

Winter Around the World

This winter, enrich your family culture by exploring holiday traditions from around the world. From the eight nights of lighting the **Hanukkah** menorah and savoring delicious potato pancakes called latkes, to the vibrant celebrations of **Three Kings Day** in Spain, featuring the delectable King cake with hidden surprises, each tradition brings its unique flavor to the festive season. The **Winter Solstice**, marked by global festivities, often includes culinary delights shared during gatherings. In Sweden, **St. Lucia Day** is honored with girls dressed as Lucia brides offering twisted saffron buns known as "Lucia cats." **St. Nicholas Day** in many European countries involves feasts and gift-giving, while **Christmas** celebrations vary from Ireland's religious focus to Ukraine's **Sviata Vechera** with symbolic wheat decorations. **Kwanzaa** emphasizes family and unity, with special foods adding to the spirit of the celebration. As we embark on this winter journey, let's savor the tastes of global traditions, fostering a deeper understanding of our interconnected world.¹

Seasonal Swaps

One of the more heartwarming traditions of the holiday season is what we serve for our family and friends. While holiday indulging can be fun, there are lots of ways to sub and swap excess without sacrificing tradition!

Here are some ideas:

- Swap traditional breadcrumbs with wholesome rolled oats and trade a portion of the butter in baked goods for the sweetness of applesauce.
- Opt for reduced-fat sour cream or fat-free Greek yogurt in your favorite recipes and cut back on sugar while elevating flavors with cinnamon, vanilla, or nutmeg.
- When it comes to the plate division, make it a family affair – fill half with veggies of all hues, reserve a quarter for proteins, and allocate another quarter for beloved carbs like potatoes, pasta, or rice.
- Kick off the feast with light and tasty favorites like salads and broth-based soups before diving into the heartier fare.
- Pay attention to what's in the glasses too; consider concocting festive sips with sparkling water and a splash of juice for a refreshing option.²

Sources: 1) <https://learningliftoff.com/k-12-education/school-calendar-and-seasons/9-winter-holidays-around-the-world/>
2) <https://health.osu.edu/wellness/exercise-and-nutrition/healthy-holiday-food-swaps>
3) <https://www.history.com/news/christmas-cookies-history-medieval-tradition>



National Cookie Day

National Cookie Day is December 4th!

It makes sense we would celebrate cookies this month, considering all the baking families tend to do during this festive month. The history of holiday baking – specifically Christmas cookies – dates back centuries. Originating in medieval Europe, these treats evolved from the introduction of spices that became synonymous with the season. Over the years, families have passed down secret recipes, each cookie a delicious chapter in their story. National Cookie Day invites us to not only savor the delightful flavors, but also to appreciate the rich history and shared memories that make Christmas cookies a timeless symbol of togetherness.³

