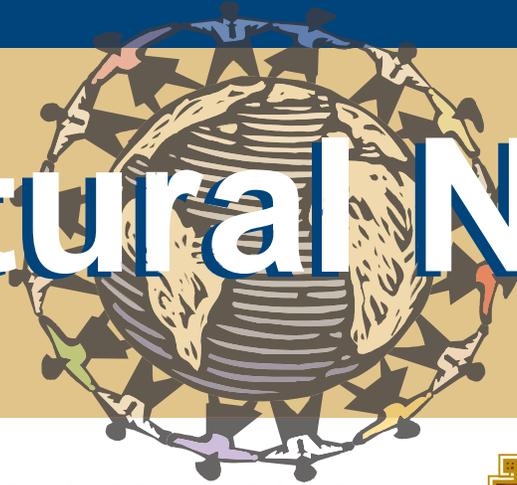


Cultural News



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First Day of Chanukah/Hanukkah in United States

Many Jewish communities in the United States observe the first day of Hanukkah, which marks the start of Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah or Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish observance that remembers the Jewish people's struggle for religious freedom.

Celebrate Hanukkah

Jewish communities in the United States celebrate the first day of Hanukkah on the 25th day of the month of Kislev in the Jewish calendar. The Hanukkah period lasts for eight days and is celebrated from the 25th day of Kislev to the second day of Tevet. The first night of Hanukkah (or Chanukah) starts with special blessings at sunset the day before the 25th of Kislev. Many Jewish people light the menorah, also known as the hanukiah (or chanukkiyah), which is a type of candelabrum.

Many Americans of Jewish faith also eat food fried in olive oil, such as potato cakes, and different fried breads. Hanukkah dishes include sufganiot (Hanukkah donuts), potato latkes (pancakes), mandelbrot (this can be sliced like a hard bread), and rugelach (pastry that with different fillings). The first day of Hanukkah is the start of a celebratory period in which a four-sided toy called dreidel is used for games. The first night of Hanukkah is also a night when people sing traditional songs to celebrate Hanukkah. Gift-giving is also popular at this time of the year.

Public Life

The first day of Hanukkah is not a federal public holiday in the United States. Some Jewish schools have their school vacation fall around the same time of Hanukkah. Chanukah/Hanukkah (first day) is observe on Wednesday Dec 17 2014 of this year.

About Hanukkah

Hanukkah commemorates the Jewish people's successful rebellion against the Greeks in the Maccabean War in 162 BCE. A ritual cleansing and re-dedication of the Temple occurred after the Jewish people's victory. It is believed that there was only enough consecrated oil to keep the lamp burning for one day but the small bottle of oil miraculously lasted for eight days. Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah, is referred as the Feast of Lights or Festival of Lights for this reason.

Moreover, the survival of Judaism over the many years is also celebrated during this period. The last day of Hanukkah, which marks the end of Hanukkah, falls on the eighth day of this period.



DECEMBER 2014 CALENDAR

WORLD AIDS MONTH

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH

WORLDWIDE FOOD SERVICE SAFETY MONTH

NATIONAL IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVENTION MONTH

- 1 - Rosa Parks Day (US)
- 2 - Special Education Day (US)
- 3 - International Day of Persons With Disabilities
- 5 - King's Birthday (Thailand)
- 7-11 - National Hand Washing Awareness Week (US)
- 8 - Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
- 8 - Feast of Immaculate Conception (Catholic)
- 10-17 - Human Rights Week (US)
- 12 - Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Christian)
- 13 - UNICEF Birthday (International)
- 15 - Bill of Rights Day (US)
- 17-24- Hanukkah (Jewish)
- 21 - Winter Solstice (Yule)
- 24 - Christmas Eve (Western Christianity)
- 25 - Christmas Day (Western Christianity)
- 26 - National Thank You Note Day (US)
- 28 - Pledge of Allegiance Day (US)
- 29 - YMCA Day (US)
- 31 - New Years Eve (International)

King's Birthday - Thailand



His Majesty, King Bhumibol, Rama IX of Thailand was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on December 5, 1927. This year Thai people will celebrate the King's birthday on Sunday, December 7, 2014. This celebration is also referred to as Thai Father's day, since the King is the symbolic father of Thailand. The King and Queen are revered for their generosity and caring for the Thai people. There are numerous royal projects aimed at improving the life and health of the Thai people. A list of King and Queen's accomplishments is long and impressive.

