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December 2024

Issue 10 48th Year

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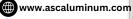


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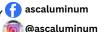




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DECEMBER Major Holidays

¹time.com

hristmas (December 25): Celebrated by Christians to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. It's also widely observed as a secular holiday with traditions like gift-giving and decorating Christmas trees.

Hanukkah (December 18-26, 2024): An eight-day Jewish festival, also known as the Festival of Lights, celebrating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Kwanzaa (December 26 - January 1): A week-long celebration honoring African-American culture and heritage, focusing on seven principles like unity and self-determination.

New Year's Eve (December 31): The final day of the year, celebrated with parties, fireworks, and countdowns to welcome the new year.

Other Notable Observances

t. Nicholas Day (December 6): Honoring the patron saint of children, who inspired the legend of Santa Claus¹.

Bodhi Day (December 8): Celebrated by Buddhists to mark the day Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) attained enlightenment¹.

Winter Solstice (December 21): The shortest day and longest night of the year, celebrated by various cultures with festivals and rituals¹.



Fun and Quirky Days

National Brownie Day (December 4)
National Brownie Day (December 8)
National Ugly Sweater Day (December 20)



December is truly a month filled with joy, reflection, and celebration. Do you have a favorite holiday or tradition in December?



My husband's idea of getting the Christmas spirit is to become Scrooge.

— Melanie White

Keep your friends close, your enemies closer, and receipts for all major purchases. — **Bridger Winegar**

https://www.keepinspiring.me/funny-christmas-quotes/

Anecdotes

ecember is such a fascinating month, filled with a mix of festive cheer, reflections on the past year, and anticipation for the new one. Here are a few anecdotes that capture the spirit of December:



Holiday Traditions: Many families have unique traditions during the holiday season. For instance, some might bake cookies together, while others might go caroling in their neighborhood. One family I know has a tradition of making a new ornament each year to add to their Christmas tree, cre-

know has a tradition of making a new ornament each year to add to their Christmas tree, creating a beautiful timeline of memories.

Winter Adventures: December often brings the first real taste of winter. I remember hearing about a group of friends who decided to go on a spontaneous road trip to a snowy mountain. They ended up getting snowed in at a cozy cabin, turning what could have been a stressful situation into a memorable adventure filled with laughter, board games, and hot cocoa.

Acts of Kindness: The holiday season often inspires people to give back. There was a story about a community that came together to surprise a local family in need. They organized a secret Santa event, collecting gifts and essentials, and delivered them anonymously. The joy and gratitude from the family were heartwarming and brought the community closer together.

New Year's Eve: The anticipation of New Year's Eve is always exciting. One memorable anecdote involves a couple who decided to get married on New Year's Eve. They wanted to start the new year as a married couple, and their wedding was a grand celebration that culminated in a countdown to midnight, making it a double celebration.

Do any of these stories resonate with you, or do you have any December anecdotes of your own to share?

There are some people who want to throw their arms round you simply because it is Christmas; there are other people who want to strangle you simply because it is Christmas.

— Robert Staughton Lynd

I haven't taken my Christmas lights down. They look so nice on the pumpkin.

— Winston Spear

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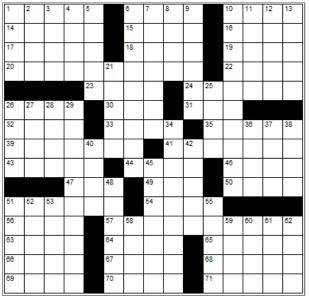


16 🛨 15

ACROSS

- 1. Chronic nag
- 6. Hardly believable
- 10. A dark bluish-red color
- 14. Moor
- 15. Not under
- 16. Religious ceremony
- 17. Liquid bodily waste
- 18. Detective Wolfe
- 19. Leave out
- 20. Neutral
- 22. Game piece
- 23. Disagreeable person
- 24. Is melodramatic
- 26. Capable
- 30. Consumed
- 31. Downturn
- 32. Metal used in steel
- 33. Feces
- 35. Skirmish
- 39. Chuckled
- 41. In the best of all worlds
- 43. Brown shade
- 44. Lack of difficulty
- 46. Stair
- 47. Zero
- 49. East southeast
- 50. Fashion
- 51. Lacking companions
- 54. Tears
- 56. Double-reed woodwind
- 57. Classical music compositions
- 63. Dam
- 64. Infinitesimal amount
- 65. Actor Clark
- 66. Being
- 67. Coagulate
- 68. Food grain
- 69. Marsh plant
- 70. Arid
- 71. Affirmatives









