



# Health & Safety



## Americans still love Christmas

Christmas is still a favorite holiday in America, even though the religious observation of it is slipping a bit.

According to the Pew Research Center, nine in 10 Americans celebrate Christmas. For Christians, it is still a major holiday, with 95 percent of Christians celebrating it.

Far fewer Americans observe it as a religious day, in which they celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, or Jesus the Savior. Just 46 percent of Americans say they keep Christmas as a religious, rather than a public, holiday. Still, 66 percent believe the Christmas story is an actual historic event.

The percentage who believe the four main points of the Christmas story has shrunk somewhat. In 2014, 65 percent of Americans believed the four points of the Christmas story: Jesus was born of a virgin; laid in a manger; wise men were guided by a star to Jesus; and an angel announced the birth to shepherds. Today, that number is 57 percent.

## An ounce of prevention for the winter season

If you were asked to name the most important day in December, Christmas or Hanukkah would probably come to mind. Certainly these events dominate the month.

But there is another day, a significant day, a day dreaded by anyone trying to run an organization in colder climes.

December 21 is the first day of winter. In many parts of the country, that means snow and ice. Before that big storm inevitably hits, there are steps you can take to ensure you make it to work.

\* First: think about your car. It may seem obvious that it needs a strong battery and good antifreeze, but those are also easy to put off. Get a tune-up to ensure that the car will start in cold weather.

\* Alternate transportation. In heavy snow, sometimes only four-wheel drive vehicles can get through. Make arrangements now with someone who has one. If all else fails, call in to your workplace. They may be able to send someone to pick you up.

\* Alternate child care. When snow is deep, daycare centers will sometimes close. Arrange now for a backup to take care of your child so you can go to work.

\* Your home. Take steps to prevent home emergencies. Wrap pipes that may freeze with heat tape. Have your heating system checked so it doesn't go out at the worst possible time. Think of any other type of emergency that could occur.

\* Personal. Be prepared with non-slip boots, walk with care, and use hand rails on steps.

Holidays should be happy days — and they will be happier if you have taken steps to ensure you'll have no problems in December and the rest of the winter season.



## The CBD craze focuses on untested claims

You've likely seen a crush of ads and stores selling CBD oil the past couple of years. And it's understandable that, with its origins in the cannabis family, you may have assumed the buzz had to do with ... a buzz.

But don't light your patchouli candle just yet. The interest in CBD oil is largely rooted in its supposed, but largely untested, medicinal purposes.

CBD is a non-intoxicating extract from the Cannabis sativa family of plants, which includes hemp and marijuana. According to The Duke Perspective, it's one of a family of chemicals known as cannabinoids, which have supposed anti-inflammatory, antipsychotic, anti-anxiety, and anticonvulsant properties.

The high associated with the cannabis plant comes from THC, which comes from different parts of the plant than those from which CBD oil is derived. In 2017, the World Health Organization suggested that CBD not be considered a drug, and cannabidiol is not listed on the U.S. Controlled Substances Act, while THC and marijuana are.

Likewise, in 2018 Congress lifted a ban on growing hemp, which means licensed farmers can now grow the plant as long as it contains less than 0.3 percent THC, according to WebMD. And hence, the explosion in businesses selling CBD oil in everything from cookies and lotion to dog treats.

But, buyers beware.

