

Holiday Celebration Readiness Reference Sheet

The holiday season is one of the most exciting and meaningful times of the year. With so many different celebrations happening, understanding & honoring these traditions isn't just thoughtful - it's essential. This information sheet is designed to offer a quick reference to deepen cultural awareness, connect authentically with guests & help create exceptional holiday experiences.

Understanding Major Holidays

Christmas

- Celebrated on December 25th as both a Christian religious holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus & a secular tradition of joy & togetherness.
- Key traditions include gift-giving, decorating & family gatherings.
- Often associated with Santa Claus & other similar cultural figures.

Hanukkah

- The Jewish *Festival of the Lights* celebrating the miracle of oil lasting eight days during the rededication of the Second Temple.
- Traditions include lighting the menorah for 8 nights, playing dreidel & enjoying foods cooked in oil.
- Symbolizes resilience & the importance of family & faith.

Kwanzaa

- Celebrated from December 26th to January 1st, honoring African American heritage & culture.
- Features the Kinara with seven candles, each representing principles like unity, creativity, purpose & faith.
- Includes storytelling, music & dance to strengthen cultural pride and community.

Winter Solstice

- Marks the shortest day & longest night of the year, celebrated on December 21st or 22nd.
- Traditions like decorating evergreens with lights & decorations symbolizes endurance & hope.
- An additional inclusive way of referencing the holiday season.

New Year's Eve

- A global celebration on December 31st, welcoming a fresh start to the new year.
- Festivities include fireworks, parties & making resolutions.
- Singing "Auld Lang Syne" (meaning "times long past") to ring in the new year is a tradition based on a 1788 Scottish poem.

Three Kings Day (January 6th)

- Celebrates the visit of the three wise men to honor the newborn Jesus.
- Traditions include gift-giving & enjoying *Rosca de Reyes*, a sweet bread shaped like a crown & decorated with dried "jewel" fruits.
- Marks the joyful conclusion of the holiday season in many Latin American cultures.

Chinese New Year

- Marks the start of the lunar calendar in late January or early February.
- Traditions focus on good fortune, health & prosperity, with red decorations & family feasts.
- Celebrations often include fireworks, dragon dances & large joyous gatherings.

Tips for Delivering Memorable Service During the Holiday Season

1. Pay Attention to Visual Cues:

Observe guest attire, accessories, or decorations (e.g., pins, holiday sweaters, or luggage tags) that might indicate their holiday traditions.

2. Engage in Friendly Conversation:

Ask open-ended questions like, "Are you celebrating anything special during your visit?" to encourage guests to share their plans or traditions.

3. Personalize the Experience

Offer information, tips & suggestions based on observations & information gathered from conversations to enhance the guest's experience.

4. Anticipate Needs

Stay one step ahead by offering thoughtful touches like warm greetings, directions to holiday events, or a simple extra like a map or offer to take a group photo.

5. Discover & Delight

Uncover opportunities to surprise guests with thoughtful, unexpected & personalized touches or experiences that exceed expectations.



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