DOWN

- 1. Blackball
- 2. Protagonist
- 3. Precipitation
- 4. Europe's highest
- volcano
- 5. Young seal
- 6. Line on a world map
- 7. Retaliator
- 8. Nothing more than
- 9. Worn away
- 10. Cytoplasm
- 11. Boundary
- 12. Useful

- 21. Angered
 - 25. Rodents
 - 26. Afflicts

13. Distributes

- 27. Scottish hillside
- 28. French for "Wolf"
- 29. Designed
- 34. Squander
- 36. Countertenor
- 37. Sleigh
- 38. Hoopla
- 40. Salute

- 42. Ocean trenches
- 45. Faucet attachment
- 48. Words to a song
- 51. Not upper
- 52. Overweight
- 53. Sound of any kind
- 55. Damp
- 58. Puncture
- 59. Act presumptuously
- 60. Nile bird
- 61. Apart from this
- 62. Adjusts



December Crossword





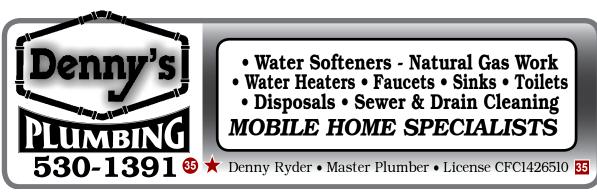














Unique Holiday Foods

Bûche de Noël (France) Also known as the Yule log, this is a traditional Christmas dessert made from sponge cake rolled with cream and decorated to look like a log. It's often adorned with powdered sugar to resemble snow¹.

Shuba (Russia) Known as "herring under a fur coat," this layered salad includes pickled herring, potatoes, carrots, beets, and mayonnaise. It's a staple during the Russian holiday season¹.

Yebeg Wot (Ethiopia) A spicy lamb stew made with berbere spice mix, onions, garlic, and tomatoes, often served with injera, a type of flatbread. It's a popular dish during Ethiopian holidays¹.

Spiced Hot Chocolate (Peru) This rich and creamy hot chocolate is made with spices like cinnamon, cloves, and chili powder, giving it a unique kick. It's often enjoyed during Christmas celebrations¹.

Bibingka (Philippines) A type of rice cake made with coconut milk, sugar, and sometimes topped with cheese or salted eggs. It's traditionally eaten during the Christmas season, especially after attending Simbáng Gabi, a series of early morning masses¹.

Hangikjöt (Iceland) Smoked lamb or mutton, typically served with potatoes in béchamel sauce and pickled red cabbage. This dish is a Christmas favorite in Iceland¹.

Tamales (Mexico) Made from masa (corn dough) filled with meats, cheeses, or sweet fillings, wrapped in corn husks, and steamed. Tamales are a traditional Christmas food in Mexico².

Kutia (Ukraine) A sweet grain pudding made from wheat berries, poppy seeds, honey, and dried fruits. It's an essential dish for Ukrainian Christmas Eve dinner¹.

Janssons Frestelse (Sweden) Also known as Jansson's Temptation, this is a creamy potato casserole with onions and pickled sprats (a type of fish), often served during Christmas¹.

Lechon (Philippines) A whole roasted pig, known for its crispy skin and tender meat, is a centerpiece of Filipino Christmas feasts².

These dishes reflect the rich culinary traditions and cultural diversity of holiday celebrations around the world. Do any of these foods sound particularly intriguing to you?

1 healthline.com 2 discoverwalks.com

"Christmas sweaters are only acceptable as a cry for help."

— Andy Borowitz: resilientstories.com

"Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year."