First, according to the journal Karger, labeling on

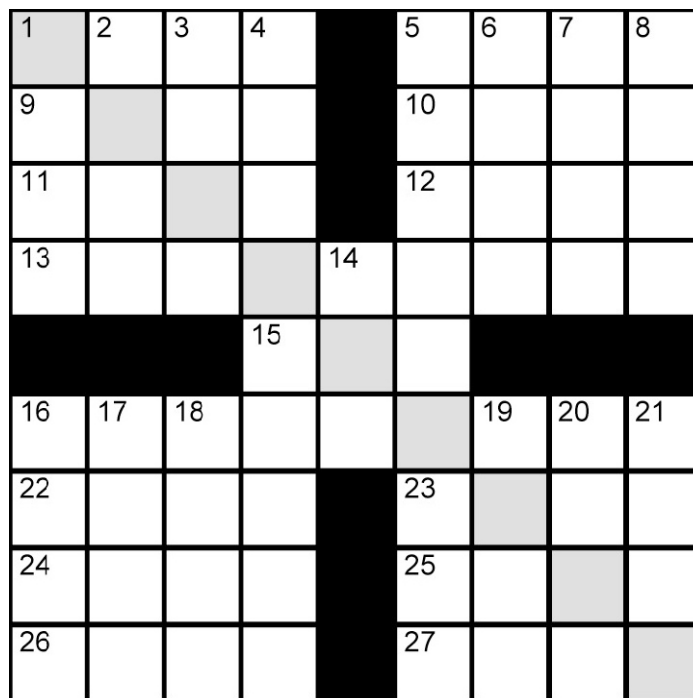
### Across

1. Attend
5. While lead-in
9. Tennessee's state flower
10. Indian butter
11. Stanza units
12. Affirmative votes
13. Ripped to pieces
15. Polo Grounds legend
16. Composers of sacred songs
22. "Beat it!"
23. Water buffalo
24. Caroled
25. Hounds
26. Plural pronoun
27. Healthful retreats

### Down

1. Present
2. Hydrox rival
3. Cake layer
4. Medical students might bone up on this course?
5. People from Cairo
6. Perlman of "Cheers"
7. Burn the surface of
8. Reason to cram
14. Money dispenser
16. Call to attention
17. Former Iranian ruler

## Season's Felicitations



18. Top-notch
19. Polaroid
20. Forum wear
21. Back talk

[Click Here to Get a Peek At the Answers](#)

*The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.*

unregulated CBD products is often wrong. It can contain high levels of THC, despite claims to the contrary, and those who are drug tested on their jobs, should avoid all CBD products.

Karger also found that CBD products were often contaminated with molds, metals, pesticides, and bacteria.

Wild claims for CBD are everywhere. Nearly all claims for CBD oil are not supported (yet) by clinical testing. But many clinical trials are in the works.

One claim for the use of CBD oil is currently in clinical trial and seems to be encouraging. In children with the epileptic disease Dravet Syndrome, CBD seems to be a good therapy.

But, claims for cures for cancer, Alzheimer's, dementia, and more are utterly unproven.



"Tell Santa that Rudolph's check engine light is on."

## Kid-friendly Meatless Mondays

As the world turns its attention to more plant-based menu options, "Meatless Monday" has become a regular in the dinner rotation. But that can be surprisingly tricky when kids are involved. Sure, mac n' cheese is easy enough. But what else?

Thankfully, there's no shortage of ideas online, and Epicurious is among those with dozens of suggestions. Next time you need some kid-friendly vegetarian options, consider these:

- \* Cauliflower-carrot cheesy tot: a variation on the tater tot that looks so similar, you just might fool 'em. Plus they're cheesy. Plus ketchup.

- \* Fresh corn quiche: a store-bought pie shell makes it easy, and the custard with fresh corn kernels makes it delicious.

- \* Flatbread caprese: cherry tomatoes and fresh mozzarella on a homemade or store-bought flatbread. Move over, kids.

- \* Jackfruit tacos: what fruit? When ripe, jackfruit resembles a mango or banana-type flavor. Unripe, some have described it as asparagus-like; scores of vegans apparently liken the unripe version to pulled pork, according to Epicurious. Regardless, try it in a taco shell with salsa and guacamole.

- \* Air fryer crispy herbed chickpeas: an addictively crunchy snack.

- \* Ramen noodles with miso pesto: a cilantro-miso sauce provides plenty of interesting flavors. Plus everything turns green.

- \* Broccoli cheese soup: comfort food, with broccoli thrown in.

- \* Baked pasta Norma: a Sicilian classic with fried eggplant, tomatoes, and basil tossed with short pasta.

- \* Sweet potato fritters with poached eggs and avocado: the presentation of a foodie in a kid-friendly dish.

