days and includes feasts, music, dance poetry, narratives.

The holiday ends with a recommitment of the seven principles. It will run from 12/26/2022 – January 1 2023. Those

communities that celebrate Kwanzaa, decorate their homes with colorful objects and works of art. A candelabra is used to hold the 7 candles representing each principle of Kwanza.

[Recipe: sweet-potato-pie-vii for Karuma Feast](#)



CHRISTMAS

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians begin celebrating with Advent 4 Sundays before December 25th. Each week of Advent (Latin for coming or arrival) a candle is lit to represent 4 virtues. These candles represent hope, love, joy and peace; they are lit in that order. On Christmas day a 5th candle is lit known as the Christ Candle to Christians of the light that Jesus brings. Christians around the world decorate their homes with colorful lights, wreaths, and other festive decor. Stories are told, music is played and sung, and people indulge in a festive feast with family and friends.

We also have the 12 days of Christmas. Did you ever wonder why we sing about a Partridge in a Pear tree and drummers drumming. The song is about receiving some type of gift for 12 days, but to get to the song there had to be days to start with.

The 12 Days of Christmas start on Christmas Day and last until the evening of the 5th of January - also known as Twelfth Night. The 12 Days have been celebrated in Europe since before the Middle Ages and were a time of celebration. The 12 Days each traditionally celebrate a feast day for a saint and/or have different celebrations:

Day 1 (December 25th): Christmas Day - celebrating the Birth of Jesus

Day 2 (December 26th also known as Boxing Day): St Stephen's Day. He was the first Christian martyr (someone who dies for their faith). It's also the day when the Christmas Carol 'Good King Wenceslas' takes place.

Day 3 (December 27th): St John the Apostle (One of Jesus's Disciples and friends)

Day 12 (January 5th also known as Epiphany Eve)

[To get the full story click here](#)

[Recipe: Christmas Cake in the United Kingdom](#)

As the Christmas season begins, the communities in Mexico and Guatemala begin with the celebration of Las Posadas. This is strongly based in the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem before the birth of Jesus. This takes place from December 16- December 24th.

[Read more about Las Posadas](#)



HANUKKAH

Chanukah (Hanukkah) is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime "festival of lights," celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods. The Hebrew word Chanukah means "dedication," and is thus named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple. This year it is celebrated from 12/18 – 12/26. (The date changes every year as Hanukkah follows the Jewish Calendar not the secular calendar) The candelabra or Hanukkiyah Menorah holds 9 candles; a candle is lit on the hanukkiyah on each of the 8 days. A new candle is lit every night so that by the time you have reached the eighth night of Hanukkah, all of the candles on the Hanukkiyah are lit.

The 9th candle is called the helper candle used to light each of the other candles each night. Through these 8 days, stories are told, and a feast is Fried foods are eaten because Chanukah celebrates the miracle of the oil never running out due to Gods mercy.

[Read more about Hanukkah](#)

[Recipe: Traditional Chanukah Potato Latkes](#)

Where Hanukkah and Christmas are based in Judaism and Christianity, Kwanza is not a religious holiday but rather a cultural one that embodies the spiritual quality of the African people.

Each of these holidays uses candles, stories and a feast in a very expressive way to help keep the traditions and meaning of each holiday prominent in our cultures. It is also interesting that although they are different holidays, the close relationship of the dates that they are celebrated should not be overlooked.

We hope that each of you has a wonderful holiday season whether you celebrate one of these holidays or whether you do something different. A recipe is included for each of the celebrations for you to try. If you would like to share a tradition you have, we would love to hear from you.

Health Education of the Month: Menopause!

October was Menopause Awareness Month, with October 18th being World Menopause Day. We've all heard about it; we've known someone that has experienced it. "The Change" is what most call it. Though it's rarely talked about, it is something all women experience.

We are a company of more than 50% female – so this is a very relevant topic!

There are three stages of menopause that a woman goes through: Perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause. For some women, perimenopause can start as early as thirty-five but primarily it begins in the late 40's. The average age of woman entering menopause is around 51, although a strong indicator of when a woman will begin menopause is the age at which her mother began menopause.

So, what is menopause? For someone who has never experienced menopause (or will never experience menopause) these are 6 examples the symptoms that one can experience:

- Excessive mood swings
- Hot flashes
- Lack of energy
- Anxiety
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Tearfulness

Typically, the best course of action when you are unsure if you are entering the stages of menopause is to ask your doctor, and then from there you can do you own research. Knowing about menopause and understanding it will help you get through it. Hormone therapy, changes in diet and natural supplementals can help to balance those hormones and help alleviate a lot of the symptoms that are prevalent.

Some tips to support someone you know who is going through menopause are:

- Educate yourself on the symptoms
- Help with climate control (allow for thermostat adjustments or using a fan)
- Don't call attention to her symptoms
- Don't doubt or diminish the experience
- Limit guilt and help them know that changes in mood, productivity, energy, etc are completely normal.

Check out International Menopause Society at <http://imsociety.org> for more comprehensive information regarding menopause. Women's Health Network at <http://womenshealthnetwork.com> offers a wealth of information available as well as a helpful quiz.

Events in Syracuse December 2022



SHOP + DONATE EVENT
SATURDAY 12/3 | 10 - NOON

The Golden Bee Bookshop - 324 1st St, Liverpool, NY 13088

Saturday, December 3rd from 10am-12pm

Demon Acres "Deck the Halls"

341 County Route 36, Hannibal, NY 13074

Time: 5pm – 9pm

November 25th & 26th

December 2nd, 3rd, 9th, 10th, 11th, 16th, 17th, and 18th

Wagon ride through 125 thousand Christmas lights & pictures with Santa

Lights on the Lake

Onondaga Lake Park - 6790 Onondaga Lake Pkwy, Liverpool, NY 13088

Time: 5pm – 10pm

November 14, 2022 – January 13, 2023

Lights on the Lake is a two-mile-long drive-thru show featuring towering holiday displays, larger-than life Land of Oz, a twinkling fantasy forest, colorful section arches, memorable animated scenes and a fairy tale magic grand finale! Visitors drive through the show while listening to the wonderful sounds of the season on Sunny 102.1!

PLUS, Lights on the Lake is more accessible this year; 2 centro-buses will pick up Syracuse residents from one of the city Community Centers every Thursday in December at 5pm and it's free for whoever registers (you just have to sign up on the Syracuse city parks website). This is such a great way to allow more people access to it!

Holiday Nights at the Zoo

Rosamond Nifford Zoo 1 Conservation Pl, Syracuse NY 13204

Time: 5pm – 8pm

December 2nd – 17th (Fridays & Saturdays)

Enjoy a festive and fun after-hours stroll amid sparkling displays of holiday lights that transform the zoo into a winter wonderland. Warm up by the fire pits and enjoy hot chocolate, s'mores, live performances of holiday music, ice carving, roving entertainers and animals on evening exhibit.

Children under 2 years of age FREE

Winter Wonderland Market

Wunderbar - 201 S West St, Syracuse, NY 13202

Sunday, December 11th from 12pm – 4pm

Purpose Statement

SOS as a medical practice and a contributor to the local community is committed in its support of diversity, equity, and inclusion. SOS seeks to build patient and team-member relationships among individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual identities that fully represents many cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints and thereby cultivate a culture of tolerance where all feel welcome.

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If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter, have suggestions for future topics, or would like to contribute to the DEI newsletter, please contact the DEI newsletter editor in chief, Melissa Patnella, at melissa.patnella@sosbones.com OR any of the DEI committee members.