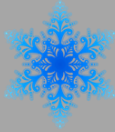




# pack chat

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## festivals—let's celebrate

A festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by a community. It mostly centres around a community's religion or various cultures. It is often marked as a local or national holiday, Mela, or Eid. Next to religion and folklore, a significant origin is agricultural.

Festivals often serve to fulfil specific communal purposes, especially in regards to commemoration or thanking of gods and goddesses. Celebrations offer a sense of belonging for religious, social, or geographical groups, contributing to group cohesiveness. They may also provide entertainment, which was particularly important to local communities before the advent of mass-produced entertainment. Festivals that focus on cultural or ethnic topics also seek to inform community members of their traditions. The involvement of elders sharing their experience and stories further provides a means for unity among families.

Acknowledgement: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival>



## think about it:

The best things  
in life are the  
people you love,  
the places you've seen,  
and the  
memories you've  
made along  
the way.



## did you know?

Why do we give Christmas presents?

The exchange of gifts between people close to one another is the most ancient of midwinter customs. It traces its remote origins to the New Stone Age when the hunting life was exchanged for the more settled existence of land cultivation. As a result there was a food surplus, making it possible to create food stores which would see people through the harshness of winter.

As the cold winter days passed, people used their accumulated food stores in kinder times. At midwinter, the worst was over and spring would soon return. A great celebration was called for. As every farmer had his own specialties, it made sense to exchange food, making the feast as varied as possible. This midwinter food swapping custom became an entrenched part of the festivities. Later the range of gifts went beyond food. In ancient Rome the ceremonies of gift swapping became very elaborate with many superstitions attaching themselves to the custom. Failure to give presents during the midwinter festivities would bring bad luck.

Acknowledgement: [www.christmas.com](http://www.christmas.com)

## the story of diwali

Once upon a time there was a great warrior, Prince Rama, who had a beautiful wife named Sita.

There was also a terrible demon king, Ravana. He had twenty arms and ten heads, and was feared throughout the land. He wanted to make Sita his wife, and one day he kidnapped her and took her away in his chariot. Clever Sita left a trail of her jewellery for Rama to follow.

Rama followed the trail of glittering jewellery until he met the monkey king, Hanuman, who became his friend and agreed to help find Sita. Messages were sent to all the monkeys in the world, and through them to all the bears, who set out to find Sita.

After a very long search, Hanuman found Sita imprisoned on an island. Rama's army of monkeys and bears couldn't reach the island, so they began to build a bridge. Soon all the animals of the world, large and small, came to help. When the bridge was built, they rushed across it and fought a mighty battle.

When Rama killed the evil Ravana with a magic arrow, the whole world rejoiced. Rama and Sita began their long journey back to their land, and everybody lit oil lamps to guide them on their way and welcome them back.

Ever since, people light lamps at Diwali to remember that light triumphs over darkness, and good triumphs over evil.

Acknowledgements: <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/diwali/>



## christmas tongue twisters

(say these five times fast)

- \* Bobby brings bright bells.
- \* Tiny Timmy trims the tall tree with tinsel.
- \* Two trains travel together to Toyland.
- \* Santa's sleigh slides on slick snow.
- \* Santa's sack sags slightly.

Acknowledgement: The Leader, December 2003



## diwali—the festival of lights

Diwali is celebrated by Hindus in India and all around the world. It is the Hindu New Year and is either a 3-day or 5-day holiday depending on where you come from. It is a very exciting and colourful holiday. Homes are cleaned to welcome the New Year and windows are opened so that the Hindu goddess of wealth and good fortune, Lakshmi, can enter. It is believed that she cannot find or enter a house which is not lit up, so every household burns special Diwali clay lamps (diyas) to light the way for the goddess, which is why the holiday is also known as the Festival of Lights.

Presents are given and delicious holiday food is prepared and exchanged. New clothes and jewellery are worn. Parties are held, and dice and card games are played. Fireworks and fire-crackers are set off to warn off evil spirits.

The last day of the holiday is a special day for brothers and sisters called Bhaiya-Dooj (also Bhaidooj or Bhai Dooj). Brothers give special presents to their sisters, who cook for them and look after them.

**Rangoli** (or Kolam) is a colourful Indian tradition, where decorative designs are drawn outdoors on the floor near the entrance of a home, to welcome visitors or Hindu deities during festivals like Diwali. Rangoli can be made in a wide variety of designs, sizes and materials. Visit <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Rangoli> for easy instructions on how to make your own Rangoli.



Make a **diya** using cardamom scented playdough. Create balls with the playdough. Press in the middle of the balls to make place for a tea light candle. Add beads/sequins to decorate your diya. Then add the tea light candle—remember the safety rules for striking and lighting a candle.

Teach your Cubs the following song to sing with their diyas:

Little Lamps (sung to the tune of "London's Burning")



Little lamps are burning bright,  
Burning bright, burning bright.  
Little lamps are burning bright,  
It's Diwali.