## Mistletoe winds its way through human history

Being kissed under the mistletoe has been a Christmas tradition for more than a thousand years. But mistletoe is not only associated with a gentle kiss, it has a lore all its own.

Mistletoe is a parasitic plant that lives off trees. It has attracted human attention for thousands of years because, in the depth of winter, it is green. That made it a natural for legend and ritual, especially fertility rituals.

The actual kissing under the plant may have begun with the Greeks in their agricultural festival, according to The Wall Street Journal, but its kissing properties continue to this day where, as the old song puts it, we can see mama kissing Santa Claus.

To the ancient Scandinavians, mistletoe symbolized peace. Enemies meeting under the mistletoe declared a truce until the following day. On a more domestic note, disgruntled spouses kissed and made up under the greenery.

The Druids believed mistletoe possessed magical powers. Their priests cut the plant with golden sickles and gathered the trimmings on white cloth so the plant would never touch the earth and lose its enchantment.

The French didn't like it. They said mistletoe was cursed because it grew on

the wood from which the cross of Christ was made and that it was doomed to be a rootless parasite forever.

In the Middle Ages, mistletoe was hung from ceilings in Europe to ward off evil, or it was dangled over doors to pre-

vent the entrance of witches. If mistletoe was suspended over a crib, the child was said to be safe from kidnapping.

Viking lore describes the goddess of love, Frigga, who made each plant and animal promise not to kill her son Baldur. She forgot the mistletoe plant and Baldur was killed by a spear made from it. The white berries on the mistletoe are said to have been created from her tears.

When her son returned to life, Frigga pro-

claimed the mistletoe to be sacred. She kissed everyone who passed under it and decreed the plant should henceforth bring love. This is said to be the origin of kissing under the mistletoe.

So go ahead. Kiss under the mistletoe, have fun doing it, and give a nod to Frigga for starting a very enjoyable custom.



## Talk about a bunch of Scrooges!

In colonial New England it was once decreed that anyone found feasting, celebrating, or acting frivolous on the sacred day of December 25 would be fined five shillings.

Begging the question as to exactly how many times you could chuckle before it was frivolous.



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# December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Advent begins	2 National Mutt Day	3	4 Rockefeller Ctr Christmas	5 Nat'l Christmas	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Full Moon	13	14
15	16 Las Posadas	17	18	19	20	21 Winter begins
22 Hanukkah Begins	23	24	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Year's Eve				

## In 1776, the fate of America turned on the Christmas Crossing

At Christmastime in 1776, George Washington's troops were in retreat, barely keeping ahead of the Redcoats. The Revolution was in great danger of collapsing.

Washington's troops had reached Trenton on the Delaware River on Dec. 2. Gathering every boat they could find so the British couldn't follow, they crossed the river into Pennsylvania. Washington expected the British to attack when the river froze, but they delayed.

The American troops were described by an enemy officer as "dying of the cold, without blankets, and very ill-supplied with provisions." Meanwhile, some 1,000 Hessians, German professional soldiers, had arrived in Trenton.

With morale crumbling, one fiery supporter of the Revolution refused to despair. Thomas

Paine, author of *Common Sense*, had written a new essay, the first in a series he called *The American Crisis*. It was published on Dec. 19. The troops were inspired as they read:

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

Washington formed an audacious plan. He would cross the

Delaware some nine miles north of Trenton and surprise the garrison. The Hessian commander said the Patriots were just farmers, and he never prepared for an attack.

The crossing began at 6 p.m. on Dec. 25. After nine hours,

the last boatload of men and cannons were on the shore. Then came the nine-mile ordeal through freezing wind and hail to reach Trenton.

Washington and his men attacked the Hessians shortly after dawn, surprising them completely. It was over in two hours with nearly 900 taken prisoner. The Americans suffered few casualties.

The Christmas victory at Trenton marked a turning point of the American Revolution. The effect on troop morale was tremendous, because they had taken on the King's

forces and won. As word of the victory spread, confidence in Washington and in the Revolution was revived. Once written off as beaten, Americans fought on and won.

