





# *A Christmas Acrostic*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Write a Christmas sentence for each of the Christmas letters.

C  
H  
R  
I  
S  
T  
M  
A  
S



Now use those sentences to make a Christmas story.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(continue on the back)



# *The Most Memorable Christmas*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Christmas is coming and you do not have money to purchase gifts. You wonder what your family and friends will think of you if they do not receive a gift. Then you remember the reason for celebrating Christmas - Jesus' birth, and you decide to make it the most memorable Christmas ever by giving gifts that keep the spirit of Christmas going throughout the year. List what these "gifts" are and who they are for.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Predict how your family and friends will react to your Christmas gift(s). How did it make you feel?

_____	A photograph of two young girls standing in front of a decorated Christmas tree. The girl on the left is wearing a light-colored dress and the girl on the right is wearing a red dress. They are both looking at a gift box held by the girl in red.
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	



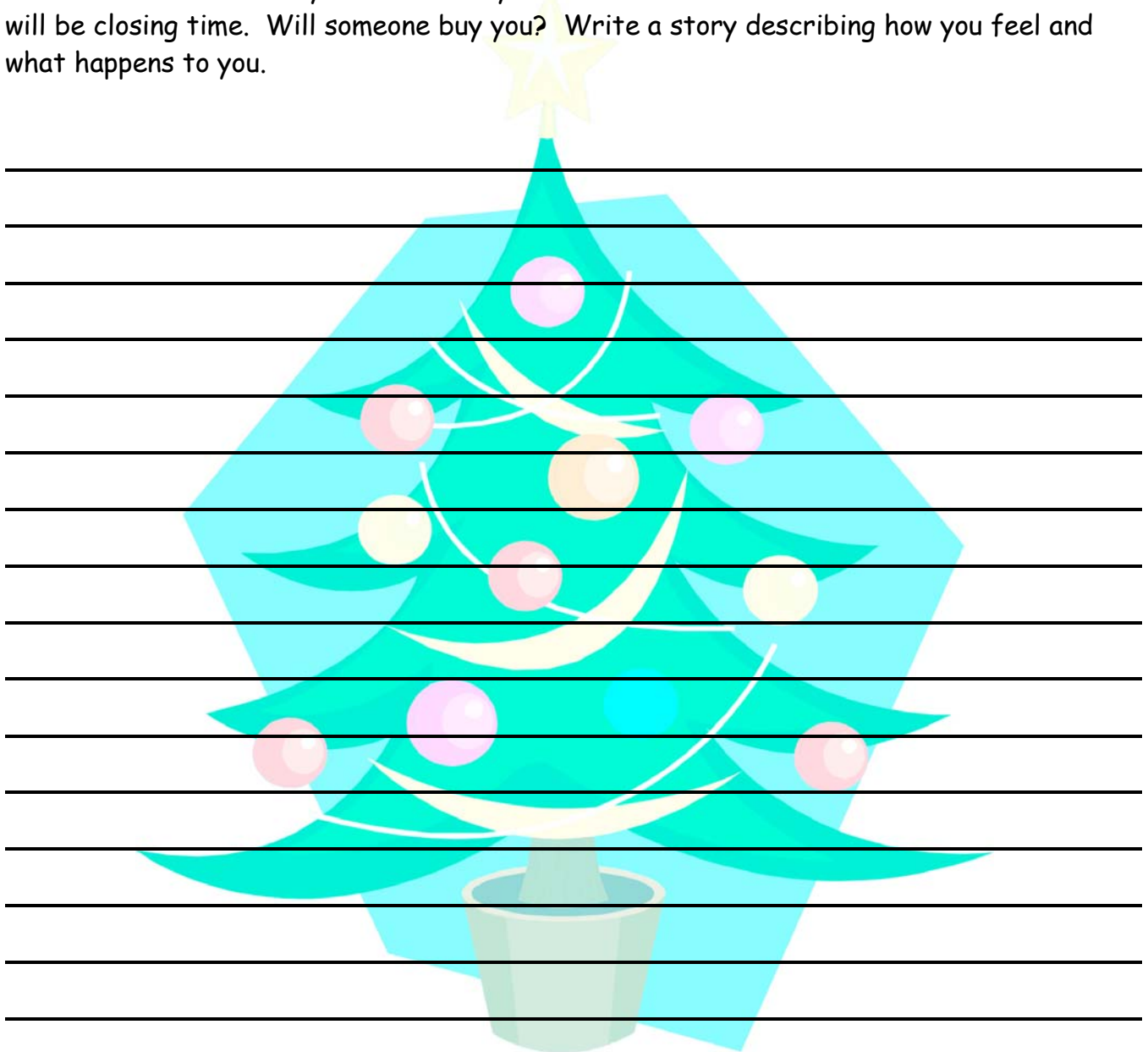


# *The Last Christmas Tree*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

It is Christmas Eve and you are the only Christmas tree left in the lot to be sold. Soon it will be closing time. Will someone buy you? Write a story describing how you feel and what happens to you.





# Christmas Word Problems

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Solve the problems and write the answers on the line. (Show your work.)

1. Connie bought 7 Christmas tree ornaments for \$3.00 each. How much did she pay?

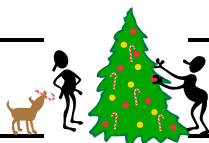
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Andy had \$12.00 to spend for Christmas. He wanted to buy 2 toy trucks that cost \$2.50 each and 1 set of markers that cost \$5.95. Did he have enough money?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



2. To earn Christmas spending money, Kim worked for her mother. Her mother paid her \$3.00 an hour for 6 hours of work. How much did Kim earn?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Bobby sold 8 tickets to the Christmas play. Each ticket cost \$4.00. How much money did he receive?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Matthew had to memorize his part for the Christmas play. He memorized 7 lines a day for 8 days. How many lines did he need to memorize?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. During Christmas vacation 8 inches of snow fell a day for 3 days. What was the total amount of snow for the three days?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# Christmas Word Problems

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Key \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

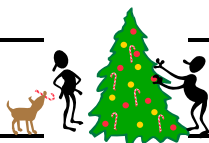
Directions: Solve the problems and write the answers on the line. (Show your work.)

