

Gift Giving at the End of the Year

December is filled with the message of gift-giving. In its positive light, think of it as a time for generosity, appreciation, and community-building. Many Americans use this season to give a yearly gift or send a yearly card to others. They may do so regardless of the person's religion, by sending a card that says "Season's Greetings" rather than "Merry Christmas," and avoiding red and green paper. Here are some guidelines, and what I do personally (but remember there are local differences in what is appropriate - it's best to ask a local friend for advice, too):

Teachers. Many young children bring a small present to their teachers on the last day of school in December. This is not necessary, and an expensive gift is not appropriate. But if you like, your child could make the teacher a gift. Or give a small craft or some food from your country. We made a contribution to a community charity in the teacher's name, or gave a gift card to an office supply store. High school and university students usually do not give gifts to their teachers.

Co-Workers. Some offices have a "Secret Santa" system: each employee is secretly given the name of one other employee, and buys a gift for him/her only. Others have a "Yankee Swap." Here, everyone brings a wrapped gift. One person goes first and chooses a gift from the pile and un-wraps it. The next person opens another gift, then can either keep that one or trade with Person #1. The next person

opens another and keeps it or swaps (trade) it for Person #1 or #2's gift, and so on. Except for these gift exchanges, you will probably not be expected to give gifts to co-workers, except, perhaps, to people who work for or closely with you -- some small gift like candy, nuts or a favorite food might be appropriate.



Gifts to superiors are usually not given. Expensive or personal gifts are almost never appropriate and may actually be forbidden.

Regular Service

Providers. Many people give money to those who give

them regular and frequent service through the year, like the mail carrier, the person who delivers the newspaper, the doorman, or the babysitter. Some of these people may "help you remember" by including an empty envelope with their name on it, with one of their deliveries! How much money to give depends on how long you have known them, the number of other holiday gifts they are likely to get, the size of your weekly payment to them, how good a job they have done, and their (and your) personal financial situation. When we had a child care provider, we gave her one week's pay. Ask a friend or neighbor about what is appropriate.

Neighbors. This is a good time to meet your neighbors, if you have not done so already. Sweets or traditional food from your country would be a welcome gift.

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Christmas Symbols

Christmas Tree: An evergreen tree with lights and decorations is, perhaps, the most common symbol of Christmas in the US. Trees were symbols of strength and long life for centuries before Christian teachers used evergreens as a symbol of “endless life.”

Red and Green: The holly bush was popular among pre-Christian Europeans. The evergreen holly, with its red berries, stands for strength against the death of winter.

Mistletoe: If you stand under a piece of mistletoe (a branch with leaves and white berries), you will be expected to kiss the host. Be careful!

Stockings: Family members hang a “stocking” next to the chimney. If the children have been good, Santa Claus fills the stocking with an orange (in the toe) and small presents and candy. If the children have been naughty, they are told they will get lumps of coal. (Could any parent really do that?)

Gifts: Christmas has become a commercial holiday for many. But within Christian belief, there is a religious root to the custom — the three Wise Men brought gifts to the baby Jesus, and Jesus grew to give his life to others. Remember that, in private, most American families’ Christmas day includes a lot of warmth, love, sweetness, tradition, and generosity. Try to keep this in mind as you walk through the shopping mall...

The Story of Christmas

Each year on December 25, most Americans from a Christian background celebrate Christmas. Even those who are not religious the rest of the year will have a Christmas tree and give gifts.

The story of Jesus’ birth (as told by Luke in the Bible) may be familiar to you: Jesus’ parents, Joseph and Mary, traveled to Bethlehem to be counted in a tax census. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable, as there were no rooms in any inn. Shepherds heard angels tell them that the son of God had been born. The shepherds visited Jesus then went to tell the world what the angels had told them. Three kings (or Wise Men), following a bright star in the East, traveled for 12 days to visit Jesus, and brought him gifts.

No one knows exactly when Jesus was born. The Bible says there were “shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by

night.” Bethlehem in December is usually cold and rainy, so some scholars think Jesus was born some months earlier. For centuries, people argued about when to celebrate Jesus’ birth. The Roman Church chose December 25, even though (or because) it was the date of a popular pagan sun celebration.

Because of this pagan and Roman root, English religious immigrants to the US in the 1600s refused to celebrate Christmas. The warm and joyful celebration of Christmas by German and Dutch immigrants, however, won popularity in the US by the early 1800s. Today, even in the southern states, the “look” of an American Christmas (with snow and evergreen trees) is clearly northern European.

