

shorter than the Gregorian calendar. The celebration starts at the first sighting of the moon in Ramadan. This year, Ramadan happens to fall over the Christmas period.

Muslims cannot eat and drink at all in the daytime during this period, breaking their fast only when the sun sets and again before the sun rises, sharing special Ramadan treats, such as Konafa, an Egyptian dessert made of shredded wheat and syrup, or Katayef, sweets stuffed with nuts. They also eat dates (iftar) which, according to Islamic teachings, were eaten by Mohammed at the end of each day of the fasting month. The days are spent in prayer and reflection.

The fast ends with the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, the festival of the breaking of the fast. Some Muslim governments grant amnesties to political and other prisoners on this day.



Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a cultural festival during which African Americans celebrate and reflect upon their heritage as the products of two worlds. It begins 26th December and lasts for seven days.

Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana “Ron” Karenga, a college professor and African American leader. He studied the festivals of many African groups of people and decided that the new holiday should be a harvest or “first fruits.” Kwanzaa is a Kiswahili word meaning “the first fruits of the harvest.”

Hindu

The 25th December also is considered to be the birthday of the Hindu god, Krishna, as well as Mithra, the Greek god of light.

Wicca

The annual Tree Festival, which had long been celebrated in Northern Europe before the Christian era, is still celebrated among nature-based faiths such as Wicca.

Madmen

There used to be a Festival of Madmen on Christmas day, when servants became masters and masters servants for the day.