— Victor Borge keepinspiring.me



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What to say about that 'special' gift

- 1. Hey! There's a gift!
- 2. Well, well, well ...
- 3. Boy, if I had not recently shot up four sizes that would've fit.
- 4. This is perfect for wearing around the basement.
- 5. Gosh. I hope this never catches fire! It is fire season though. There are lots of unexplained fires.
- 6. If the dog buries it, I'll be furious!
- 7. I love it—but I fear the jealousy it will inspire.
- 8. Sadly, tomorrow I enter the Federal Witness Protec—tion Program.
- 9. To think—this is the year I vowed to give all my gifts to charity.
- 10. I really don't deserve this. —From the Internet

Some things we must do alone

nce there was a monk who had studied Zen for many years but had been unable to discover any secrets through his efforts. The monk began to lose heart and question whether there really was anything to discover or learn after all. He was very discouraged. One day he was sent on an errand to a distant city that he reckoned would take him at least six months to complete. He feared that making the trip would be a hindrance to his studies



to complete. He feared that making the trip would be a hindrance to his studies and prevent even the possibility of experiencing a breakthrough and discovering some great truth that remained hidden from him.

He shared his anxieties with a fellow monk, who said, "There is no reason you cannot continue your meditation while you travel. Friend, I will go with you and give you help in every way I can."

One evening while they were traveling together the monk who was seeking the answers to the mysteries of life said to his friend, "Can you not help me with finding these answers?"

"Friend, I am willing to help you in any way I can, but there are some things I cannot help you with; these things you must look after yourself."

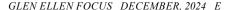
"What are these things I must find out?" the discouraged monk implored.

"For instance," the sympathetic monk said, "When you are hungry or thirsty, my eating of food or drinking will not fill your stomach; you must eat and drink for yourself. No one else can satisfy your needs for these things but yourself."

The words of the sympathetic monk opened the mind of the discouraged monk, and he was overjoyed. The sympathetic monk looked at his friend and said, "My work is done here," and he left the other to continue on his journey alone.

While we all want, need and deserve help along the way, some things we simply have to do for ourselves. — adapted from An Introduction to Zen Buddhism, by D.T. Suzuki





Did You Know?

December 5 marks a significant day in Florida history as it is the anniversary of the day Florida officially became a state in 1845?

December 5, 1962, was the coldest recorded day in Florida history, with a low temperature of 2 degrees Fahrenheit in Tallahassee?

There's a town in Florida called Christmas, and some streets are named after Santa's reindeer?



727-484-7488 220 Bahama St. Venice, FL 34285 Merry Christmas!



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DECEMBER • 2024

Sunday	Monday	Т
1	2	
First Sunday of Advent		
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20	20	Chi
29	30	
		Nev

Glen Ellen

luesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	5	6	7
				Pearl Harbor Remem- brance Day
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ristmas Eve	Christmas			
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v Year's Eve				26 27 28 29 30 31
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Quotable

On Christmas

What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day.

— Phyllis Diller

Many banks have a new kind of Christmas club in operation. The new club helps you save money to pay for last year's gifts.

— Anonymous

I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying, toys not included.

— Bernard Manning

There is a remarkable breakdown of taste and intelligence at Christmas-time. Mature, responsible grown men wear neckties made of holly leaves and drink alcoholic beverages with raw egg yolks and cottage cheese in them.

— P.J. O'Rourke

Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall.

— Larry Wilde

A lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunder¬storm, and we all go through it together.

— Garrison Keillor

If all the year were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work.

— William Shakespeare

On kindness

Kindness is the ability to love people more than they deserve.

— Anonymous

On the past

The past always looks better than it was. It's only pleasant because it isn't here.

— Peter Finley Dunne (Mr. Dooley)

On the future

The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.

— Abraham Lincoln

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Wearing your heart upon your sleeve

You've probably heard the phrase 'to wear one's heart on one's sleeve' ... but what does it mean? It usually describes someone who displays their innermost feelings openly.

The expression can be traced back to the medieval days of chivalry, according to R. Brasch in That Takes the Cake. Knights who were to fight each other in a tournament wanted everyone to know for whom they fought. That's why they conspicuously wore something the lady they favored had given them as a token of her affection. Often this was a ribbon, scarf or handkerchief. The knight would then pin or tie the treasured gift to his sleeve. Hence, the saying that he wore his heart or his heart's desire on his sleeve was born.

Saving energy on laundry

omewhere around 90 percent of the energy used to do laundry is used for heating the water, according to EnergySavers.gov (www.energysavers.gov). To save energy while you're washing the family clothes you can use cold water or use less water. And unless you're dealing with oily stains, the warm or cold setting on your wash-



ing machine will clean your clothes just fine. Just switching your energy setting from hot to warm can save a lot—it cuts the energy used for a load of laundry by 50 percent.

