



Kwanzaa

Meaning:

Kwanzaa is a Swahili word that means "first" and signifies the first fruits of the harvest

When:

December 26th - January 1st (7 days for the 7 Principles)

History:

Maulana Karenga, professor and chairman of Africana Studies at California State University, first created Kwanzaa in 1966. He created this holiday in response to the Watts Riots in Los Angeles in 1965 as a way to bring African-Americans together as a community and celebrate African Heritage, unity, and culture.

Greeting:

Habari gani - Swahili for "What is the news"

Principles:

The primary symbols of Kwanzaa are the seven candles (Mishumaa Sabaa), which represent the seven principles.

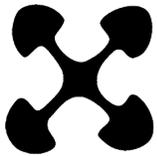
Day 1 - Umoja (Unity) - To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.



Day 2 - Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) - To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.



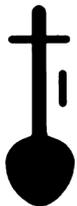
Day 3 - Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) - To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and solve them together.



Day 4 - Ujamaa: Cooperative Economics - To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.



Day 5 - Nia: Purpose - To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.



Day 6 - Kuumba: Creativity - To always do as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.



Day 7 - Imani: Faith - To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.



Primary Symbols:

The primary symbols of Kwanzaa are the seven candles (Mishumaa Sabaa), which represent the seven principles. The candle holder (Kinara), unity cup (Kikombe cha Umoja), placemat (Mkeka), crops (Mazao), corn (Muhindi), and gifts (Zawadi)

1. Mazao: Crops - Mazao symbolizes the fruits of collective planning and work, and the resulting joy, sharing, unity and thanksgiving part of African harvest festivals. To demonstrate mazao, people place nuts, fruits, and vegetables, representing work, on the mkeka.
2. Mkeka: Place Mat - Just as the crops stand on the mkeka, the present day stands on the past. The mkeka symbolizes the historical and traditional foundation for people to stand on and build their lives.
3. Muhindi: Ear of Corn - The stalk of corn represents fertility and the idea that through children, the future hopes of the family are brought to life. One vibunzi is placed on the mat for every child in the family.
4. Mishumaa Saba: The Seven Candles - Candles are ceremonial objects that serve to symbolically re-create the sun's power, as well as to provide light. There are three red candles, three green candles, and one black candle that are placed on the kinara.
5. Kinara: The Candleholder - The kinara represents our ancestry, and the original stalk from which we came.
6. Kikombe Cha Umoja: The Unity Cup - On the sixth day of Kwanzaa, the libation ritual is performed to honor the ancestors. Every family member and guest will take a drink together as a sign of unity and remembrance.
7. Zawadi: Gifts - On the seventh day of Kwanzaa, gifts are given to encourage growth, achievement, and success. Handmade gifts are encouraged to promote self-determination, purpose, and creativity.

Songs:

[Emage Happy Kwanzaa](#)

[Teddy Pendergrass - Happy Kwanzaa](#)

Videos:

[What is Kwanzaa? How is Kwanzaa Celebrated?](#)

[Sesame Street: Kwanzaa](#)

[PBS LEARNING MEDIA | Kwanzaa | PBS KIDS](#)

[Afro-One Dancers Kwanzaa Celebration](#)

[Sesame Street: Kwanzaa Dancing With Elmo](#)

[Kevin's Kwanzaa | Children's Books Read Aloud](#)

Local Celebrations:

- Sunday, December 12, 2021- Kwanzaa Celebration at ROC Holiday Village - Presented by the Rochester Kwanzaa Coalition <https://rocholidayvillage.com/holiday-celebrations/>