1. Connie bought 7 Christmas tree ornaments for \$3.00 each. How much did she pay?

\_\_\_\_\_ \$21.00 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Andy had \$12.00 to spend for Christmas. He wanted to buy 2 toy trucks that cost \$2.50 each and 1 set of markers that cost \$5.95. Did he have enough money?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_



2. To earn Christmas spending money, Kim worked for her mother. Her mother paid her \$3.00 an hour for 6 hours of work. How much did Kim earn?

\_\_\_\_\_ \$18.00 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Bobby sold 8 tickets to the Christmas play. Each ticket cost \$4.00. How much money did he receive?

\_\_\_\_\_ \$32.00 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Matthew had to memorize his part for the Christmas play. He memorized 7 lines a day for 8 days. How many lines did he need to memorize?

\_\_\_\_\_ 56 lines \_\_\_\_\_

6. During Christmas vacation 8 inches of snow fell a day for 3 days. What was the total amount of snow for the three days?

\_\_\_\_\_ 24 inches \_\_\_\_\_





# The Christmas Tree Farm

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Solve the problems and write the answers on the lines.

1. Snow's Christmas Tree Farm has a total of 310 choice Christmas trees. There are 218 trees left to sell. How many trees have been sold?

\_\_\_\_\_



2. There are 15 Christmas trees per row. How many rows are there if there are 330 trees?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Mr. Snow pays Larry \$8.00 an hour to sell Christmas trees. How many hours does Larry work to earn \$184.00?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Mr. Snow spends \$11.00 a day for hot chocolate. His bill was \$154.00. How many days had it been since Mr. Snow paid the bill?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Snow's Christmas Tree Farm has 550 pounds of evergreen tree fertilizer. Each bag weighs 25 pounds. How many bags of fertilizer does the Christmas Tree Farm have?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. One Christmas Tree Farm worker cut 40 trees in 5 hours. How many trees did he cut per hour?

\_\_\_\_\_



7. Mr. Snow ties the Christmas wreaths into bundles of 45. How many bundles can he make out of 1,485 single wreaths.?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Larry sold 365 Christmas trees and wreaths so far this year. Tim sold 216. How many more trees and wreaths did Larry sell than Tim?

\_\_\_\_\_





# The Christmas Tree Farm

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Key \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Solve the problems and write the answers on the lines.

1. Snow's Christmas Tree Farm has a total of 310 choice Christmas trees. There are 218 trees left to sell. How many trees have been sold?

\_\_\_\_\_ 92 trees \_\_\_\_\_



5. Snow's Christmas Tree Farm has 550 pounds of evergreen tree fertilizer. Each bag weighs 25 pounds. How many bags of fertilizer does the Christmas Tree Farm have?

\_\_\_\_\_ 22 bags \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are 15 Christmas trees per row. How many rows are there if there are 330 trees?

\_\_\_\_\_ 22 rows \_\_\_\_\_

6. One Christmas Tree Farm worker cut 40 trees in 5 hours. How many trees did he cut per hour?

\_\_\_\_\_ 8 trees \_\_\_\_\_



3. Mr. Snow pays Larry \$8.00 an hour to sell Christmas trees. How many hours does Larry work to earn \$184.00?

\_\_\_\_\_ 23 hours \_\_\_\_\_

7. Mr. Snow ties the Christmas wreaths into bundles of 45. How many bundles can he make out of 1,485 single wreaths.?

\_\_\_\_\_ 33 bundles \_\_\_\_\_

4. Mr. Snow spends \$11.00 a day for hot chocolate. His bill was \$154.00. How many days had it been since Mr. Snow paid the bill?

\_\_\_\_\_ 14 days \_\_\_\_\_

8. Larry sold 365 Christmas trees and wreaths so far this year. Tim sold 216. How many more trees and wreaths did Larry sell than Tim?

\_\_\_\_\_ 149 wreaths \_\_\_\_\_







# *December Days*

## *Ten Activities to Celebrate a Month of Special Days!*

The holiday season is upon us! Whether you want to investigate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or all of these, you can find information here. How do you make soofganiyot? What is a kinara? Who was St. Nicholas? Find the answers to these seasonal questions and tons of related activities as we celebrate ten holidays in December. kinaraki

December is full of special days to celebrate in the classroom. Here are activities for ten of the observances you won't want to miss this month!

### *Hanukkah or Chanukah*

Jewish families begin the eight-day celebration of Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights, beginning at sundown on a date in November or December.

People in Israel make delicious jelly doughnuts called Sufganiyot during Hanukkah. You can enjoy them also when you experiment with the recipe.

Fun and games are also a part of Hanukkah, and the most traditional children's game is The Dreidel. This simple game is easy to play and easy to make with the Dreidel Pattern.

Investigate these Internet links to learn more about Hanukkah.

Find out more history and traditions behind Hanukkah here! Watch the History of Hanukkah now! History of the Holidays. All the holidays in one place!

[www.history.com/minisites/hanukkah](http://www.history.com/minisites/hanukkah)

The History of Hanukkah.

Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and nights, starting on the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar

[www.history.com/minisites/hanukkah/viewPage?pageId=730](http://www.history.com/minisites/hanukkah/viewPage?pageId=730)



## Monthly Activities - December



History Of Hanukkah - Learn about hanukkah, the festival of lights. A short history about this Jewish festival of lights. Learn how Hanukkah came into existence.

[www.theholidayspot.com/hanukkah/history.htm](http://www.theholidayspot.com/hanukkah/history.htm)

### The History of Hanukkah

Information and history about Hanukkah - the Jewish holiday celebrating the Festival of Light.

[www.ridgenet.org/Szaflik/hanukkah.htm](http://www.ridgenet.org/Szaflik/hanukkah.htm)

History of Chanukah explores the history of Chanukah, as well as traditions associated with the festival. Includes links to electronic postcards, recipes, and songs.

[www.chanuka.com/history.shtml](http://www.chanuka.com/history.shtml)

Chanukah On the Net - One of the best known symbols of Chanukah is the Dreidel. A dreidel is a four sided top with a Hebrew letter on each side.