Below are some additional laundry tips from EnergySavers.gov:

- Wash your clothes in cold water and use cold water detergents whenever possible.
- Wash and dry full loads. If you do wash a smaller load, change the water-level setting.
- Dry towels and other heavier cottons separately from lighter clothing.
- Don't overdry. Use the moisture sensor on your machine if you have one.
- Clean the lint filter in your dryer after every load.
- Use the cool down cycle to allow clothes to finish drying with residual heat in the dryer.
- Check your dryer vent periodically to make sure it's not blocked. This will save energy and prevent fires.
- Dry your clothes on a clothesline or drying rack.

On experience

Experience is a good school, but the fees are high.

— Heinrich Heine

On youth

Never have I enjoyed my youth so thoroughly as I have in my old age.

— George Santayana



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Holiday traditions

I oliday traditions are such a delightful part of the season! They bring a sense of joy and togetherness. Here are a few popular holiday traditions that many people cherish:



Decorating the Christmas Tree: This is often a family affair, with everyone pitching in to hang ornaments, string lights, and place the star or angel on top. Some families even have a special ornament that gets added each year.

Baking and Sharing Treats: From cookies to pies, baking is a beloved tradition. Many families have recipes that have been passed down through generations. Sharing these treats with neighbors and friends spreads the holiday cheer.

Advent Calendars: Counting down the days to Christmas with an advent calendar is a fun way to build anticipation. Some calendars have chocolates, small gifts, or even activities to do each day.

Holiday Lights Tour: Taking a drive or walk to see the holiday lights in your neighborhood or city can be magical. Some places even have light shows set to music.

Gift Giving: Exchanging gifts is a central part of many holiday celebrations. Secret Santa or White Elephant gift exchanges add an element of surprise and fun.

Watching Holiday Movies: Curling up with a blanket and watching classic holiday movies is a cozy tradition. Favorites might include "It's a Wonderful Life," "Home Alone," or "Elf."

Volunteering and Acts of Kindness: Many people use the holiday season as a time to give back. Volunteering at a local shelter, donating to toy drives, or simply helping a neighbor can make the season brighter for everyone.

My mother-in-law has come round to our house at Christmas seven years running. This year we're having a change. We're going to let her in.

— Leslie 'Les' Dawson, Jr.

The principal advantage of the non-parental lifestyle is that on Christmas Eve you need not be struck dumb by the three most terrifying words that the government allows to be printed on any product: 'Some assembly required.'

—John Leo

https://www.keepinspiring.me/funny-christmas-quotes/

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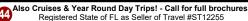
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Tree safety for the holidays

Buying and decorating a tree during the holiday season is often a beloved activity. This tradition can be a fun and memorable experience. However, while a real tree can add real enjoyment to your holiday, you should keep in mind the following safety tips from the National Safety Council to prevent fires and other safety hazards associated with Christmas trees.



- Trees can be fire hazards. Annually more than 400 fires involve Christmas trees, with nearly 40 deaths and 100 injuries resulting from those fires.
- Look for fresh, green trees. Pines and spruces should have flexible needles that do not break—and they should be hard to pull off the branches. Fresh fir needles will snap when they are bent, like a fresh carrot.
- Don't let your tree dry out. Before you put the tree in its stand, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk so that it can "drink." Then secure the tree in a stand filled with water. And—this is important—keep the stand filled with water as the tree "drinks" it, so that the tree can remain as green and supple as possible.
- Place your tree strategically away from heat sources, such as fireplaces, radiators and registers. (You'll also want to make sure that your tree doesn't block exits and doorways.)
- When purchasing lights, make sure you only buy indoor lights for your tree—and make sure that the lights have the Underwriters Laboratory label on them.
- Don't plug more than three cords into a single extension cord. Keep the extension cords against the wall, so that people don't trip over them—but do not run them under rugs.
- Always turn off all Christmas lights (on your trees and in your house) before you leave or go to bed.
- When decorating the top of your tree, always use a good step stool or ladder. Don't apply decoration that is sprayed or comes from a jar until you thoroughly read the directions.
- Don't place candles near your tree.
- Be careful not to hang ornaments in low places where children and pets might have access to them. Small ornaments could be a choking hazard, and breakable ornaments could cause injury.
- If you buy an artificial tree, make sure it's fire resist-ant and tested. If lights are built into the tree, make sure the tree has a label from the Underwriters Laboratory.