If You Have A Tree in Your Home: Safety Tips

Even if you have had Christmas trees in your home country, safety concerns here may be new to you, depending on the type of heating in your home or the types of trees in the US. To be safe:

- ♦ Be sure to buy a fresh (not dry) tree. (Tree farmers start cutting their trees in November and they can dry out long before you buy yours.) Grab a branch about 6 inches from the end. Pull it toward you. If the tree is fresh, no needles will come off in your hand. In some parts of the US, you can go to a farm and cut your own.
- ♦ Remember that home heat dries out trees. If possible, keep the tree outside in a bucket of water until you are ready to decorate it. When you bring it inside, saw one inch off the bottom of the trunk, to re-open the cells that can absorb water. Always keep the tree in a large pot of water. Fill the pot once a day. The average tree in the US absorbs a gallon of water per day. If you ever let the tree become completely dry, the cells close up and will not absorb any more water.
- ♦ Keep the tree away from candles and fire. Be sure the tree will not fall over. Use wire, tied from the tree to a wall, to support the tree if necessary.



Christmas Across Generations

How Americans celebrate Christmas is changing a bit. According to the Pew Research Center, only 40% of Millennial Americans (see generation definitions below) consider Christmas to be a religious rather than cultural holiday, compared to 68% of the Silent Generation who see it as a religious holiday. Despite this, Millennials celebrate Christmas in traditional ways - see charts below.

Christmas and holiday traditions by generation

% of each generation who plan to _____ this Christmas or holiday season

Put up a Christmas tree



	Yes	No
Silent generation	75%	24
Baby Boomers	77	22
Generation X	82	17
Millennials	81	18

Buy gifts for friends or family



	Yes	No
Silent generation	79	20
Baby Boomers	86	14
Generation X	88	12
Millennials	91	9

Go caroling



	Yes	No
Silent generation	15	84
Baby Boomers	15	83
Generation X	19	79
Millennials	16	82

Send Christmas or holiday cards



	Yes	No
Silent generation	76	23
Baby Boomers	68	31
Generation X	65	35
Millennials	57	43

Plans for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

% of each generation who plan to _____ on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

Attend a gathering with extended family or friends



	Yes	No
Silent generation	85%	13
Baby Boomers	85	14
Generation X	86	12
Millennials	90	9

Attend religious services on Christmas Eve or Day



	Yes	No
Silent generation	61	35
Baby Boomers	55	41
Generation X	56	41
Millennials	49	49

Source: Pew Research Center

Santa Claus

Here is how Santa Claus works in the US. He "lives" at the North Pole, where he and his many elves (tiny helpers) work hard all year to make children's toys. Children write a letter to Santa, asking for the gifts they want. On Christmas Eve (December 24), Santa puts his toys in a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer. He flies from house to house, landing on the roof, but only when all children are asleep. He comes down the chimney with his bag of presents. Children leave milk and cookies for him. If these are gone in the morning, it is "proof" that Santa really came.

The character of Santa Claus evolved from stories about St. Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the fourth century. He was generous, especially to children and the poor. The name Santa Claus comes from St. Nicholas, or Sinterklaas in Dutch. Some people refer to Santa Claus as Kriss Kringle, from the German Christkindl, or Christ Child. But Santa Claus is not the Christ Child. This is a simple example of a slowly-changing tradition.

At times in US history, people thought of Santa Claus as a small elf. Then in the 1800s, an American cartoonist drew Santa as human-size, fat and jolly, bearded, and dressed in red with white fur trim. This is the Santa you will see in stores and on street corners. These Santas confuse children, who think he should be hard at work at the North Pole.



Holidays in the Work Place

Many companies and organizations have a holiday party in December. These used to be called "Christmas parties" and had a reputation for having lots of alcohol and rowdy behavior.

Now, with a clearer sensitivity for non-Christian co-workers and for appropriate work place behavior, parties are typically calmer and lack the red-and-green marks of Christmas. You may be invited to a small gathering at work, to a restaurant, to your boss's house, or to an elegant affair at a hotel.

Eating and drinking at office parties is always optional. However, if the theme, food, or alcohol at the party will be a problem for you, you should not feel obligated to go to the party at all. You could simply decline the invitation ("I'm sorry, I will not be able to attend the holiday party this year."). Or, you could explain the reasons for not going ("As you know, my family and I do not celebrate Christmas. We do not feel comfortable joining in a party with a Christmas focus.").

Usually, gifts for specific people are not expected at office holiday parties. Some offices have a kind of gift swap - see the article on Gift-Giving on page 1 for details.