[www.holidays.net/chanukah/dreidel.html](http://www.holidays.net/chanukah/dreidel.html)

### Hanukka Dreidel Game

The four letters which appear on the four corners of a dreidel alude to the miracle of Hanukkah.

[www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/hanukkah/dreidel2.htm](http://www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/hanukkah/dreidel2.htm)





## *Hanukkah Recipes*

### *Potato Latkes*

6 medium sized potatoes  
1 small onion  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 egg  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
3 tablespoons flour, matzo meal or bread crumbs  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
oil for frying\*

Wash, peel and grate potatoes. Strain, but not too dry. Add grated onion, salt and the egg. Mix well. Add remaining ingredients and beat into potatoes, mixing well. Heat enough oil to cover bottom of frying pan. Drop by tablespoonfuls into hot oil. Brown on both sides. Drain on absorbent paper. Delicious served with applesauce or sour cream. Enjoy!!

Variation: Appletato Latkes

Add to batter one large apple, coarsely grated, and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Serve with jam.

\*Add additional oil as needed.





## *Sufganiyot*

The young State of Israel has created many of its own customs. One is serving jelly doughnuts at Hanukkah, which are fried in oil to symbolize the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days instead of one.

1 package dry yeast  
1/4 cup warm water  
1/3 cup sugar  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
1/3 cup vegetable shortening  
2 eggs  
3/4 cup milk, warmed  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
dash nutmeg or mace  
5 cups flour (approximately)  
1/2 cup oil  
jam or jelly  
confectioners sugar

Dissolve yeast in water and set aside for ten minutes. Meanwhile, place sugar, salt and shortening in a large mixing bowl and mix to a smooth paste. Add eggs, one at a time; blend well. Add milk and vanilla and stir them in slightly. Add flour gradually, enough to form a smooth dough of medium consistency.



Brush dough with oil, cover bowl with cloth and set to rise in warm place until doubled in bulk. Punch down, place on lightly floured board and roll into a tight roll about 1 inch in diameter. Slice into 16 equal slices and place on a flour dusted pan to rise again. Fry 4-6 at a time in deep oil until brown. Drain on absorbent paper.

When doughnuts are completely cool, force jelly into them with a pastry bag or cookie press. (Insert tip of tube into the center of the side of each doughnut.) Sift confectioners' sugar over completed doughnuts. Makes 16. Enjoy!!



## *Cheese Latkes*

1 pound cottage cheese  
6 eggs  
1/2 cup sugar  
pinch salt  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla  
grated peel of a 1/2 lemon  
1 cup flour  
oil for frying

Combine above ingredients in order given.

Drop by tablespoons into hot oil, and fry until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper and serve topped with sour cream. Serves 6-8. Enjoy!!





# *December 1*

## *Rosa Parks Day*



Celebrated as the beginning of the end of segregation, this day is the anniversary of Rosa Parks's arrest for refusing to relinquish her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus and move to the back. The incident sparked a boycott of the municipal bus system that is now viewed as the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. Read all about the life of Parks, an unlikely heroine, at *Rosa Parks: Pioneer of Civil Rights*

(<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/par0bio-1>) You can find the story of her involvement in the boycott at Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott (<http://www.holidays.net/mlk/rosa.htm>). If you need a ready-made lesson on the subject to jump-start your study, check out Lesson 1: Riding the Bus -- Taking a Stand (<http://www.archives.state.al.us/teacher/rights/rights1.html>)

Investigate these Internet links to learn more about Rosa Parks  
Rosa Parks

[www.rosaparks.org/bio.html](http://www.rosaparks.org/bio.html)

Rosa Parks - A biography of Rosa Parks, famous for her part in igniting the Montgomery bus boycott when she refused to give up her seat on a bus.

[http://womenshistory.about.com/od/parksrosa/Rosa\\_Parks.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/parksrosa/Rosa_Parks.htm)

CNN.com - Civil rights icon Rosa Parks dies at 92 - Oct 25, 2005

[www.cnn.com/2005/US/10/25/parks.obit/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/10/25/parks.obit/index.html)



# *December 6, 2007*

## *National Christmas Tree Lighting*

The annual lighting of the National Christmas Tree kicks off Washington's two-week Pageant of Peace, a holiday celebration of caroling, music, a burning Yule log and other events. A display includes lighted Christmas trees representing every American state and territory. The president lights the National Christmas Tree on a Thursday evening in December. An orchestra and choral group perform seasonal music.

Other trees in Washington are featured on The Trees of Christmas. The White House also gets into the holiday spirit with beautiful Christmas trees. Keep an eye on the White House Web site for information about this year's theme and trimmings.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/president/holiday/tree/>

Study the history of the Christmas tree through two sites devoted to this holiday favorite: Christmas Trees & More (<http://photo2.si.edu/ctree/ctree.html>) and National Christmas Tree Association (<http://www.realchristmastrees.org/>). The NCTA Web site contains a Teacher's Resource section that has puzzles for children to solve and information about various types of Christmas trees.





# *December 6*

## *St. Nicholas Day*

In some countries, St. Nicholas is the fairy tale character who bestows presents on well-behaved children. His special holiday is December 6, and there are customs associated with St. Nicholas Day. Find out more about the celebration of St. Nicholas Day and other European customs at <http://www.pastrywiz.com/cookies/christmas.htm>, which offers a brief outline of Christmas in several countries in Europe as well as recipes for holiday goodies. The Many Faces of Santa tells students about the various Santa Claus personas and how they developed.







# *December 12*

## *Poinsettia Day*

Did you know that the poinsettia has a special day all its own? By an Act of Congress, December 12 was set aside as National Poinsettia Day. The date marks the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett, who is credited with introducing the native Mexican plant to the United States. The purpose of the day is to enjoy the beauty of this popular holiday plant.

The plant we know today as the poinsettia has a long and interesting history. The fact is, that beautiful plant many put in their homes during the holidays was once used as a fever medicine!

Native to Central America, the plant flourished in an area of Southern Mexico known as Taxco del Alarcon. The ancient Aztecs had a name for this plant found blooming in the tropical highlands during the short days of winter: *cuetlaxochitl*. Not merely decorative, the Aztecs put the plant to practical use. From its bracts they extracted a purplish dye for use in textiles and cosmetics. The milky white sap, today called latex, was made into a preparation to treat fevers.