Nothing's as mean as giving a little child something useful for Christmas.

— Kin Hubbard

https://www.keepinspiring.me/funny-christmas-quotes/

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EVENTS & PROGRAMS

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Big Sale Doral Village Lot 493 December 6-8th 8am - 2pm. Hand Tools Housewares Clothing

Annual Craft Fair. Handmade items and bake sale. December 7th, 8am-2pm. East Bay Oaks Clubhouse. 601 Starkey Road, Largo

ART/CRAFT SHOW, Saturday, 12/07, 9am-1pm. Amber Glades MHP, 3113 St. Rd. 580, Safety Harbor.

Ranch Mobile Park, Park-Wide Yard Sale, Saturday, December 7th, 8:00am - 2:00pm at: 6800 - 150th Ave. N., Clearwater (Largo).

CRAFT SHOW, BAKE SALE and RAFFLE. Saturday December 7th, 9:00-1:00. Southwind MHC, 795 County Road 1, Palm Harbor. 440.227.5906

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EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Annual Carport sale, Lincolnshire Estates: 1071 Donegan Rd., Largo FL 33771. Saturday January 11th 8AM to 1PM. Over 50 homes: housewares, arts & crafts, clothes, furniture, tools and lots more. Maps available at entrances.

Rummage & Bake Sale: 1/11/24 8AM-Noon Golden Crest Clubhouse, 800 Main St. Dunedin

Lincolnshire Estates Annual Bazaar will be held Saturday Feb 1st, 8AM to 1PM- 1071 Donegan Rd, Largo. Furniture, tools, jewelry, housewares, bake sale, nick-nacks, linens. Appliances, silent auction, breakfast, and lunch for purchase.

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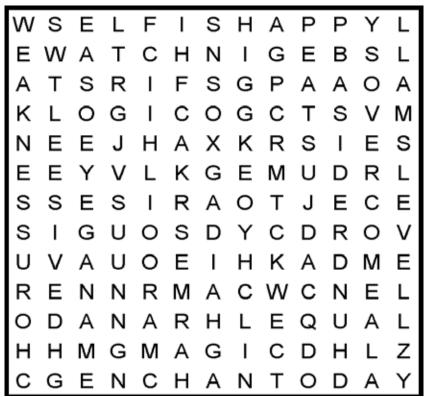
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www.usa.gov/scams-and-fraud

Identity Theft

Warning signs of identity theft

- Bills for items you did not buy
- Debt collection calls for accounts you did not open
- Information on your credit report for accounts you did not open
- Denials of loan applications
- · Mail stops coming to, or is missing from, your mailbox

How to report identity theft

To report identity theft, contact:

- The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) online at IdentityTheft.gov or call 1-877-438-4338
- The three major credit reporting agencies. Ask them to place fraud alerts and a credit freeze on your accounts.
- The fraud department at your credit card issuers, bank, and other places where you have accounts

How to protect yourself from identity theft

- Do not answer phone calls, texts, social media messages, or email from numbers or people you do not know.
- Do not share personal information like your bank account number, Social Security number, or date of birth.
- Collect your mail every day and place a hold on your mail when you will be on vacation or away from your home.
- Review credit card and bank account statements. Watch for and report unauthorized or suspicious transactions.
- Understand how ATM skimming works and how to protect yourself
- · Learn when it is safe to use a public Wi-Fi network
- Store personal information, including your Social Security card, in a safe place. Do not carry it in your wallet.

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- Government imposter scams Unless you contact them first, government agencies typically initiate communication with you by letter. Unexpected contact or demands through any other method may be a scam.
- IRS imposter scams scammers pretend you owe the IRS money for taxes and may threaten legal action
- Social Security imposter scams scammers claim there is a problem with your Social Security account or promise to increase your benefits
- Charity scams scammers pretend to be from a real or fake charity and try to get you to contribute
- Grandparent scams scammers pretend to be a grandchild or other relative who needs emergency financial help
- Tech support scams scammers tell you your computer's security is at risk and try to remotely access your device and steal personal information or ask for payment
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