

December is **Universal Human Rights Month**

You can find the best resources by clicking the name above.

December 5 - **International Volunteer Day**

Thank you to all who volunteer their time and services! Expressing your gratitude can have ripple effects - for you, your loved ones, and even strangers. **Be sure to thank someone today.**

December 6 - **St. Nicholas Day**

As a patron saint, St. Nicholas was very generous and well known for giving to others. Do something kind or charitable today.

December 21 - **Winter Starts**

It's the shortest day and longest night of the year. What a wonderful night to **drive around and look at Christmas lights!**

December 25 - **Christmas**

Gift a membership to the Y with a YMCA Gift Card! A gift they can enjoy all year.

December 26 - **Kwanzaa**

Bring some good luck to the table with these easy **Benne Cakes**.

December 31 - **New Year's Eve**

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." ~ C.S. Lewis

What are your New Year goals and dreams?

FOOD & DRINK

What's in season? Parsnip, turnips, celery root, winter squash, cauliflower, romanesco, Brussels sprouts, chestnuts, horseradish, kumquats, ugli fruit, kiwi, mandarins, Meyer lemons, beets, collard greens, kale, and rutabaga.

Warm-up your ovens and start your holiday baking on December 4, **National Cookie Day**. If you're taking the healthy route, [Cooking Light](#) has some great recipes. #NationalCookieDay

Post for December 13 - Nothing tastes better on a cold winter day than a delicious cup of hot cocoa. [Celebrate with one](#) on National Cocoa Day! #NationalCocoaDay

National Maple Syrup Day is December 17. Toss tomatoes with maple syrup, roast, and pair with goat cheese and crusty bread for a phenomenal treat. #NationalMapleSyrupDay

Beets are in season, and this [beet hummus](#) will make a healthy and festive-looking appetizer for the holidays. Serve with fresh veggies and pita.

There's nothing better to remind you of the holiday season than freshly roasted chestnuts. Just be sure to score them before roasting, or they'll explode!

Ring in the New Year with [Finger Foods](#) and spend less time on the dishes. #NewYear2022

Transport yourself to the tropics with this [tropical fruit parfait](#) with make-ahead granola for a grab-and-go breakfast!

Avocado, Granny Smith Apple, Green Onion, and Kiwi Salad? Yes, please! Chop up one of each and combine with 2 Tbsp lime juice, 1 Tbsp oil, ½ tsp honey, ½ tsp salt, and a ¼ tsp pepper. If you're feeling spicy, add some thinly sliced jalapeno.



LIFESTYLE

Roadway Safety: Watch out for deer at dusk and dawn. Use your high beams, scan the roadways frequently, and if you see a deer in the road, slow down, but do not swerve!

Are you prepared for an emergency? [Good Housekeeping](#) has prepared a list of the best items to include in an emergency kit. #BePrepared

Have a humidifier? You might be releasing mold spores into your home if you are not cleaning it regularly. Get in the habit of cleaning your machine as recommended!

Hear the beep where you sleep! Every bedroom needs a working smoke alarm because half of home fire deaths happen between 11 pm and 7 am.

Are you planning a trip home to see family this holiday or taking a memorable trip? [Learn what protocols are in place before you board the plane.](#)

Is sitting in the same chair for hours causing you back pain? Try these [13 lower back stretches](#) that can provide relief!

Do you decorate for Christmas before or after Thanksgiving? Now you can justify why you start so early. [It's good for you!](#)

Are the fruit juices you're drinking at the local juicer a good choice? [Real Simple](#) breaks it down for you. #choosewisely

Live Christmas trees can be hazardous to your home. Remember to keep them watered, as a dry and thirsty tree is a house fire waiting to happen!



COMMUNITY

We like these [plantable pencils!](#) Once they are too short to write with, simply plant and watch them grow into flowers, herbs, or vegetables!

Things to do on Green Monday (December 13):

- Go meatless for the day - try veggie pizzas, meatless meatballs, or black bean burgers.
 - Instead of buying all the things you want, donate that money to a charity of your choice.
 - Make a conscious effort to use less water and be greener.
 - Buy something green! LED lightbulbs, glass food storage containers, a smart home thermostat, or green cleaning products are good options.
 - Spread awareness by using the hashtags #GreenMonday #ShopGreen
-

Trending: a new exercise called Plogging. It's an eco-friendly workout that combines jogging and picking up litter and is considered a form of cardio and strength. Just bring two plastic bags, one for trash and one for the recyclables!

Be eco-conscious this Christmas and choose to use a [100% recyclable gift wrap.](#)

Affordable? ✓ Ethical? ✓ All the feels? ✓ Check out these [Gifts That Do Good.](#) There's also a list for all your [workout friends!](#)

Simple ways to show gratitude:

- Have a pizza or food delivered to your local firehouse
- Write a positive review online
- Leave a note of appreciation to the person who cleans your office
- Treat the person in line behind you to their morning coffee
- Thank your significant other for making dinner, running the vacuum, or washing dishes



HEALTH

If you're exhausted after a busy day, try turning up the tunes! Listening to your favorite songs can help you push through mental fatigue and improve your workouts or run performance.