If you do go to the party, remember that, no matter where the party is, you are still at work. Dress and act appropriately. If alcohol is served, drink only in moderation. Remember, you will be back at work with these people soon.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a relatively new family and community celebration for African Americans. It lasts seven days, from December 26 to January 1. The holiday is a time to honor one's ancestors, and to celebrate African culture and history. Friends, neighbors, and family gather to consider seven ideas that are important to the African American community:

umoja: unity, or coming together
kujichagulia: self-determination or having control of one's life
ujima: collective work and responsibility
ujamaa: cooperative economics, or sharing money and profits
nia: having a purpose or reason
kuumba: being creative
imani: having faith

Kwanzaa is not an ancient religious holiday. It was established in 1966 as part of the civil rights movement in the US. And so, families



are still deciding what traditions they will develop and use.

However, a few customs have already been widely accepted. The symbolic colors of Kwanzaa are *red* (for hard work), *black* (for beauty), and *green* (for a plentiful future). Families put a straw mat (*mkeka*) on a table (to remember African culture), and on it, a candle-holder (*kinara*). Every night, they light a candle to celebrate one of the seven ideas. Many families have a feast on December 31.

New Year's Eve: For Parents

I will be writing more about New Year's Day (January 1) in the next issue. But in December you may begin to make plans for New Year's Eve celebrations (on December 31). You may be invited to a party that does not include children. And your children, especially adolescents, may ask your permission to go to a New Year's Eve party without you. Some towns plan cultural and festive activities that continue all day, through midnight. Many people make their plans far in advance. If you will need a baby-sitter, start looking for one now.

Many parents and towns worry about car accidents on New Year's Eve, because so many people will have been drinking alcohol. In some towns, buses and subways are free, to encourage using them rather than a car. Taxi companies have many more drivers on duty than usual. Some companies will allow you to order a taxi ahead of time. Some groups of teenagers and/or adults hire a limousine for the evening, to drive from place to place. If they split the cost six ways, this may be a good, safe (and luxurious...) choice. Many restaurants and bars offer free coffee. Even if you and your children will not be drinking alcohol, remember that almost everyone else on the road will have been.

Some families have an at-home celebration. Children may invite groups of friends to sleep all night in their home, on the floor. If your child is invited to a friend's house, make sure that the parents will be home. Discuss with your teenagers your family rule about alcohol. If the party is not a sleep-over, make careful plans for how and when your child will get home safely.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah (sometimes spelled Chanukah) is a Jewish festival of lights and dedication. The holiday has its roots in the second century, BCE, when Antiochus Epiphanes became king of the Syrian branch of Alexander the Great's empire. He made Jewish (and other local) religions illegal and forced people to become Hellenistic (Greek). On the 25th day of the month of Kislev in the Jewish calendar (probably at the time of a pagan sun celebration), he changed the Temple of Jerusalem into a temple of Zeus, a Greek god. A group of Jews, led by Mattathias and his five sons (called the Maccabees), began to fight against Antiochus. After three years of war, the Maccabees won. They took down the altar in the temple and built a new one. On the anniversary of Antiochus' actions, they re-dedicated the Temple. They had only one bottle of oil, enough for one day. By a miracle, the oil lasted eight days, through the whole celebration. For this reason, Hanukkah lasts eight days.

This year Hanukkah begins on the evening of December 12 and continues every night for eight nights. Jewish families gather to light candles, held in a special holder called a *menorah*. On the first night of Hanukkah, families use the middle

candle to light one other one. On the second night, the middle candle is used to light two candles, symbolizing the new day and increasing light. This continues through the eighth night. As they light the candles, families say a blessing and may sing songs. Jewish children may receive a gift or money on each of the nights of Hanukkah.

The story of Hanukkah is a story of despair and hope, of dark and light. On the 25th day of Kislev, the moon is always dark, as the Jewish calendar is a moon-based one. The end of Kislev is also usually very near the winter solstice, when the days in the northern hemisphere are the shortest. So Hanukkah always comes at the year's longest and darkest nights. Jews remember the darkest days of their history when the forces to give up their religion and culture were strong. And they remember their power to resist these forces. They remember the sadness of their people when they lost their temple, but also the joy of the miracle of the lasting oil.

Even if you are not Jewish, you may identify with the struggle to keep one's own truest beliefs in the face of a new, competing culture.



