

CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES

CELEBRATE THE WORLD AND EACH OTHER

WE ARE ALL ONE

Canada is a nation that celebrates diversity with the highest percentage of foreign-born citizens than any other G8 country. In 2018 and 2019, Canada welcomed 313,580 immigrants (Statistics Canada). We are a nation that has accepted people of all languages, cultures, and religions. We are a fabric of inclusion, knit with many different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions. People celebrate a variety of holidays this time of year, and some choose to celebrate none. Everyone deserves freedom, respect, and dignity. While we may have our own set of beliefs, it's important to celebrate commonalities.

The month of December is usually shaped by activities that define a holiday: time off, vacation plans, social gatherings, food indulgence. There is a sense of community and gratitude, and a celebration of love. Celebrate these qualities and let this time be an opportunity to learn more about your friends and co-workers and don't be afraid to ask what holiday they celebrate. When you allow someone to share celebrations and traditions that are significant to them, it demonstrates genuine interest and creates a meaningful connection. Here are other celebrations this season that you may want to learn more about:

Multicultural Holiday Celebrations

Diwali (Hindu) - November 14, 2020: A 5-day holiday of lights celebrating the victory of light over darkness.

Hanukkah (Jewish) - December 10-18, 2020: An 8-day festival of lights involving the lighting of the Menorah, a candelabra that burned for 8 days during a battle between the Jews and the Greeks that restored the temple.

Chinese New Year - February 12, 2021: A celebration to mark the end of winter and the start of spring. People indulge in parades, fireworks, and the giving of luck money.

Bodhi Day (Buddhist) - Date Varies: A celebration of enlightenment and the awakening of Buddha.

Kwanzaa (African) - December 26, 2020 - January 1, 2021: A 7-day celebration of African heritage involving the lighting of the kinara. Each day represents a life principle, also used as a response to the daily greeting of "Habari Gani".

Orthodox Christmas (Orthodox Christian) - January 7, 2021: A holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus. A time to heal the soul and of peace and unity. Christmas Day falls on January 7th according to the Julian calendar currently used by many Orthodox churches.

Ramadan (Muslim) - April 13, 2021: A month of fasting during daylight hours until the fast is broken on Eid. Eid is a 3-day celebration with family that involves gift-giving, prayer, charitable works, and special foods.

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The celebratory nature of food is universal. It unifies us across cultures and strengthens community bonds. Foods used to celebrate the holidays are culturally meaningful and are often based around values, beliefs, geography, history, and norms. We all eat, we all celebrate, so why not do both together!

Experience holiday tastes from around the world in the month of December. Each week, try to experience a traditional holiday dish from a different country! Add a new cultural dish to your weekly meal plan, share a favourite traditional dish in the lunchroom, or share and discuss fasting or dietary restrictions. This holiday season, celebrate diversity and culture through food! Here are a few dishes from across the globe that you might want to try.

Diwali – Zafrani Kaju Katli

A sweet treat to add to your holiday table or weeknight dinner.

Makes 3 servings



- 1 teaspoon saffron
- 2/3 cup cashew nuts, broken
- Approx. 1/2 cup water
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon green cardamom powder
- 2 sheets edible silver leaf

Directions:

- 1) Use a food processor to grind cashews into a fine powder.
- 2) Heat water in a non-stick pan.
- 3) Add sugar and saffron. Mix and simmer until it thickens into a syrup consistency.
- 4) Add cardamom powder and mix well.
- 5) Add cashew nut powder and mix well. Cook for about 3 minutes.
- 6) Spread onto a platter and let it cool to room temperature.
- 7) Transfer mixture onto a workspace and knead a little.
- 8) Spread the mixture into a pan (burfi tray) and garnish with edible silver leaf (varq) and let it set.
- 9) Cut into squares and serve.

Nutrition Per Serving: Cal: 145 | Fat: 4.3g | Protein: 1.6g | Sodium: 2mg | Carbohydrate: 26.8g | Fibre: 0.3g | Sugar 24.4g

Adapted from <https://food.ndtv.com/recipe-zafrani-kaju-katli-577091>

Ramadan – Dry Fruit Milk Shake

A great way to break a fast or after a holiday indulgence!

Makes 2 servings



- 1/4 cup each of unsalted almonds, pistachios, and cashews chopped
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1/4 cup of dried raisins*
- 4 dates*
- 3 dried figs*

Directions:

- 1) Blend all the nuts with 1/2 cup milk until as smooth as possible.
- 2) Add dates, figs, and raisins (to taste).
- 3) Blend until it becomes frothy.
- 4) Stir and pour in glasses.
- 5) Garnish with a few dry fruit slices or mint and serve immediately.

Nutrition Per Serving: Cal: 463 | Fat: 18.5g | Protein: 16.8g | Sodium: 190mg | Carbohydrate: 65.9g | Fibre: 7.2g | Sugar 49.9g

Adapted from <https://www.stylecraze.com/articles/delicious-ramadan-recipes-you-should-try/>

*Note: High in natural sugars, but balanced by fibre. To decrease sugar content, reduce dates, raisins, and figs to taste.

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Kwanzaa - Sweet Potato & Peanut Stew

This fragrant dish defines Kwanzaa!

Heart-warming, soul-feeding, and homemade.

Makes 4 servings



- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne powder (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon clove powder
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 cup yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons ginger root, peeled and minced
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup peanut butter*
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 3 cups kale, chopped

Directions:

- 1) In a small dish, mix together the powdered spices. Set aside.
- 2) In a hot pot, add the sweet potato, onion, bell pepper, garlic, and ginger. Cook for about 3 minutes. Add a bit of water if it starts to stick.
- 3) Add spice mixture and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
- 4) Add the tomatoes and peanut butter and stir until all is combined.
- 5) Add the water, stir and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, with a loose lid. Stir occasionally getting the bits on the bottom of the pot for flavour.
- 6) Remove the lid. Add the kale and simmer for an additional 10 minutes, until the sweet potatoes have softened.
- 7) Stew will thicken up as it cools.

Nutrition Per Serving: Cal: 331 | Fat: 16.6g | Protein: 11.4g | Sodium: 1407mg | Carbohydrate: 39g | Fibre: 7.5g | Sugar 16.2g

Adapted from <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-recipe/plant-based-african-peanut-stew-vegan/>

**Note: To reduce sodium, replace peanut butter with a low-sodium version and reduce salt.*

Source: <https://livelearn.ca/article/about-canada/9-multicultural-holiday-celebrations-you-may-not-be-aware-of/>
<https://www.immigration.ca/record-canada-population-growth-dominated-by-immigration>