Healthy Holiday Tip: Instead of using a single hand towel for guests, use disposable towels for parties and events. #germfree #fluseason #COVID #health #wellness

Dreaming of a creamy, healthy salad dressing? Whisk in some plain Greek yogurt to your recipe!

Cinnamon is the flavor of the season, but did you know that it offers many [health benefits](#), including anti-inflammatory?

Get a serving of veg at breakfast by adding shredded carrots to your oatmeal. For an extra tasty bowl, **sprinkle it with cinnamon and walnuts.**

Health Tip: Keep your shades handy. Just because summer is long gone doesn't mean you need to stow your sunglasses away. Sensitivity to glare can lead to painful and dry eyes.

What wellness practices make you feel best?

Eating plant-based food is good for your health as well as the planet. **What are some of your favorite products?**

Study after study shows that mindfulness meditation can lower stress and improve health. Use an app to help **cultivate mindfulness** throughout your day.



PARENTING

If overindulging for the holidays is causing your stomach to be upset, **sip on some peppermint or ginger tea**. It could be just what you need to soothe digestive discomfort!

Here's a homemade gift idea that your kids can make - [birdseed ornaments!](#)

Pinecones make excellent [Christmas ornaments](#). Collect them from outside, then decorate with pom-poms, glitter, or **let your kids' creativity shine through!**

December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month. Ensure that the toys you give suit the child's age, skills, and abilities, especially for infants and children under age three.

Have a Christmas movie marathon. Make some hot chocolate, bundle up in some blankets, and watch your family's favorites.

"Wingardium Leviosa." **Do something magical** and test your kids' knowledge of [Harry Potter spells](#). Also, fun for adults!

Have a story night with your children and read *The Baker's Dozen: A Saint Nicholas Tale*.

Spend time with your kids making a [classic paper snowflake!](#) Then hang them in a window to create a stained-glass appearance when the sun shines through.

When it's too cold to get outside, **bake up a batch of [Gingerbread cutouts](#)** and have the kids decorate them.

Bundle up, get outside and explore the skies! Sign up for [text notifications](#) from NASA, and they'll let you know when the Space Station can be visible in your area.

MEMBERSHIP

It's cold and dark, but you can always warm up at the Y! Check out our winter class schedule. *(Link to URL with class schedule)*

"If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you." The Y offers many exciting classes for all fitness levels. Come check us out!

Are you bored with your current cardio routine? [Consider swimming.](#) With so many great health benefits, you'll wonder why you've never been to the pool at our Y.

Friendly Reminder: It's time to start collecting those coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for local shelters. Put up signs, advertise on your social channels, and spread the word!

Host an online cookie recipe swap for **National Cookie Day!** Ask members to share their favorite recipes for all to enjoy.

Donating to your local Y provides emergency services to communities in need, including outreach to isolated seniors. Here's how you can help: *(insert your YMCA URL to the page with information)*

What are your new year's resolutions? How about joining the YMCA! You'll have access to state-of-the-art equipment, fitness classes, youth development programs, childcare services, personal trainers, and so much more! Learn more by visiting *(insert your YMCA URL to page with more information).*



TRIVIA

Three of Santa's reindeer's names begin with the letter "D." What are those names?

Answer: Dancer, Dasher, and Donner

How many hours of sunlight are in the Antarctic Circle on December 21?

Answer: 24 hours. The Arctic Circle sees 24 hours of darkness.

What's the most popular homemade cookie?

Answer: No surprise here! Chocolate chip ranks number one, followed by peanut butter and oatmeal raisin.

How many years does a maple tree take before it is big enough to tap?

Answer: 40 years

In the movie, *It's A Wonderful Life*, what happens every time a bell rings?

Answer: An angel got his wings

What are the colors of Kwanzaa?

Answer: Red, black, and green. Black for the people, red for the noble blood that unites all people of African ancestry, and green for the rich land of Africa.

How many gifts in total were given in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song?

Answer: 364

Who said, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear?"

Answer: Buddy the Elf



INSPIRATION

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold.”

~ Aristotle

Is it time to make a new playlist to keep you motivated through the Winter? Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music Limited are great places to start.

“What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year.”

~ Vern McLellan

“Just remember, the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.”

~ Santa Claus

“It’s only cold if you’re standing still.” Warm-up this winter at the Y!

May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve.

“I don’t have time” is the grown-up equivalent to “the dog ate my homework.” Get to the Y today!

“I just like to smile. Smiling’s my favorite.”

~ Buddy the Elf

“What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas ... perhaps ... means a little bit more!”

~ The Grinch



VIDEO

Have your Nutritionist or dietitian answer the following question: I'm usually not hungry in the morning. **Is it ok to skip breakfast?**

Trending: Have your Nutritionist or dietitian explain the **Nordic diet** and the pros and cons.

Have a class instructor answer, "How can I motivate myself to get to the Y during winter?"

Google is giving away Free \$\$\$! [LEARN MORE](#)