Apparent Temperature, by Relative Humidity and Room Temperature

	Relative Humidity (%)					
	0	20	40	60	80	100
75°	68°	71°	74°	76°	77°	79°
72°	64°	67°	70°	72°	74°	76°
69°	62°	64°	66°	68°	70°	72°
66°	59°	61°	63°	65°	67°	68°
63°	57°	59°	60°	62°	63°	64°
60°	55°	56°	58°	59°	60°	61°

The "apparent temperature" of a room (how warm it feels) is higher if the room is more humid. A relative humidity of 20% is common in the winter in northeastern US in homes with no humidifier. Notice that the apparent temperature of a room at 72° and 20% humidity is the same (67°) as that of a room at 66° and 80% humidity.
Source: *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*

Your Home in Winter

- ♦ To save energy, it is safe to turn your home thermostat down a bit when you go away, but always keep the temperature warm enough so the pipes will not freeze. (If you have pets or house plants, remember to think about what level of heat they will need.)
- ♦ If you have a hot-air heating system, replace or clean its air filter once a month. Otherwise, dust will clog the filter and decrease the amount of heat you feel.
- ♦ If you can feel wind come in at your windows or doors, use a sealer to cover the gaps. Hardware stores sell many kinds — find a knowledgeable salesperson and ask for help in which kind to buy.
- ♦ Dry air feels colder than warm air (see chart on this page), and is unhealthy. Keep bowls of water around your rooms to help increase the air moisture. Or use a humidifier, but then be sure to clean it frequently or germs will spread through the air.
- ♦ Keep a snow shovel where you can reach it from inside. Also keep something handy to reduce snow and ice on your steps or walkway: rock salt, snow-melting chemicals, sand, sawdust, or gravel.
- ♦ Outside, turn off the water to garden faucets then drain the pipes by leaving the faucet open to keep it from freezing.
- ♦ Clean your house's gutters by removing old leaves and sticks. Otherwise, water will gather and freeze.

American Milk

Do you think American milk is thin and tasteless? Or worse, blue? If



“half and half” is half cream and half milk (which it is), do you wonder what “fat-free half-and-half” is? American concern with fat and cholesterol have changed milk drinking patterns dramatically. Since 1951, Americans have drunk 51% less whole milk while increasing their drinking of low-fat milk by 25,566%! (That is one of those silly statistics you get when you start with a really tiny number.)

But even “whole milk” here may seem thin to you. Different kinds of cows produce milk with different amounts of fat. The most common kind of dairy cow in the US is the Holstein (black and white spots). Its milk is about 3.6% fat. In contrast, milk from the Jersey cow (usually light gray without spots) has fat content of 5% (and cream with 60% fat). You may be used to higher-fat cows.

And it depends on what the cows eat, too. American researchers are busy trying to raise cows that produce lower-fat milk. In one study, they fed lots of grains and some canola seeds (high in unsaturated fats) to young cows. This diet led to milk with more unsaturated and less saturated fat. People who drank this milk for three weeks had 4% lower cholesterol than when they drank regular whole milk. And they said this new milk tasted better than regular milk that had had fat removed.

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Birthday Biography: Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman (born Araminta Ross) was born into slavery in the early 1820s, in Maryland. (It was common for slaves not to know their exact date of birth.) She became one of the most well-known and well-respected *abolitionists* (people who fought against slavery), and a legend in her own lifetime, as a kind of *Moses*, after the Biblical figure who led his people out of slavery.

Araminta married a free black man, John Tubman. In Maryland at that time, about half the black population was free, so this was not uncommon, but according to law, she remained a slave. In 1849, after suffering a head injury and a serious illness, she feared she would be sold. She escaped to Philadelphia. (To avoid being caught, she changed her name - to her mother's first name Harriet, and her husband's last name.) Over the course of the next few years, she returned south almost 20 times and led or guided about 300 family members and other slaves north to freedom. She used the Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses and participating free blacks, slaves, Quakers and abolitionists.

During the Civil War, Tubman joined the Union (northern) Army, first as a nurse and cook but she later participated in armed raids, including one that freed more than 700 slaves. After the war, she was a leader of the women's suffrage movement (fighting for the right of women to vote). She's an American hero for many reasons. Happy Birthday, Mrs. Tubman.

Baking in the US

If you have tried to bake in an American kitchen, you have probably discovered some differences in how the basic foods are prepared and sold:

Eggs: Eggs are marked by grade and size. Grade AA eggs (the best) have a clean, unstained shell, a centered yolk, a thick white, and only a small amount of air inside. Grade A and Grade B eggs are less perfect, but still healthy. Sizes are Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, and Small. Most recipes assume you will use Medium or Large eggs. You can also buy “egg substitutes” if you want to avoid the cholesterol in egg yolks. In egg substitutes, the yolks have been removed, and oil, some nutrients, and [sometimes] a yellow coloring have been added. Use them instead of a whole egg in a recipe, or for omelets.