The King's father, Prince Mahidol, was studying medicine at Harvard University at the time of the King's birth. The King's grandfather was King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), one of the most famous kings of the Royal House of Chakri. Prince Bhumibol's father died at an early age and his mother moved to Switzerland, where the young prince led as "ordinary" of a life as possible.

Prince Bhumibol's interests during this time were photography, tinkering with electrical & mechanical things, and science. While in Switzerland, he entered Lausanne University.

While in Switzerland, he met and fell in love with a charming young Thai lady. They were married just prior to the King's coronation in 1950. It is worth noting that Thailand has had a constitutional monarchy since 1937. King Bhumibol is the longest reigning king in the world.

Two personal observations attest to the love the Thai people hold for King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit.

Perhaps the most visible sign of the love and respect for the King and Queen is that every house and every store have one (or sometimes many more) picture of the royal couple. This was as true 25 years ago, as it is today.

The second observation has likewise been formed over many years. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. In theoretical terms the king has limited powers in the day-to-day governing of Thailand. He does, however, have vast moral authority. His advice and counsel is sought on many of the important decisions of the Thai government. In a recent article on the King stated the King has only three rights: The Right to Encourage, the Right to be Consulted, and the Right to Warn. These rights are only effective because His Majesty is so revered by the people of Thailand.

<http://wattampainenglish.com/apecial-events-main/king-s-birthday-thai-fathers-day-2012.html>

India Ayurvedic Medicine

Ayurvedic medicine (also called Ayurveda) is one of the world's oldest medical systems. It originated in India more than 3,000 years ago and remains one of the country's traditional health care systems. Its concepts about health and disease promote the use of herbal compounds, special diets, and other unique health practices. India's government and other institutes throughout the world support clinical and laboratory research on Ayurvedic medicine, within the context of the Eastern belief system. But Ayurvedic medicine is not widely studied as part of conventional (Western) medicine. This fact sheet provides a general overview of Ayurvedic medicine and suggests sources for additional information.

Key Points:

Is Ayurvedic medicine safe?

- Ayurvedic medicine uses a variety of products and practices. Some of these products—which may contain herbs, minerals, or metals—may be harmful, particularly if used improperly or without the direction of a trained practitioner. For example, some herbs can cause side effects or interact with conventional medicines. Also, ingesting some metals, such as lead, can be poisonous.

Is Ayurvedic medicine effective?

Studies have examined Ayurvedic medicine, including herbal products, for specific conditions. However, there are not enough well-controlled clinical trials and systematic research reviews—the gold standard for Western medical research—to prove that the approaches are beneficial.

Background:

The term "Ayurveda" combines the Sanskrit words ayur (life) and veda

(science or knowledge).

Ayurvedic medicine, as practiced in India, is one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world. Many Ayurvedic practices predate written records and were handed down by word of mouth. Three ancient books known as the Great Trilogy were written in Sanskrit more than 2,000 years ago and are considered the main texts on Ayurvedic medicine—Caraka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Astanga Hridaya.

Key concepts of Ayurvedic medicine include universal interconnectedness (among people, their health, and the universe), the body's constitution (prakriti), and life forces (dosha), which are often compared to the biologic humors of the ancient Greek system. Using these concepts, Ayurvedic physicians prescribe individualized treatments, including compounds of herbs or proprietary ingredients, and diet, exercise, and lifestyle recommendations.

The majority of India's population uses Ayurvedic medicine exclusively or combined with conventional Western medicine, and it is practiced in varying forms in Southeast Asia.



<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/ayurveda/introduction.htm>