The poinsettia may have stayed a regional plant for many years to come if it hadn't been for the work of Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779 - 1851). The son of a French physician, Poinsett was appointed as the first United States Ambassador to Mexico (1825 - 1829) by President James Madison. Poinsett had attended medical school, but his real love in the scientific field was botany. (Mr. Poinsett later founded the institution that we know today as the Smithsonian Institution).

Poinsett kept his own hothouses on his Greenville, South Carolina plantations. While visiting the Taxco area in 1828, he became fascinated with the brilliant red blooms he saw there. He immediately sent some of the plants back to South Carolina, where he began propagating the plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens.

Among the recipients of Poinsett's work was John Bartram of Philadelphia, who in turn gave the plant over to another friend, Robert Buist, a Pennsylvania nurseryman. Mr. Buist is thought to be the first person to have sold the plant under its botanical name, *Euphorbia pulcherrima* (literally, "the most beautiful Euphorbia"). Though it is thought to have become known by its more popular name of poinsettia around 1836, the origin of the name is certainly clear!

Adapted from: [http://www.ecke.com/HTML/h\\_corp/corp\\_joelp.html](http://www.ecke.com/HTML/h_corp/corp_joelp.html)





## *Milkweed Pod Poinsettia Ornaments*

At first glance, milkweed plants and poinsettias don't seem to have much in common. If you live in an area where milkweed grows wild, however, you can use the dried milkweed pods to make poinsettia ornaments for your Christmas tree. You could also give these as gifts — four or six to set, or however many you want to give.

Here's how:

- Collect some dried milkweed pods. In the fall, the milkweed plants have already gone to seed but the dried pods will still be attached to the plant. You will need six "halves" of a milkweed pod for each poinsettia flower that you are going to make.
- After you have collected the milkweed pods and have brought them into the house, put them in a warm spot for a few days or a week to dry out more. This is especially important if it has been rainy and damp outside.
- Glue the milkweed pod halves together side-by-side in a circle so that they look like a flower. A hot glue gun works well for gluing the pods together.
- Decorate your poinsettia flowers with spray paint and glitter, or, if you don't want to spray paint your poinsettias, just use glue and glitter. Mix and match and experiment with colors.
- Glue a loop of string, yarn, twine or ribbon to the back of the poinsettia flower. Once the glue is dry, your ornament is ready to hang on the Christmas tree.





## *Poinsettia Napkin Rings*

These napkin rings can be adapted for paper, cloth, or fingertip towels.

### What You Need

- Red felt
- Green felt
- Tulip gold glitter paint
- Scissors
- Ruler



### How To Make It

- Adjust the length of rectangle according to the type of napkins you use:
- Cut a rectangle of red felt  $1\frac{3}{4}$  x 7" long.
- Cut the ends of the rectangle as shown in the picture.
- Apply gold glitter paint along the side of each of the circular ends. Let dry.
- Cut two rectangles out of red felt  $2\frac{3}{4}$  x 3" to make the blooms of the flower.
- Cut the two rectangles curving the edges of the flower as shown in the picture.
- Apply gold glitter paint along the sides as shown in the picture. Let dry.
- Cut one rectangle out of green felt  $3\frac{1}{2}$  x  $3\frac{1}{4}$ " to make the leaves of the flower.
- Cut the rectangle curving the edges of the leaves as shown in the picture.
- Apply gold glitter paint along the sides as shown in the picture. Let dry.
- Turn the long rectangular felt over and apply gold glitter paint along the side of each of the circular ends. (Optional) Let dry.
- Place one red bloom on top of the leaves, so that you can see a leaf in-between each part of the bloom.





- Place another red bloom on top of the first red bloom. Rotate so that you see the first red bloom parts between the one on the top. (see photo)
- Measure the width of the long rectangular felt (napkin ring) at the "neck" (immediately after the round area) of the napkin ring.
- Pick up all 3 pieces and fold in half.
- With your scissors, cut a slit through all the layers that would measure 1/2 the width of the "neck" of the napkin ring.
- Open up the 3 pieces.
- Insert one end of the napkin ring through all 3 pieces (beginning with the leaves).
- Insert the other end of the napkin ring through all 3 pieces.
- Insert a napkin into the napkin ring.



Adapted from:

<http://homeschooling.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.kidsdomain.com/craft/poinsettia.html>



## *Beethoven's Birthday*

The holiday season and Beethoven -- the perfect match! Ludwig Van Beethoven was born on this day in 1770, in Bonn, Germany. Many people consider Beethoven one of the finest composers of all time. Although he eventually lost his hearing, he continued to write music and to conduct. The Beethoven Depot has all kinds of information about the life of this master and his works and midi files of his music for students to hear.

Ludwig Van Beethoven: The Magnificent Master is a wonderful Beethoven resource with a picture gallery. Use Beethoven's Symphony Number 9: Third to Fifth Grades ([www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/lesson151.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson151.shtml)) as the basis for a great music lesson plan for your classroom. Also, investigate Composer "Road Rally," ([www.lessonplanspage.com/MusicBeethovenBachInfo.htm](http://www.lessonplanspage.com/MusicBeethovenBachInfo.htm)) for another online lesson that introduces students to this musical genius.

### *Beethoven: The Magnificent Master*

<http://www.raptusassociation.org/>

All the information about Beethoven you ever needed! Includes a biography of his life, a complete list of his musical works, pictures of Beethoven, special projects, links and way more.

### *All About Beethoven*

<http://www.all-about-beethoven.com/>

All About Beethoven includes a bio and a timeline, but my favorite section is Beethoven's Music, where you'll be introduced to Beethoven's major works in ten different genres. "Beethoven is the composer responsible for bringing chamber music to the concert hall. ... They [his chamber music pieces] are also seen as pushing the boundaries of acceptable harmony of that time, and are regarded as some of his most profound works." There is also a section of free classical sheet music (in PDF) that includes works by Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and a handful of others.