Baking Soda and Baking Powder: Recipes for cakes and dough will require something to make the food rise and become light. One way is to add both an acid and an alkaline ingredient, to make carbon dioxide. Baking soda (chemically, sodium bicarbonate, NaHCO_3) is an alkaline. Recipes may use about 1/2 teaspoon baking soda per cup of acidic liquid (like fruit juice, sour milk, sour cream, or milk with lemon juice). Baking powder is a mixture of baking soda, some kind of acid (like cream of tartar), and a starch to absorb moisture. Most baking powder in stores today is double-acting baking powder, which includes two different acid salts, one that reacts at room temperature and one that reacts when heated. You can make a baking powder substitute by mixing one part baking soda and two parts cream of tartar.

Sugar: Unless a recipe says something different, “sugar” means white, *granulated* sugar,

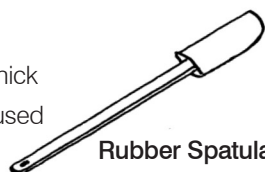
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Kitchen Utensils

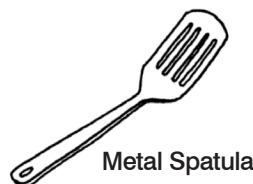
If reading US recipes is new for you, you may be confused about what utensils (tools) they suggest. This will get you started:

Spatula (pronounced SPAT-choo-la):

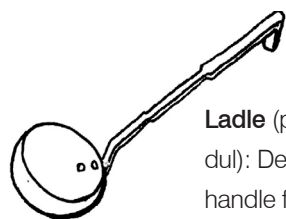
Rubber spatulas are soft, to scrape a thick liquid from a bowl. Metal spatulas are used to lift and turn food while cooking.



Rubber Spatula



Metal Spatula

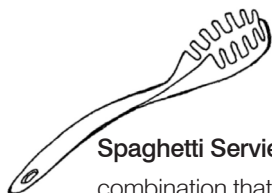
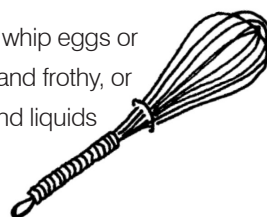


Ladle (pronounced LAY-dul): Deep spoon with long handle for serving soup or other liquids

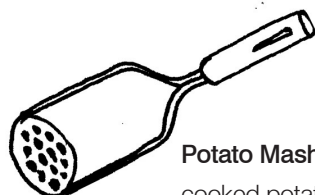
Slotted Spoon: Holes let liquid run through, leaving just the solids



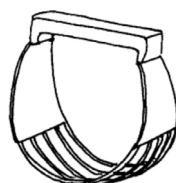
Whisk: Tool to whip eggs or cream till light and frothy, or to mix solids and liquids



Spaghetti Server: A fork-spoon combination that helps serve long thin pasta



Potato Masher: Press cooked potatoes through the holes.



Pastry Blender: Used to mix flour, sugar and butter.



Tongs: Used to pick up items without touching them

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from either sugar cane or sugar beets. *Powdered* or *confectioners* sugar has been made into a fine powder, then corn starch (about 3%) has been added to keep it smooth. *Brown* sugar has had less refining than white sugar; the darker the sugar, the less refining it has had. Corn syrup is a thick, sweet liquid made from corn starch.

Butter and **Margarine:** Most butter sold in the US has salt added to it. *Sweet butter* is unsalted (not sweetened). A walk in the butter/margarine aisles of the supermarket is enough to make you cry — too many choices! Usually, margarine sold in “sticks” (four sticks per pound) can be used in recipes just like butter — it has at least 80% fat. Margarine that is sold in tubs (not sticks) is higher in polyunsaturated fats, lower in saturated fats and trans-fats, and spreads more easily. Many people now buy a combination (in a tub) of butter and either olive or canola oil.

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The simple days of buying milk are gone. Here are the choices you will face:

Milk. Most milk in supermarkets has added Vitamins — D, often A, and sometimes C. Read the label carefully if this is important to you. Usually, you will see these types:

- ♦ *whole milk*: at least 3.25% fat
- ♦ *reduced-fat milk*: 2% fat
- ♦ *low-fat milk*: 0.5% or 1% fat
- ♦ *skim, fat-free milk*: <0.1% fat

Your store may also carry milk (usually 2% fat or less) supplemented with added calcium and other vitamins and/or minerals. These may also have carrageenan, a kind of gel made from red seaweed, added to make the milk less thin. You may see *lactose-free* milk that contains lactase enzyme. Or *buttermilk* which is technically the liquid left over after butter is made. But the buttermilk in your store is likely to be low-fat or skim milk with a special culture added to make it a bit sour. *Soy*milk and *almond* milk have never seen a cow; you decide if that’s good for you or bad.

