



December 2015
Holidays / Celebrations Recognition
in the United States Virgin Islands

December

St. Croix Crucian Christmas Carnival ... December - January

Christmas Day ... Friday, December 25th

Boxing Day ... Saturday, December 26th

Kwanzaa ... Saturday, December 26th - Friday, January 1st

*Holidays observed by the United States Virgin Islands
strengthen an important process in the development of the territory.*

Compliments of:
Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

ST. CROIX CRUCIAN CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL

It's that time of the year again! The St. Croix Crucian Christmas Carnival will be celebrating its 63rd Carnival Celebration with the theme "Past, Present & Future Scenes, St. Croix Carnival 2015- 2016".

Between Christmas and New Year, there will be activities in both Christiansted and Frederiksted including calypso shows, Latin music venues, food fairs showcasing local crafts, food, and drinks, horse races, parades, royalty pageants, and the night entertainment of local bands and musicians at the village. The St. Croix Crucian Christmas Carnival is one of the biggest annual events in the Virgin Islands; it is more than a large party; it is an exposition of culture and tradition.

QUEEN CONTESTANTS



PRINCE AND PRINCESS CONTESTANTS



Outlined is the 2015 -2016 schedule

DECEMBER 2015

11DEC	SOCA MONARCH ELIMINATIONS	8:00pm	
12DEC	CHRISTIANSTED J'OUVERT AND MINI VILLAGE	5:30am	Bassin Triangle
13DEC	PRINCE AND PRINCESS SHOW	3:00pm	Island Center
20DEC	ST CROIX CARNIVAL QUEEN	5:00pm	Island Center
26DEC- 31JAN	OPENING OF MAIN VILLAGE IN FREDERIKSTED	7:00pm - 11:00 pm	St. Croix Carnival Village
29DEC	SOCA MONARCH COMPETITION	8:00pm	St. Croix Carnival Village
30DEC	CARNIVAL J'OUVERT	5:30am	Hannah's Rest Corner
30DEC	FOOD, ART & CRAFTS FAIR	12:00 pm	McBean Clock Tower
30DEC	CALYPSO MONARCH COMPETITION	8:00pm	Island Center

JANUARY 2016

26DEC- 31JAN	OPENING OF MAIN VILLAGE IN FREDERIKSTED	7:00 pm - 11:00pm	St. Croix Carnival Village
1JAN	CHILDREN'S PARADE	10:00am	Frederiksted
2JAN	ADULTS PARADE	10:00 am	Frederiksted

Suggested Family and Classroom Activities:

Research the history and origin of the Crucian Christmas Carnival

Engage in a carnival event and creatively share your experience

Speak to a former participant about his/her experience and share their experience with someone

Courtesy of

Text: <http://www.vicarnivalschedule.com/stcroix/>; <http://stcroixsource.com/content/news/local-news/2015/08/22/christmas-carnival-schedules-september-warm-event>

Images: <http://eventscalendar.caribseek.com/sites/default/files/files/2015/images/caribseek-events-calendar/saint-croix/2015-1220-cse-vi-stx-63rd-annual-miss-st-croix-crucian-christmas-pageant-2015-2016.jpg>; <https://vn.facebook.com/VirginIslandsPageantry/>

CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas Day is a federal holiday, which is celebrated on December 25th.

Though the majority of religious denominations indicate that it was on this day that Jesus was born, some argue that Jesus was not born on December 25th. However, although none can prove when He was born, we do believe He was born. Hence, December 25th is the day which is observed to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

In America's Paradise, families and community members attend church in celebration of Jesus' birth, assemble for caroling challenge, and feeding the less fortunate.

On the island of St. Croix the atmosphere is filled with song and celebration of the Crucian Christmas Carnival. An event with Christmas Concert and Caroling is held in Frederiksted at the Buddhoe Park. In Coral Bay on St. John the Community Christmas Caroling Competition is held. Residents from the neighboring communities, such as Carolina, Mandahl, East End, and John's Folley join in. Residents are invited to participate in the Christmas tree lighting and carols singing. On St. Thomas, there are a few caroling groups that still travel from house to house. Just before sunrise the caroling climaxes at the Challenge of the Carols at Emancipation Garden. Joining in to out-sing each other in a friendly spirit of the holidays are caroling groups including church groups and choirs and community groups and choirs.

Christmas in the beautiful US Virgin Islands is definitely a time for family, friends, and community members to join in unity to celebrate. The tradition of families and friends gathering together to eat, chatting and laughing, reflecting on the blessings of the past year, and exchanging gifts and well-wishes. Large meals of delicacies consisting of sweetbread, tarts (such as guava berry, coconut, guava, pineapple), slices of ham, turkey, cranberry, and guava berry liquor are prepared. Indeed it continues to be a time for family and friends to celebrate!