## *Beethoven: The Magnificent Master*

<http://raptusassociation.org/>

"Beethoven is recognized by many as the greatest composer whoever lived. But very often we overlook the man in favor of seeing the feats of the master composer. This biography is dedicated to exploring the life of this most unique genius in an endeavor to discover more of the man behind the music." In addition to the detailed biography, you'll find a well-organized portrait gallery and a few fascinating (but wordy) peeks into the history behind several of Beethoven's major works (listed under Research Projects.)

## *Ludwig van Beethoven's Website*

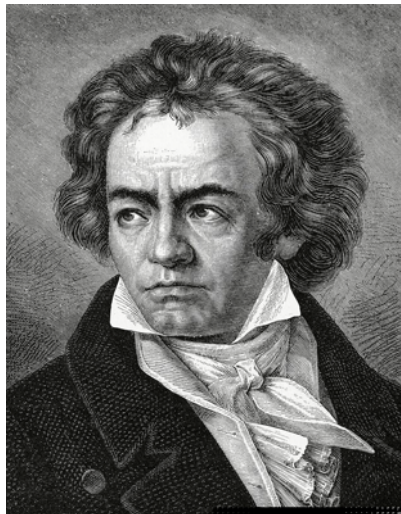
[http://www.lvbeethoven.com/index\\_En.html](http://www.lvbeethoven.com/index_En.html)

Dominique Prévot shares his Beethoven passion with the world with this fan site, published in four languages. The site includes a biography, an illustrated family tree, a portrait gallery, and a Beethoven discussion forum. My favorite clicks were the stamp exhibit (look in Collections) and the coverage of Beethoven's descent into deafness (look for the Health icon on the biography page.) Find the School icon (on most pages you'll first need to click on "More") for a five-page guided site tour.

## *Mad About Beethoven*

<http://www.madaboutbeethoven.com/>

John Suchet is a television journalist who did extensive Beethoven research for a three-part television special titled "The Last Master." This site is a compilation of that research, including photos he took of "all the important locations in Beethoven's life," portraits of Beethoven's friends and family, a chronology of Beethoven's life, and a "friendly guide" to Beethoven's music, arranged by genre. "What is it that sets Beethoven's music apart? ... For me it is this: Beethoven broke the rules."





# *December 18*

## *Nutcracker First Performed*

Fans of the ballet will be pleased to learn that the Nutcracker was first performed on this day. Students may listen to an online audio clip of the Nutcracker Suite Overture by Tchaikovsky. The Official Nutcracker Site has music and a description of the story. Kids Domain offers the Nutcracker tale and midi files of many of the tunes on The Nutcracker Story and Music page.

### Nutcracker - Library Series

The Official Nutcracker Site This site has lots of information. You can read the story, listen and learn about the music.

[www.icfw.org/LS-Nutcracker.htm](http://www.icfw.org/LS-Nutcracker.htm)

### A Victorian Christmas

The Official Nutcracker Site - Grades 4 - 6 - Music/Language Arts - Click on "Nutcracker MIDIs" and introduce your student to the glorious music from The Nutcracker.

[www.teachersfirst.com/lessons/vic-xmas.htm](http://www.teachersfirst.com/lessons/vic-xmas.htm)

### Nutcracker Story

The Nutcracker Ballet is based on the story "The Nutcracker and the King of Mice" written by E.T.A. Hoffman.

[www.nutcrackerballet.net/html/nutcracker\\_story.html](http://www.nutcrackerballet.net/html/nutcracker_story.html)





# *December 21*

## *First Day of Winter*

In astronomy, the solstice is either of the two times a year when the Sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator, the great circle on the celestial sphere that is on the same plane as the earth's equator. In the Northern Hemisphere, the winter solstice occurs either December 21 or 22, when the sun shines directly over the tropic of Capricorn; the summer solstice occurs either June 21 or 22, when the sun shines directly over the tropic of Cancer. In the Southern Hemisphere, the winter and summer solstices are reversed.

### **Reason for the Seasons**

The reason for the different seasons at opposite times of the year in the two hemispheres is that while the earth rotates about the sun, it also spins on its axis, which is tilted some 23.5 degrees towards the plane of its rotation. Because of this tilt, the Northern Hemisphere receives less direct sunlight (creating winter) while the Southern Hemisphere receives more direct sunlight (creating summer). As the Earth continues its orbit the hemisphere that is angled closest to the sun changes and the seasons are reversed.

### **Longest Night of the Year**

The winter solstice marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The sun appears at its lowest point in the sky, and its noontime elevation appears to be the same for several days before and after the solstice. Hence the origin of the word solstice, which comes from Latin solstitium, from sol, "sun" and -stitium, "a stoppage." Following the winter solstice, the days begin to grow longer and the nights shorter.

Adapted from:

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/wintersolstice1.html>

### **The Winter Solstice: Activities and Trivia for Kids**

How much do you know about the winter solstice -- what it is and what traditions surround it.

<http://fun.familyeducation.com/holidays-and-celebrations/childrens-science-activities/32939.html>







# *December 25*

## *Christmas Day*

Christmas Traditions Around the World

[www.Santas.net](http://www.Santas.net)

Christmas Around the World

[www.TheHolidaySpot.com](http://www.TheHolidaySpot.com)

Christmas Around the World

[www.The-North-Pole.com](http://www.The-North-Pole.com)

Christmas Around the World

[www.Christmas.com](http://www.Christmas.com)

Multicultural Calendar, a Web site devoted to explanations (most of them kid-written) of holiday celebrations -

<http://www.kidlink.org:80/KIDPROJ/MCC>

Christmas Around the World lesson plan

[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/lesson041.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson041.shtml)