Cream. Different kinds of cream differ by the amount of fat:

- ♦ *Half-and-half*: 10.5-18% fat (like British “half cream”) (There is a new “fat-free” version — skim milk and carrageenan.)
- ♦ *light cream*: 15-30% fat (like European “single cream”)
- ♦ *light whipping cream*: 30-36% (like European “heavy cream”)
- ♦ *heavy (whipping) cream*: 36-40% fat (like British “double cream”)

Newcomer's Almanac is published monthly by The Interchange Institute, for people who have recently moved to the United States. Its goal is to promote international understanding by providing information about the American holidays, customs, values, social issues, and language that often confuse and surprise newcomers. It is written by Anne P. Copeland, PhD, who is a clinical psychologist and the Director of The Interchange Institute. She is an American and has lived and worked overseas with her family.

The Interchange Institute is a not-for-profit organization that studies the impact of intercultural transitions on individuals, their families, and the organizations for which they work. From the results of this research, the Institute offers seminars and workshops, produces publications, and provides consultative services to the international newcomers, their organizations, and to host communities, recognizing that change and insight on both sides facilitates smooth transition.

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That Crazy English: I Hope and Believe

December is a season of hope and anticipation, and belief -- that that Santa Claus will come down our chimney, that we will have enough oil to last eight days, that the sun will return to lengthen the days. Here are some idioms to help you discuss your beliefs:

I know you aren't sure, but don't be such a *doubting Thomas*. (I know you aren't sure, but don't be a *person who does not believe unless you have certain proof*.)

I *have a gut feeling* that you will get the job you want. (I *have an inner feeling but no proof* that you will get the job you want.)

I'll *eat my hat* if she gets here on time. (I *do not believe* that she will get here on time.)

She is a woman *after my own heart*. (She is a woman *who agrees with my beliefs and who acts in a way that I approve of*.)

He is going to try to make you change your mind, but you should *stick to your guns*. (He is going to try to make you change your mind, but you should *not change what you believe*.)

When she spoke to the worker's union about the importance of fair pay, she was *preaching to the choir*. (When she spoke to the worker's union about the importance of fair pay, she was *talking to people who already shared her beliefs*.)

I am *hoping against hope* that she will be on time tonight. (I *really want her* to be on time tonight *although I think she probably will not be*.)

VOCABULARY OF NOUNS AND VERBS

Read *Your Home in Winter* on [page 5](#). This article includes many words that can be either a noun or a verb. For each of these words from the article listed below, mark the part of speech as used in that paragraph (shown by the number in parentheses). Then write a synonym or very short definition of the word's meaning when used as the *other* part of speech.

word in context	noun	verb	meaning of other part of speech
1. heat (1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>to make warm</u>
2. filter (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
3. dust (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
4. cover (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
5. stores (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
6. bowls (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
7. rooms (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
8. spread (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
9. ice (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
10. rock (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
11. salt (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
12. sand (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
13. water (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
14. drain (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
15. leaves (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>
16. sticks (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u></u>

HOMEWORK

WITH A PEN

1. Read *Gift Giving at the End of the Year* on [page 1](#). Write a list of the people in your home country (besides your family and friends) to whom you give a gift at least once a year. For each person, describe what a typical gift might be. Then write a list of the people in your home country who give you a gift at least once a year. What is a typical gift from each of these people?

2. Read *Christmas Symbols* on [page 2](#). Think of holidays in your home culture in which some colors are symbolic or traditional. Write a brief description of the meaning of these colors.

3. Read *Santa Claus* on [page 3](#). Draw a picture of a person, animal or imaginary character that is a symbol of a holiday in your home country. Write a short description of your picture.

4. Read *Your Home in Winter* on [page 5](#). Pretend someone was staying in your home in your home country. Write a list of weather-related instructions for them, so your home would stay safe. Rain? Heat? Snow? Ice? Humidity? What should they do?

5. Read about *Milk, Kitchen Utensils* and *Baking in the US* on [pages 6](#) and [7](#). Describe how these items are different in your home country.

WHAT YOU USUALLY DO: SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE

Read about the various December holidays on [pages 2-4](#). Think about your family's own rituals during one of its most important holidays. Complete each sentence below, using the simple present tense to describe what you usually do.