See them lighting up the night,  
Up the night, up the night.  
See them lighting up the night,  
It's Diwali

Acknowledgement: <https://theeducatorsspinonit.com/make-your-own-diyas-for-diwali/>

## festive candles



There are many different reasons why candles are associated with **Christmas**, although no one knows when they first became connected. They were used during ancient winter solstice celebrations as a way of remembering that spring would soon come. One of the earliest records of candles being used at Christmas is from the middle ages, where a large candle was used to represent the star of Bethlehem. Jesus is sometimes called 'the Light of the World' by Christians. This might have started the custom of the Advent crown and candles.

Candles are also used during **Hanukkah**, the Jewish Festival of light which is also celebrated during winter. During the eight nights of Hanukkah, a candle is lit in a special menorah (candelabra) called a 'hanukkiyah'.

Candles are also used in the modern winter festival **Kwanzaa**, where a special candle holder called a kinara, that holds seven candles, is used.

Candles are also used as part of the **St. Lucia's or St. Lucy's day** celebrations in Sweden.

Perhaps the most famous use of candles at Christmas are the Carols by Candlelight Services. These are services where the church is only lit by candles.

Candles were also originally used to decorate Christmas trees, until safer electric lights were invented!

In some parts of Ireland, it was traditional to have a Yule candle instead of a Yule Log.

In Southern India, Christians often put small oil burning clay lamps on the flat roofs of their homes to celebrate Christmas. Christians in China use paper lanterns to decorate their Christmas trees.

Acknowledgement: <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs>



## poinsettias at christmas

There is an old Mexican legend about how poinsettias and Christmas come together, it goes like this:

There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services. Pepita was sad. As she walked to the chapel, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. "Pepita", he said "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him, will make Jesus happy."

Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them were sure they had seen a miracle. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought of as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red coloured leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

The poinsettia is also the national emblem of Madagascar.

Acknowledgement: <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs>

## hanukkah dreidel game

**Dreidel** is a traditional game of chance, and one of the most well-known symbols of Hanukkah. The dreidel is a four-sided top with a different Hebrew letter on each side. The game dates back to the time when the Greek King Antiochus IV had outlawed Jewish worship. Jews who gathered to study the Torah played dreidel to fool soldiers into thinking they were just gambling. Now, it is usually played to see who can win the most *gelt* (chocolate coins wrapped in gold foil).

Make your own dreidel: <https://www.alexbrands.com/hanukkah-dreidel-game-printable/>

Outside of Israel, the four letters on the sides of the dreidel are *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hay* and *Shin* which stand for "A Great Miracle Happened Here", referring to the miracle of the oil. In Israel, where the miracle occurred, the dreidel has the letters *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hay* and *Pey*, which means "A Great Miracle Happened Here".

You can play with as few as two, but the more the merrier. Distribute tokens evenly among all players. The tokens can be any little thing — stones, matchsticks, etc. Before each spin, players put one token in the middle of the circle to create 'the pot'. Every time it's emptied, or there's only one token left, every player should put a token in the pot. Take turns spinning the dreidel; spin the dreidel only once. The letter which comes up once it stops spinning will determine whether you win or lose.

According to the letter shown, the player should perform the following action: *Shin* ("shtetl" or "put in" in Yiddish) - put one more token in the pot; *Nun* ("nisht" or "nothing" in Yiddish) - do nothing; *Gimmel* ("gantz" or "everything" in Yiddish) - take all the tokens from the pot; *Hay* ("halb" or "half" in Yiddish) - take half of the tokens lying in the pot. In the case of an odd number, round up the tokens. If you run out of tokens, you are either 'out', or you may ask another player for a loan. Pass the dreidel onto the next player.

Acknowledgement: <https://www.wikihow.com/Play-Dreidel>



**Always do your best.  
What you plant now,  
you will harvest later.**

*Og Mandino*

## Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a seven day festival that celebrates African and African American culture and history. Kwanzaa takes place from the 26th of December to the 1st of January.

The name Kwanzaa comes from the phrase 'matunda ya kwanza' which means 'first fruits' in the Swahili language.

Kwanzaa is mostly celebrated in the USA.

During Kwanzaa a special candle holder called a Kinara is used.

A Kinara holds seven candles, three red ones on the left, three green ones on the right with a black candle in the centre. Each night during Kwanzaa a candle is lit. The black centre candle is lit first and then it alternates between the red and green candles, starting with the ones on the outside and moving inwards. This is quite similar to the lighting of the menorah in the Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah. The seven days and candles in Kwanzaa represent the seven principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba).