## *How "Merry Christmas" is said .....*

Afrikaans: Geseënde Kersfees  
Afrikander: Een Plesierige Kerfees  
African/ Eritrean/ Tigrinja: Rehus-Beal-Ledeats  
Albanian: Gezur Krislinjden  
Arabic: Milad Majid  
Argentine: Feliz Navidad  
Armenian: Shenoraavor Nor Dari yev Pari Gaghand  
Azeri: Tezze Iliniz Yahsi Olsun  
Bahasa Malaysia: Selamat Hari Natal  
Basque: Zorionak eta Urte Berri On!  
Bengali: Shuvo Naba Barsha  
Bohemian: Vesele Vanoce  
Brazilian: Feliz Natal  
Breton: Nedeleg laouen na bloavezh mat  
Bulgarian: Tchestita Koleda; Tchestito Rojdestvo Hristovo  
Catalan: Bon Nadal i un Bon Any Nou!  
Chile: Feliz Navidad  
Chinese: (Cantonese) Gun Tso Sun Tan'Gung Haw Sun  
Chinese: (Mandarin) Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan (Cantonese) Gun Tso Sun  
Tan'Gung Haw Sun  
Choctaw: Yukpa, Nitak Hollo Chito  
Columbia: Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo  
Cornish: Nadelik looan na looan blethen noweth  
Corsian: Pace e salute  
Crazanian: Rot Yikji Dol La Roo  
Cree: Mitho Makosi Kesikansi  
Croatian: Sretan Bozic  
Czech: Prejeme Vam Vesele Vanoce a stastny Novy Rok  
Danish: Glædelig Jul  
Duri: Christmas-e- Shoma Mobarak  
Dutch: Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar! or Zalig Kerstfeest  
English: Merry Christmas  
Eskimo: (inupik) Jutdlime pivdluarit ukiortame pivdluaritlo!  
Esperanto: Gajan Kristnaskon  
Estonian: Ruumsaid juulup|hi  
Ethiopian: (Amharic) Melkin Yelidet Beaal  
Faeroese: Gledhilig jol og eydnurikt nyggjar!



## Monthly Activities - December

Farsi: Cristmas-e-shoma mobarak bashad  
Finnish: Hyvaa joulua  
Flemish: Zalig Kerstfeest en Gelukkig nieuw jaar  
French: Joyeux Noel  
Frisian: Noflike Krystdagen en in protte Lok en Seine yn it Nije Jier!  
Galician: Bo Nada  
Gaelic: Nollaig chridheil agus Bliadhna mhath ùr! German: Froehliche Weihnachten  
Greek: Kala Christouyenna!  
Haiti: (Creole) Jwaye Nowel or to Jesus Edo Bri'cho o Rish D'Shato Brichto  
Hausa: Barka da Kirsimatikuma Barka da Sabuwar Shekara!  
Hawaiian: Mele Kalikimaka  
Hebrew: Mo'adim Lesimkha. Chena tova  
Hindi: Shub Naya Baras  
Hausa: Barka da Kirsimatikuma Barka da Sabuwar Shekara!  
Hawaian: Mele Kalikimaka ame Hauoli Makahiki Hou!  
Hungarian: Kellemes Karacsonyi unnepeket  
Icelandic: Gledileg Jol  
Indonesian: Selamat Hari Natal  
Iraqi: Idah Saidan Wa Sanah Jadidah  
Irish: Nollaig Shona Dhuit, or Nodlaig mhaith chugnat  
Iroquois: Ojenyunyat Sungwiyadeson honungradon nagwutut. Ojenyunyat osrasay.  
Italian: Buone Feste Natalizie  
Japanese: Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto  
Jiberish: Mithag Crithagsigathmithags  
Korean: Sung Tan Chuk Ha  
Lao: souksan van Christmas  
Latin: Natale hilare et Annum Faustum!  
Latvian: Prieci'gus Ziemsve'tkus un Laimi'gu Jauno Gadu!  
Lausitzian: Wjesole hody a strowe nowe leto  
Lettish: Priecigus Ziemassvetkus  
Lithuanian: Linksmu Kaledu  
Low Saxon: Heughliche Winachten un 'n moi Nijaar  
Macedonian: Sreken Bozhik  
Maltese: IL-Milied It-tajjeb  
Manx: Nollick ghennal as blein vie noa  
Maori: Meri Kirihimete  
Marathi: Shub Naya Varsh  
Navajo: Merry Keshmish  
Norwegian: God Jul, or Gledelig Jul  
Occitan: Pulit nadal e bona annado



## Monthly Activities - December



Papiamento: Bon Pasco  
Papua New Guinea: Bikpela hamamas blong dispela Krismas na Nupela yia i go long yu  
Pennsylvania German: En frehlicher Grischt daag un en hallich Nei Yaahr!  
Peru: Feliz Navidad y un Venturoso Año Nuevo  
Philippines: Maligayan Pasko!  
Polish: Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia or Boze Narodzenie  
Portuguese: Feliz Natal  
Pushto: Christmas Aao Ne-way Kaal Mo Mobarak Sha  
Rapa-Nui (Easter Island): Mata-Ki-Te-Rangi. Te-Pito-O-Te-Henua  
Rhetian: Bellas festas da nadal e bun onn  
Romanche: (sursilvan dialect): Legreivlas fiastas da Nadal e bien niev onn!  
Rumanian: Sarbatori vesele or Craciun fericit  
Russian: Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva is Novim Godom  
Sami: Buorrit Juovllat  
Samoan: La Maunia Le Kilisimasi Ma Le Tausaga Fou  
Sardinian: Bonu nadale e prosperu annu nou  
Serbian: Hristos se rodi  
Slovakian: Sretan Bozic or Vesele vianoce  
Sami: Buorrit Juovllat  
Samoan: La Maunia Le Kilisimasi Ma Le Tausaga Fou  
Scots Gaelic: Nollaig chridheil huibh  
Serbian: Hristos se rodi.  
Sinhalese: Subha nath thalak Vewa. Subha Aluth Awrudhak Vewa  
Slovak: Vesele Vianoce. A stastlivy Novy Rok  
Slovene: Vesele Bozicne Praznike Srecno Novo Leto or Vesel Bozic in srecno Novo leto  
Spanish: Feliz Navidad  
Swedish: God Jul and (Och) Ett Gott Nytt År  
Tagalog: Maligayamg Pasko. Masaganang Bagong Taon  
Tami: Nathar Puthu Varuda Valthukkal  
Trukeese: (Micronesian) Neekiriisimas annim oo iyer seefe feyiyeech!  
Thai: Sawadee Pee Mai or souksan wan Christmas  
Turkish: Noeliniz Ve Yeni Yiliniz Kutlu Olsun  
Ukrainian: Srozhdestvom Kristovym or Z RIZDVOM HRYSTOVYM  
Urdu: Naya Saal Mubarak Ho  
Vietnamese: Chung Mung Giang Sinh  
Welsh: Nadolig Llawen  
Yoruba: E ku odun, e ku iye'dun!





