

LEVELED BOOK • L

World Holidays



Adapted by Cecilia Maeson

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Introduction

People all over the world celebrate holidays that are full of **traditions**. Traditions are the special ways people do something. People celebrate holidays by preparing and eating food, playing games, singing songs, and telling stories.



❶ Ornaments on a tree during Christmas ❷ Gift envelopes used during Chinese New Year ❸ Painting the ground bright colors during Holi

Chinese New Year ✨👉

Many people celebrate Chinese New Year.

People celebrate the arrival of spring and wish for good

luck. They put good luck sayings in

their homes

and watch a

colorful Lion

Dance. It uses

loud noises to

chase away

bad luck.

People also

give gifts

to others.



A lucky lion made of cloth dances down the street.



A family spends time together on Christmas Day.

Date:

December 25
or January 6

Where Started:

Europe

Christmas ❄️

Christmas can be celebrated at different times, but many people celebrate on December 25.

Christmas usually lasts only a day, but the celebration may last longer. Many people place a tree in their homes. They decorate the tree with colorful lights. People sing songs and give gifts to family and friends. They also share toys, clothes, and food with others who need them.

Hanukkah



Date: Middle or
late December

Where Started:
Middle East

Other people celebrate Hanukkah. Hanukkah lasts eight nights.

People light a candle each night in a holder called a **menorah**.

During Hanukkah, people sing songs and eat with family and friends. They get small gifts and money to share



with others. People also play a game with a top called a **dreidel**.

Holi ✨

Date: March

Where Started:
India

Some people celebrate Holi. During Holi, people celebrate the end of winter and the arrival of spring. People sing and dance. They decorate with lots of colors and wear colorful clothes. They even spray family and friends with colorful powders and water. It is a time of joy and fun.



Family members decorate each other during Holi.



One candle in the kinara is lit for each night of Kwanzaa.

Date: December 26 to January 1

Where Started: North America

Kwanzaa



Other people celebrate Kwanzaa. It is an important time of the year for friends and family. Kwanzaa lasts for seven days. Each night, people light candles in a holder called a **kinara**. There are seven candles in the kinara, one for each night of Kwanzaa.

During Kwanzaa, people celebrate by eating together and giving gifts. An **mkeka**, or mat, with vegetables is put in the home. Special items are placed on this mat. People tell traditional stories with family and friends.



The Kwanzaa table includes vegetables placed on an mkeka, or mat.



Fireworks are part of many New Years celebrations.

Date: January 1
or beginning
of spring

Where Started:
Middle East

New Year

People all over the world celebrate the New Year. People use different calendars to tell when a new year starts. They have many traditions. Many people celebrate with fireworks and songs. They may toss colorful pieces of paper in the air. People also might wish each other good luck for the new year.



A family eating together at the end of Ramadan.

Date: Changes each year by the Western calendar

Where Started:
Middle East

Ramadan

Other people celebrate Ramadan. It lasts one month. During Ramadan, many people eat only before the sun comes up and after it goes down. People show their thanks for the things they have. It is a time to think about other people and do nice things for them.



Conclusion

Holidays are often a special time for people. Many holidays are celebrated all over the world. People celebrate the holidays in some ways that are different, and some ways that are the same.



A Celebration Timetable

Holidays occur all year long.

Here are some holidays and when they are celebrated.

Chinese New Year

- Chinese New Year is based on the Chinese calendar.
- It is celebrated in late January or early February. It lasts for 15 days.

Christmas

- Christmas is celebrated on December 25th or January 6th each year.
- It lasts one day. However, people often celebrate this holiday over many days.

Hanukkah

- Hanukkah is based on the Jewish calendar.
- It begins in middle or late December and lasts eight nights.

Do You Know?

Many people around the world follow the *Gregorian calendar*, often referred to as the Western calendar. This calendar measures approximately 365 days in each year.

Holi

- Holi lasts 15 days and is celebrated each March on the day after the full moon.

Kwanzaa

- Kwanzaa begins on December 26th and ends on January 1st. It lasts seven days.

New Year

- Many people celebrate the coming of the new year on the night before New Year's Day.
- New Year's Day is January 1st or the beginning of spring.

Ramadan

- Ramadan is based on the Muslim calendar. The calendar is 354 days long.
- Celebrating Ramadan lasts about 29 or 30 days.

Math Minute

- How many days is the Muslim calendar shorter than the Western calendar?
- How many days do Chinese New Year and Kwanzaa last altogether?

Glossary

dreidel	a top used in a Hanukkah game (p. 7)
kinara	a candleholder used during Kwanzaa (p. 9)
menorah	a candleholder used during Hanukkah (p. 7)
mkeka	a mat used to place vegetables on during Kwanzaa (p. 10)
traditions	beliefs or customs passed down (p. 4)

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Pronunciation Guide

Hanukkah (HAH-nuh-kuh)
 menorah (muh-NOR-ah)
 dreidel (DRAY-dehl)
Ramadan (RAH-muh-dahn)
Christmas (KRIS-mus)
Kwanzaa (KWAN-zuh)
 mkeka (m-KAY-kah)
 kinara (kee-NAH-rah)
Holi (HOH-lee)

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