- Umoja: **Unity** - Unity of the family, community, nation and race. Idea: write and sing a song about the unity in the Scouting community.
- Kujichagulia: **Self-Determination** - Being responsible for your own conduct and behaviour. Idea: read stories about determined people who achieved great goals.
- Ujima: **Collective work and responsibility** - Working to help each other in your community. Ideas: make posters encouraging responsible behaviour in the community. Plan a community service day.
- Ujamaa: **Co-operative economics** - Working to build shops and businesses. Idea: encourage the Cubs to earn the Entrepreneur interest badge.
- Nia: **Purpose** - Remembering and restoring African and African American cultures, customs and history. Idea: find videos or stories to share with the Cubs. Choose videos/stories where the characters show strength or purpose. Discuss these with the Cubs.
- Kuumba: **Creativity** - Using creativity and your imagination to make communities better. Idea: put on a concert using home made musical instruments.
- Imani: **Faith** - Believing in people, families, leaders, teachers and the righteousness of the African American struggle. Run programmes on different faiths, let the Cubs describe their beliefs. Invite a religious leader to talk to the Pack.

On each of the seven days, families will participate in an activity which symbolizes that day's principle. For example, on the sixth day of Kwanzaa people make up dances to perform for family and friends, showing creativity.

Kwanzaa gifts, called zawadi (zah-wah-dee), are made by hand. Some examples are: fabric dolls with black-button eyes, home-made storybooks with African folk tales, and necklaces strung with specked beads. These zawadi are made and given by adults and children alike on Kwanzaa.

Jewellery is an important part of African dress. Here is a different way of making beads:

### Sand beads

Mix 1 cup of sand with 1/4 cup of white glue in a plastic tub. Pinch off enough sand dough to roll a bead in the size you want. With a nail, poke a hole through the centre for stringing. If the dough is too soft to hold the hole, add more sand until it is stiff enough so that the hole does not collapse. Let the bead dry on a tray until hard. Tape the end of a piece of yarn that is long enough to make a necklace and string the beads on it. Tie ends together to make a necklace. Can decorate beads by colouring them with markers or gluing tiny seed beads to them.

## news:



Amendments have been made to the Leaping Wolf badge requirements:

The Hiking Interest badge has been added to the list of Special Interest badges. Find the amended Cub Trail on the SCOUTS South Africa website: <https://www.scouts.org.za/members/cubs/>



Try this yummy snack with your Cubs:

### Fried bananas

Ingredients: bananas; plastic knives; lemon juice; brown sugar; cinnamon; butter; frying pan; spatula; paper towels.

Ask the Cubs to peel the bananas and cut into 1/2" slices (you may want to do the cutting). Place banana slice on a plate and sprinkle a little lemon juice, brown sugar and cinnamon onto the slices. Put butter in the frying pan over med heat. Place a layer of slices in the frying pan. Fry both sides of the slices until golden. Drain on paper. Remember safety first.

Acknowledgements: <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/>; <http://www.childfun.com/holidays/winter/kwanzaa/>

## chinese new year

Chinese New Year is observed by Chinese communities scattered all over the world and has a history going back thousands of years. Legend has it that Emperor Huang Ti introduced the holiday in 2637 B.C., but no one knows for sure when it began. What is known is that Chinese New Year is an integral part of Chinese culture and that the dates of all subsequent annual feasts are based upon it.

Symbols of Chinese New Year include plum blossoms, which stand for courage and hope, and the water narcissus, which is thought to be a flower of good fortune. "Good Luck", written in Chinese characters on red diamond-shaped paper, and "lucky oranges" are often seen around the house this time of year.

Another common tradition is to give gifts of money to children in small red envelopes. The colour red is thought to bring good luck and happiness for the year ahead, and a little cash doesn't hurt either.



Next year (2020) is the Year of the Rat. In Chinese culture rats are seen as a sign of wealth and plenty. Let your Cubs make a lucky money envelope and fill each one with a chocolate coin (or with a silver one) —visit <https://www.firstpalette.com/craft/chinese-red-envelope.html> to find out how to make one.

Some ideas to celebrate the Chinese New Year:

- \* Read your Cubs the story of the Pied Piper of Hamlyn.
- \* Play Kim's game — rats have very good memories.
- \* Make a Chinese lantern — handcraft module, page 50.
- \* Make a simple paper holder — handcraft module, page 20.

For more ideas check out [www.Pinterest.com](http://www.Pinterest.com)

Acknowledgements: <https://publicholidays.sg/chinese-new-year/>

## other festivals

There are so many festivals to celebrate! Too many to include in this edition of Pack Chat. Below are some websites you could visit to find out more.

- ◆ <https://www.whychristmas.com/customs>
- ◆ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com > article > how-to-play-dreidel>
- ◆ <https://www.familyeducation.com/printables/hanukkah-printables/hanukkah-dreidel>
- ◆ [https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/1.2\\_YR\\_EYFS\\_Religious\\_Festivals\\_Who\\_Celebrates\\_what](https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/1.2_YR_EYFS_Religious_Festivals_Who_Celebrates_what)
- ◆ <https://artsymomma.com/chinese-new-year-lantern-craft-kids.html>
- ◆ <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/brief-history-chinese-lanterns/>
- ◆ <https://www.creativetravelguide.com/cultural-festivals-africa/>
- ◆ [http://www.fun-facts.org.uk/holidays/muslim\\_festivals.htm](http://www.fun-facts.org.uk/holidays/muslim_festivals.htm)

More tips, games and crafts in the next edition of **pack chat**  
Stay tuned.