# Kwanzaa



Kwanzaa is a non-religious African American holiday which celebrates family, community, and culture. It is celebrated for seven days: December 26 - January 1.

The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili. The kinara is the center of the Kwanzaa setting and represents the original stalk from which we came: our ancestry.

Like Christmas, Kwanzaa has its own customs and traditions. Investigate these internet links for more information and activities about Kwanza.

## Kwanza, Kwanzaa Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans for teachers to use on Kwanza holidays! Learn about Kwanzaa, the world's fastest growing holiday, with these activities and Internet links.

[www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson\\_plans/holidays/kwanza/](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/holidays/kwanza/)

## Kwanzaa, Recipes, Crafts, Activities, E-Cards

The root word is Swahili - Kwanza. The American holiday is spelled with a double 'a'

[www.chiff.com/home\\_life/holiday/kwanza.htm](http://www.chiff.com/home_life/holiday/kwanza.htm)

## BillyBear4Kids

Learn about the holiday, create holiday stationery, and bring the celebration to your computer desktop with Kwanzaa Fun from Billy Bear.

<http://www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/kwanzaa/kwanzaa.htm>

## Kids Domain - Kwanzaa Time

The name Kwanzaa, sometimes spelled Kwanza, comes from a phrase which means "first fruits" in Swahili, an East African language.

[www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/kwanzaa/](http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/kwanzaa/)

## Kwanzaa: Activities

Grades K-2: Art. Coloring Pages. Have your students color Kwanzaa pictures to decorate the classroom for the holiday.

[www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/december/kwanzaa\\_activities.html](http://www.eduplace.com/monthlytheme/december/kwanzaa_activities.html)





# *Kinara Centerpiece*

## **What You Need**

- 3 Red short taper candles
- 3 Green short taper candles
- 1 Black short taper candles
- 7 Small terracotta pots
- 1 Very large terra cotta dish (the dishes that go under the pots)
- Black craft paint
- Red craft paint
- Green craft paint
- Gold "Painters" paint markers
- Paintbrush
- Artificial gourds and other harvest items, loose or garland
- Clay



## **How To Make It**

Note: The reason the craft calls for the short tapers, is that the tall tapers are too top heavy and tend to tip the small pots over.

- Paint the terracotta dish in black. Let dry. Paint another coat, if needed, and let dry.
- Paint 3 terracotta pots green. Let dry. Paint another coat, if needed, and let dry.
- Paint 3 terracotta pots red. Let dry. Paint another coat, if needed, and let dry.
- Paint 1 terracotta pot black. Let dry. Paint another coat, if needed, and let dry.
- Use the Gold paint marker to write along the outer lip (or side) of the terracotta dish the principles of Kwanzaa. Let dry.
- Add the tapers to the small pots, adding a small clay ball in the bottom of the pot to aid the taper in standing straight.
- Arrange the pots in the dish. (see picture above)
- Fill in the area around the pots with the artificial gourds and other harvest items.



# *Cooking for Kwanzaa*

## *Sweet Potato Pie*

- 2 c Sweet potatoes, drained
- 4 T Margarine, melted
- 3 Eggs
- 1 c Sugar
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp Grated nutmeg
- 3/4 c Milk
- 1 tsp Vanilla
- 1 9" pie shell, baked
- 1/4 c Chopped pecans

Use a food processor or fork to mash sweet potatoes together with melted margarine. Blend in eggs, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add milk and vanilla. Pour mixture into baked pie shell. Microwave on 70% (medium high) 7 minutes. Sprinkle pecans over surface of pie. Rotating midway through cooking, microwave on 70 % (medium high) 6 to 8 minutes or until center no longer jiggles. If you prefer, you can bake it in the oven at 375 degrees for about 35-45 minutes or until it doesn't jiggle.

Yield: 8 servings





## *Grandmother's Southern Fried Okra*

- 1 lb Fresh okra, cut 1 inch pieces
- 1 lg Green tomato, diced
- 1 med Onion chopped
- 1 Clove garlic, minced (optional)
- 1 Jalapeno pepper halved & sliced, remove seeds if too hot
- 2 Eggs beaten
- 1/4 tsp Salt
- 1/4 tsp Black pepper
- 1/2 c Milk
- 1 c Cornmeal
- 1/4 c Vegetable oil

Combine okra, tomato, onion, garlic & jalapeno in large bowl. In separate bowl combine eggs, salt, pepper, milk. Pour egg mix over veggies and toss to thoroughly coat. Gradually add cornmeal until mixture on the okra and at the bottom of the bowl soaked up. Continue to toss till ingredients evenly mixed. Mixture will have a gooey consistency.

Heat oil in 10 inch skillet over med. heat until hot. Oil is ready when dash of cornmeal sizzles.

Spoon mixture evenly in skillet. Reduce heat to med low. Cover and fry till underside golden brown, 10-15 minutes. Then invert on plate and slide other side up into skillet and cook uncovered 5-8 min until golden brown. Remove from skillet to paper towels to drain excess oil. Serve hot.

Yield: 6 servings







## *African Vegetarian Stew*

- 4 sm Kohlrabies, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1/2 c Couscous or Bulgar Wheat
- 1 lg Onion, chopped
- 1/4 c Raisins, dark or golden
- 2 Sweet Potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 tsp Ground Coriander
- 1/2 tsp Ground Turmeric
- 2 Zucchini, sliced thick
- 1/2 tsp Ground Cinnamon
- 5 Tomatoes, fresh or 16 oz Can Tomatoes
- 1/2 tsp Ground Ginger
- 1/4 tsp Ground Cumin
- 15 oz Can Garbanzo beans
- 3 c Water

Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

Note: Serve the couscous separately, if desired. Parsnips may be substituted for the kohlrabi.

Yield: 8 servings

## *African Squash And Yams (futari)*

- 1 sm Onion; chopped, pared & cut into 1" pieces
- 2 tbs Oil
- 1 c Coconut Milk
- 1 lb Hubbard squash; pared and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Ground cinnamon
- 2 medium size Yams or sweet potatoes
- 1/4 tsp Ground cloves



Cook and stir onion in oil in 10-inch skillet over medium heat until tender. Stir in remaining ingredients. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer 10 minutes. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes longer.