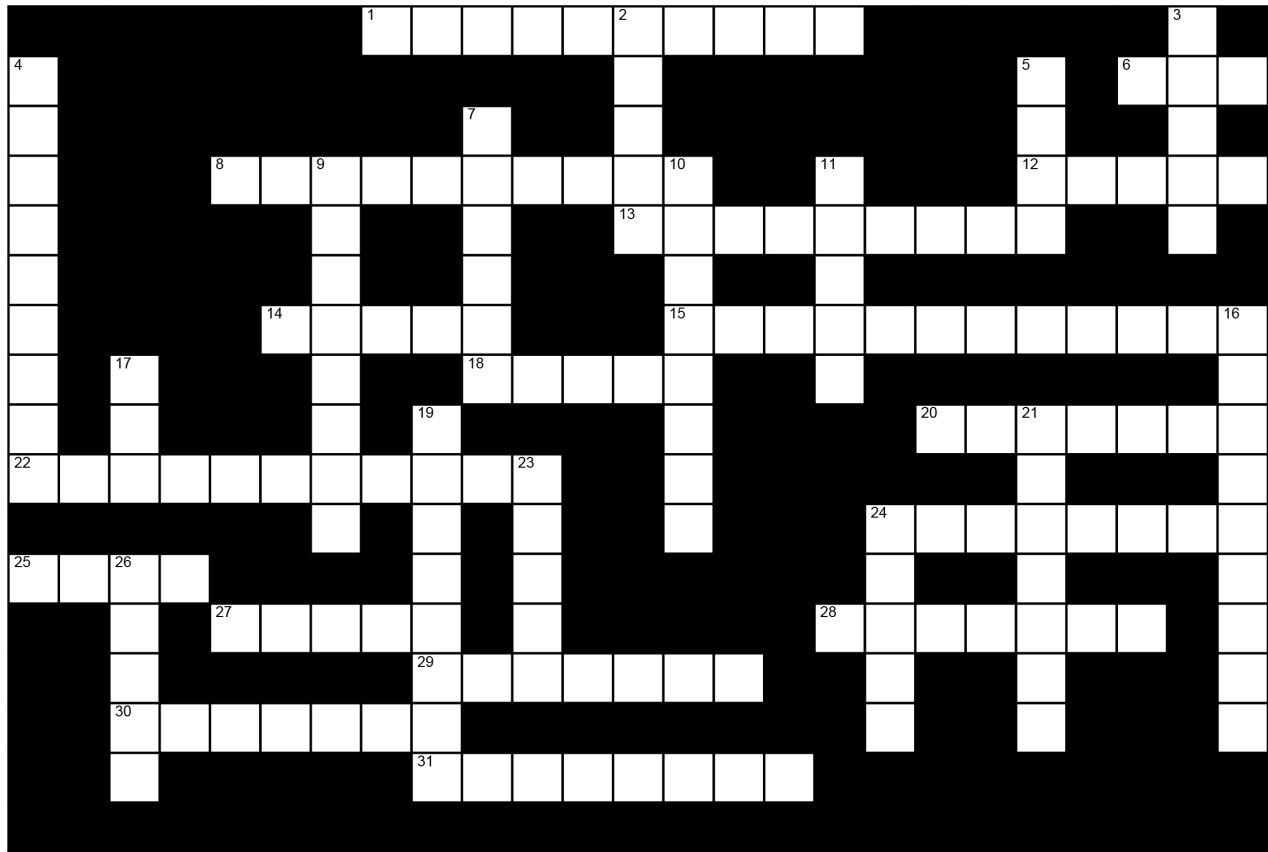
Name of Holiday _____

1. Every year we _____.
2. The day before this holiday, we _____.
3. Children always _____.
4. Men _____.
5. Women _____.
6. For dinner, we _____.
7. Some families _____.
8. Our neighbors _____.
9. Music _____.
10. For clothes, we _____.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Read about *Christmas* on [pages 2](#) and [3](#). Mark each of these TRUE (T) or FALSE (F). Correct any false statements.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Since a Christmas tree is dead, there is no need to give it water in your home. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Nineteenth-century German and Dutch immigrants to the US made the celebration of Christmas popular in this country. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Santa Claus is a modern-day symbol of Jesus. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The Bible says that Jesus was born on December 25. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. According to US legend, Santa Claus travels in a sleigh that is pulled by eight reindeer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. In the 4th century, St. Nicholas wore red clothes with white fur. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Across

1. the kitchen version of sodium bicarbonate (two words)
6. What the ___ eats influences the fat content of milk.
8. "Sugar" in an American recipe usually means ___ sugar.
12. Even if you turn your furnace down, be sure the ___ won't freeze.
13. The American Santa Claus lives at the ___ (two words).
14. use to serve soup
15. a combination of baking soda and an acid (two words)
18. ___ butter has no salt (and no sugar) added to it.
20. Be careful on New Year's Eve, as many drivers will have been drinking ___.
22. people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s
24. People in Generation X are most likely to go ___ at Christmastime.
25. ___ giving is a common part of Christmas and the end of the year.
27. use to whip eggs or cream
28. a gut ___, a sense you're right
29. an African American celebration of family and community
30. use to scrape liquid from a bowl
31. Keep the ___ high in a room to make it feel warmer.