Suggested Family and Classroom Activities:

Research the origin of Christmas

Participate in feeding of the less fortunate

Plan, prepare and participate in a Christmas meal with family and friends

Participate and/or attend in the caroling at the Buddhoe Park on St. Croix, Coral Bay on St. John, or Emancipation Gardens on St. Thomas

Attend a church service with family and friends

Courtesy of

Text: <http://www.vinow.com/articles/121809/caroling.php>;

Pictures: <http://www.graceport.com/humpdayblog/2014/12/12172014>

BOXING DAY **(2ND Day of Christmas)**

Boxing Day or the Second Day of Christmas is a federal holiday celebrated on December 26th in the United States and its territories.

The term 'Boxing Day' dates back to the Age of Exploration. Symbolizing good luck when sailing ships were setting off to discover new lands, there was a 'Christmas Box'. As the ship was in port, the priest would place a small container on the ship. The crewmen who were desirous of a safe return would drop money into the box. It was then sealed up and kept on board for the entire voyage. If the ship came home safely, the box was given to the priest in exchange for the saying of a Mass of thanks for the successful voyage. The Priest would keep the box sealed until Christmas, when he would open it and share its contents with the less fortunate.

Another practice is in older days, an 'Alms Box' was placed in each church on Christmas Day for the worshippers to place gifts for the poor of the parish. The boxes were opened the day after Christmas, which is symbolic of why the day became known as 'Boxing Day'. This custom continues still, where some householders give small gifts or monetary tips to trades people to include their milk man, garbage man, and the paper boy. Occasionally, gifts are put together to be placed into Christmas boxes by organizations, community groups, and churches and given to the less fortunate.

In the United States Virgin Islands, Boxing Day is celebrated as a second day of Christmas, where families and friends gather together to celebrate the Seasons, as well as to continue the tradition of give gift giving to trades people and the less fortunate.



Suggested Family and Classroom Activities:

Research the history of Boxing Day and share with some what you learn

Present gifts to trades people - such as your garbage man, news paper person, mail man, etc.

Prepare a gift for the less fortunate of your community and/or church

Courtesy of

Text: <http://seanlinnane.blogspot.com/2011/12/boxing-day.html>;

Pictures: <http://funmozar.com/happy-boxing-day/>

KWANZAA

The Kwanzaa Celebration is observed from December 26 through January 1. It was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga and first celebrated in 1966 – 67. Held in the United States and Western African Diaspora in other nations the week-long celebration honors African heritage in African-American culture and culminates in a feast and gift-giving. It has seven core principles (*Nguzo Saba, originally Nguzu Saba – the seven principles of African Heritage*).

In the early years of Kwanzaa, Dr. Karenga intended it to be an alternate for Christmas. However, this posture was later changed, so Christians would not be alienated. He later stated in the 1997 *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community, and Culture*, "Kwanzaa was not created to give people an alternative to their own religion or religious holiday." Today many African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa in addition to observing Christmas.

What Karenga said "is a communitarian African philosophy," consist of what he called "the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world." These seven principles comprise Kawaida, a Swahili term for tradition and reason. Each day of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the principles below:

- On the **first day** of Kwanzaa the black candle is lit, representing the first principle of Kwanzaa - Umoja (oo-MOH-jah): Unity.
- On the **second day** the black candle is again lit, as well as the farthest red candle on the left. This represents the 2nd principle of Kwanzaa - Kujichagulia (koo-jee-chah-goo-LEE-ah): Self-Determination.
- On the **third day** the black candle is lit, then the farthest left red, and then the farthest right green candle. This represents the 3rd principle of Kwanzaa - Ujima (oo-JEE-mah): Collective work and responsibility.
- On the **fourth day** the black candle is lit, then the farthest left red, then the farthest right green and then the next red candle on the left. This represents the 4th principle of Kwanzaa - Ujamaa (oo-jah-MAH): Collective economics.
- On the **fifth day** the black candle is lit, then the farthest left red, the farthest right green, the next red and then the next green candle. This represents the 5th principle of Kwanzaa - Nia (NEE-ah): Purpose.
- On the **sixth day** the black candle is lit, then the farthest left red, the farthest right green, the next red, the next green and then the final red candle. This represents the 6th principle of Kwanzaa - Kuumba (koo-OOM-bah): Creativity.
- On the **seventh day** the black candle is lit, then the farthest left red, the farthest right green, the next red candle, the next green, the final red and then the final green candle. Now all seven candles are lit. This represents the 7th principle of Kwanzaa - Imani (ee-MAH-nee): Faith.

The symbols of Kwanzaa include a decorative mat on where other symbols are placed, corn and other crops a candle holder with seven candles is called a kinara, a communal cup for pouring libations, gifts, a poster of the seven principles, and a black, red, and green flag. The symbols were designed to convey the seven principles.



Suggested Family and Classroom Activities:

Research the history of Kwanzaa

Interview a participant of their experience while participating in Kwanzaa

Experience participating in the celebration of Kwanzaa

Courtesy of

Text: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwanzaa>; <http://ourheritagemagazine.com/our-heritage-magazine-online/kwanzaa/>

Picture: <http://ourheritagemagazine.com/our-heritage-magazine-online/kwanzaa/>



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