## *African Green Pepper And Spinach*

- 1 med Onion; chopped
- 1 med Green pepper; chopped
- 1 tbs Oil
- 1 med Tomato; chopped
- 1 lb Fresh spinach; stems removed
- 3/4 tsp Salt
- 1/8 tsp Pepper
- 1/4 c Peanut butter

Cook and stir onion and green pepper in oil in 3 quart saucepan until onion is tender. Add tomato and spinach. Cover and simmer until spinach is tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in salt, pepper and peanut butter. Heat just until hot.

Yield: 4 servings

## *African Vegetable Stew*

- 1 Onion (very large) chopped
- 1 Swiss chard bunch
- 1 can Garbanzo beans (known also as chick-peas)
- 1/2 c Raisins
- 1/2 c Rice, raw
- 2 Yams
- Several fresh tomatoes (or large can)
- 1 Garlic clove
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Tabasco sauce, to taste

- Fry onion, garlic and white stems of chard until barely limp. Add chopped greens and fry a bit.
- Either peel the yams or scrub them well with a vegetable brush, then slice them into thick slices. Add garbanzos, raisins, yams, tomatoes, salt and pepper. Cook a couple of minutes.
- Make a well in the center of the mixture in the pot. Put the rice in the well and pat it down until it's wet. Cover and cook until rice is done, about 25 minutes. Add Tabasco sauce to taste.

Yield: 4 servings





## *African Tomato-avocado-buttermilk Soup*

3 lb Tomatoes, peeled and seeded  
2 tbs Tomato paste  
1 c Buttermilk  
1 tbs Olive oil  
1 Avocado, mashed to a puree  
Juice of 1 lemon  
2 tbs Finely minced fresh parsley  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Hot pepper sauce

Garnish: 1 Cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced, sour cream, plain yogurt, or creme fraiche

Puree tomatoes in a food processor or food mill, then press through a sieve to remove seeds. In a large mixing bowl, beat the pureed tomatoes, tomato paste, buttermilk, and oil. Toss pureed avocado with 1 tablespoon lemon juice to hold the color. Add the avocado, remaining lemon juice, and parsley to the tomato mixture; stir to mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and a generous number of drops of hot pepper sauce. Refrigerate several hours before serving.

At serving time, taste soup for seasonings. Ladle into individual bowl and have guest garnish their portions with cucumber and sour cream. Pass hot pepper sauce around to add more piquancy.

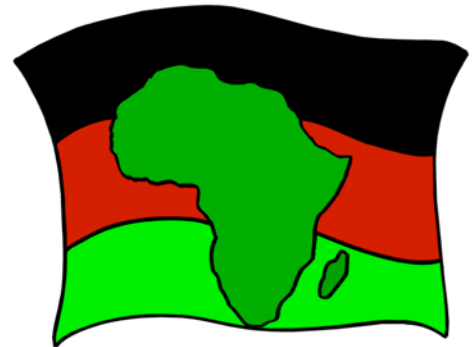
Makes 8 to 10 servings.

**KWANZAA  
GREETINGS!**



## *Benne Cakes*

You will need: oil to grease a cookie sheet  
1 cup finely packed brown sugar  
1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened  
1 egg, beaten  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/2 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup toasted sesame seeds



Preheat the oven to 325°. Lightly oil a cookie sheet. Mix together the brown sugar and butter, and beat until they are creamy. Stir in the egg, vanilla extract, and lemon juice. Add flour, baking powder, salt, and sesame seeds. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto the cookie sheet 2 inches apart. Bake for 15 minutes or until the edges are browned. Enjoy!

Benne cakes are a food from West Africa. Benne means sesame seeds. The sesame seeds are eaten for good luck. This treat is still eaten in some parts of the American South.

## *Peanut Soup with Okra Croutons*

1/2 tb Peanut oil  
1/4 ts Crushed red pepper flakes  
1/2 tb Coriander seeds  
1/2 c Celery, diced  
1/2 c Carrot, diced  
2/3 c Butternut squash, diced  
2/3 c Potatoes, diced  
1 c Peanuts, roasted, shelled & unsalted  
6 c Stock  
1 tb Lemon juice  
Salt & pepper



### Okra Croutons

- 1 1/2 c Okra, thinly sliced
- 3 tb Cornmeal
- 1/4 ts Cumin
- 1/4 ts Cayenne
- 1/4 ts Herbal salt
- Olive oil spray

Place oil, pepper flakes & coriander in a large non-stick pot & fry over moderate heat until the seeds begin to darken. Add vegetables & peanuts & cook for 3 minutes. Pour in the stock & bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat & simmer 30 minutes. Cool slightly & puree. Gently reheat, add lemon juice & season to taste. Serve in shallow bowls garnished with okra croutons.

**CROUTONS:** Preheat oven to 375F. Rinse okra under running water, drain & pat dry with paper towels. Combine cornmeal, seasonings, salt & okra in a bag. Seal & shake well.

Spray a baking sheet with oil, spread okra slices in a single layer & spray them with oil too. Bake until crisp & browned, spraying & stirring twice during cooking. Should take 30 minutes. Yield: 6 servings

### *Sweet Potato Fritters*

- 1 lb Sweet potatoes; peeled and coarsely shredded
- 3 lg Eggs
- 3 tb Flour
- 1 sm Onion; coarsely shredded
- Vegetable oil for frying

1. Spread potatoes and onion on clean dish towel; roll up, twisting towel to extract excess moisture from vegetables.
2. In bowl, whisk eggs, flour, 1/2 t salt and 1/4 t pepper until smooth
3. In large nonstick skillet, heat 1/4 cup oil over medium-high heat. Add vegetables to batter; mix. Spoon mixture into skillet, allowing heaping 1 T for each fritter; with back of spoon, flatten slightly. Fry, six fritters at a time, 4 minutes. Turn; cook 2 to 4 minutes. Drain on paper towels; keep warm while frying remaining fritters, adding more oil if necessary. Yield: 6-8 Servings