Down

2. one symbolic color of Christmas
3. a typical year-end gift for a babysitter or newspaper deliverer
4. where Jesus was born
5. hope against ___, when it seems unlikely to come true
7. Harriet Tubman led hundreds of ___ to freedom.
9. "___ temperature," how warm a room feels
10. Don't be a ___ Thomas.
11. preach to the ___, try to persuade people who already agree with you
16. Most older Americans see Christmas as a ___ rather than cultural holiday.
17. A bottle of ___ lasted eight days during a re-dedication of a Temple.
19. a Jewish festival of lights and dedication
21. a typical year-end gift for an elementary-school teacher
23. He comes down American Christians' chimneys on Christmas Eve.
24. Half-and-half is half milk and half ___.
26. Be sure to buy a ___ (not dry) Christmas tree.

OUT AND ABOUT

1. Read about *Santa Claus* on [page 3](#). In one week in December, count the number of pictures of or people dressed as "Santa Claus" you see — on street corners (they are probably collecting money for a charity), department stores (they are probably talking to children, asking what gifts they would like for Christmas).

At the same time, count the number of "nativity scenes" (models or pictures of the baby Jesus, his parents, and animals in the stable). Which number is higher — the number of nativity scenes or the number of people dressed as Santa? Compare this to your own country.

2. Read *New Year's Eve: For Parents* on [page 4](#). What activities (performances, parties, sales) will be offered in your community on December 31?

IF YOU USE THE WEB

1. Read *Your Home in Winter* on [page 5](#). Go to www.thespruce.com and type "winterize home" in the Search box. Read the tips in the articles until you find something you have not yet done to winterize your home.

2. Read *Birthday Biography: Harriet Tubman* on [page 6](#). Watch a short film about her life, with amazing photos (remember, photography was new then!): www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmsNGrkbHm4

3. Read *Kwanzaa* on [page 4](#). To hear the founder of Kwanzaa, Dr. Maulana Karenga, describe the holiday and his vision for its celebration, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-MY8l_kwJY.

4. Read *Baking in the US* on [page 6](#). Watch how to use these ingredients to make a classic American cookie:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqmMZs2-3ZI

And enjoy this:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTPDXmcygqw

WITH A FRIEND

1. Read *Kwanzaa* on [page 4](#). Look at the list of seven ideas that are celebrated on this holiday. Do you have any holidays in your home country that celebrate any of these seven ideas? Describe them to a friend or partner.

2. Read *Christmas Across Generations* on [page 3](#). Think of a popular holiday in your home country -- Christmas, or some other holiday that a majority of people in your country celebrate. Discuss with a friend or partner how older vs. younger people celebrate it. Name a few traditions -- about what percentage of people of different ages do those traditions?

3. Read *Kitchen Utensils* on [page 7](#). Describe three kitchen utensils that are common in your home country but uncommon in the US. How are they used? How have you managed without them in the US?

SAYING WHAT YOU MEAN

Read *New Year's Eve* on [page 5](#). With a partner:

Partner 1: You have a 14-year-old daughter who has been invited to a friend's house for a New Year's Eve party. You want to ask the friend's parents some questions about the party before you decide whether to let your daughter go.

Partner 2: You are the friend's parent. You hope Partner 1's daughter will come to the party.

Have a conversation about the party. Then switch roles and try again.

Useful Expressions

Would you mind if I asked a few questions about New Year's Eve parties, because I don't know how they work here in the US.

In my country on New Year's Eve, children this age usually ____.

I wanted to be sure that you, or another adult, will be at home for the party.

I know families have different rules about drinking alcohol. In our family, our children _____. Will that be a problem at your party?

Because we are new here, I don't know what time parties like this are usually over.

ANSWER CORNER

VOCABULARY OF NOUNS AND VERBS

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 noun (separate) | 8 verb (cover) | 14 verb (hole in sink) |
| 3 noun (sprinkle) | 9 noun (cover) | |
| 15 noun (exits) | 4 verb (lid) | 10 noun (tip) |
| 16 noun (stays) | 5 noun (saves) | 11 noun (sprinkle) |
| 6 noun (plays game) | 12 noun (smooth) | |
| 7 noun (live with) | 13 noun (pour liquid on) | |

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

- 1.F (Even though a Christmas tree is dead, it still needs water.)
 2.T 3.F (Santa Claus is a modern-day symbol of St. Nicholas.)
 4.F (The Bible does not give a date for Jesus' birthday.) 5.T
 6.F (The red clothes and white fur became a symbol of Christmas later.)



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