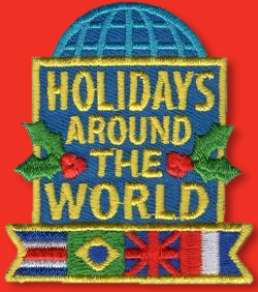




Holidays Around the World








Christmas is probably the best-known winter holiday in America, but there are plenty of others from a range of faith backgrounds.

In honor of our sister Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world, take December to learn about some of these other holidays. Choose at least 4 holidays from the list at right to learn more about (or choose all 7!) Each holiday has some facts and questions to pique your interest.

By choosing 4—or more—holidays to learn about, you can earn a fun patch! (Available in our Girl Scout Shop.)

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	Islam	Eid al-Fitr <i>First day of Shawwal</i>	Eid al-Fitr marks the last day of Ramadan. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar so their holidays do not have fixed dates on the Gregorian calendar. Eid might be in winter one year, then spring, then summer.	How do people celebrate Eid al-Fitr and the end of Ramadan?
	Buddhism	Bodhi Day <i>December 8</i>	On Bodhi Day, people meditate, study the <i>dharma</i> , chant <i>sutras</i> , and do random acts of kindness. This day honors when the Buddha achieved enlightenment while sitting under a Bodhi tree.	What is a Bodhi tree? Who was Siddhartha Gautama?
	Judaism	Hanukkah <i>25th day of Kislev</i>	During the 8 nights of Hanukkah, people light candles on the <i>hanukkiah</i> , give gifts, and play games like <i>dreidel</i> . The dates change because they follow the Jewish lunisolar calendar, not the Gregorian calendar.	Why is Hanukkah eight nights long? Who were the Maccabees?
	Taoism	Dongzhi <i>December 21</i>	The Dongzhi Festival is a celebration of the winter solstice and is honored by several East Asian faiths along with other folk and indigenous religions around the world. It is usually on December 21, 22, or 23.	What things might you see, do, and hear at a Taoist Dongzhi Festival?
	Shinto	Hatsumōde <i>January 1</i>	Hatsumōde means “first visit” and is when people visit public shrines to celebrate the new year. While not unique to Shinto, it is widely practiced in Japan where Shinto is a cornerstone of the culture.	What are <i>kadomatsu</i> and <i>omamori</i> ? What is their role in the celebration?
	Eastern Orthodox	Christmas <i>January 7</i>	Orthodox Christmas is celebrated 13 days after Western Christmas because they use the Julian calendar instead of the Gregorian calendar. It often follows a 40-day fast and usually involves special meals and church services.	What kinds of special foods might you eat at Orthodox Christmas?
	Hinduism	Makar Sankranti <i>January 14</i>	Makar Sankranti celebrates the sun’s journey into the zodiac sign of Capricorn as it moves northward. It signifies the end of winter and is generally considered a time of good fortune and positive change.	How do people celebrate Makar Sankranti? Where do they celebrate?