Enjoy the Holidays—Your Way

This time of year, diverse cultures around the world observe holidays that are centered on love and connection—and these celebrations can take many forms. Whether you choose to reconnect with friends and family through established traditions, spend time with your chosen family, or create new seasonal traditions, remember that gratitude and self-love are some of the most meaningful practices you can nourish.

Enjoy and explore cultural traditions from around the world:

• Attend the Harvard University Choir’s century-old Christmas Carol service on Sunday, December 11 or Tuesday, December 13.
• Commemorate the Winter Solstice through song with Revels in-person or virtually.
• Celebrate the Indian Festival of Lights at a Diwali celebration in Northborough on Tuesday, November 8.
• Visit Rwanda (virtually) to participate in Hamwe with five days of music, poetry, films, and discussions demonstrating the power of arts in global wellbeing.

Cultivate gratitude:

• Explore the concept of gratitude with In Focus, Harvard’s weekly roundup of ideas on a designated topic, with contributions from across the university.
• Transform negative reactions to persistent holiday cheer with a collection of articles on expressing gratitude from HBR Ascend.

Spend time with your chosen family:

• Revisit A.R.T.’s portraits of chosen families from 2018, and follow their link to read Why Queer People Need Chosen Families.
• Learn about what chosen families mean, especially to members of our LGBTQ+ community.

Give a gift to yourself:

• Take a yoga, meditation, or Pilates class from the Center for Wellness and Health Promotion.
• Listen to the HBR Ideacast episode on How to Use All Your Vacation — And Really Unplug.
• Schedule some time for yourself to finally declutter your desk or home.

If you find yourself anxious this time of year, you may find value in attending our Handling Holiday Stress webinar, provided by KGA, on Wednesday, November 9. There are many ways to make your holiday season merry and bright. We encourage you to practice mindfulness and self-care, because a more peaceful, serene version of you is a gift to yourself and those around you.
Do Your Civic Duty

“Some politician some years ago said that bad officials are elected by good voters who do not vote.”
– Dwight D. Eisenhower

Tuesday, November 8, 2022, is Election Day, and we encourage everyone to exercise their right to vote—for your community, for children who don’t have the right to vote yet, and for future residents of your town, state, and country.

Are you ready to vote?

• Check your voter registration status. (Register today in some states.)
• Find your polling place in Massachusetts, or across the US.
• Learn about MA ballot questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.

What else can you do?

• Encourage civic engagement among your colleagues with tools and advice from the Harvard Votes Challenge.
• Promote health equity through conversations about voting.
• Wear your “I Voted” sticker with pride! It reminds others to vote and creates a culture of participation.

MIND AND BODY

“A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.”
— Dwight D. Eisenhower*

• Want to support student wellbeing and mental health? Visit We’re All Human to learn how to recognize distress in others and respond effectively.
• Say “yes” to yourself and assert your needs when you wield The Power of a Positive No. Register for this virtual workshop based on the research of one of the co-founders of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School.
• Give yourself the peace of mind that comes with pet insurance for your fuzzy friends. Enroll any time of year in Pets Best by calling 866-228-3516 or visiting CrimsonPersonalPlans.com.

LEARNING AND GROWTH

“There is an old saw in the services: that which is not inspected deteriorates.”
— Dwight D. Eisenhower*

• Looking to improve your management skills? Take free, online classes on project management, difficult interactions, change management, and more through Harvard ManageMentor (HarvardKey required).
• Benefits-eligible employees, don’t miss out on your own Harvard education! Use the Tuition Assistance Program when you register for a course at the Harvard Extension School. Spring registration opens on November 7. Note, there may be tax implications for graduate credit courses that do not meet the IRS standard of job relatedness. See HARVie for details.
• Get proactive with your career when you Design Your Personal Career Toolkit (HarvardKey required). This 90-minute interactive session—available to employees in salary grades 47-56 and in Services & Trades unions—will help you set actionable career goals and track your professional development.
LIVING AND WORKING

“Change based on principle is progress. Constant change without principle becomes chaos”
— Dwight D. Eisenhower*

- Learn how meditation can boost your resiliency and make you more pleasant to be around when you watch The Benefits of Not Being a Jerk to Yourself, a new TED Talk from Dan Harris, creator of the Ten Percent Happier app, which is free to benefits-eligible staff and faculty.

- duh DUM 🎵 duh DUM 🎵 Meet the ocean’s most misunderstood megafauna at Swimming with Sharks: A Deep Dive into Shark Biology and Behavior, an exhibit at the Harvard Museum of Natural History.

- BYOS (bring your own snack) and learn how to slow down and enjoy your food by attending Mindful Eating (HarvardKey required), a webinar aimed at helping you stay present as you nosh. Check out the course description and prerequisites on the Mindfulness page.

FINANCES AND SECURITY

“Plans are worthless, but planning is everything”
— Dwight D. Eisenhower*

- Discover how to manage your money, save for a rainy day, and achieve your financial goals this Wednesday, November 9, through The Power of Savings, a webinar from TIAA.

- Get a better grasp of your current finances and practical advice on how to position yourself for the future with TIAA’s Financial Housekeeping for Now and Later webinar, this Thursday, November 10.

- All employees are invited to find out how to Increase Cash Flow at a workshop from Harvard University Employees Credit Union and the Harvard Benefits Office.

*Dwight David “Ike” Eisenhower (1890–1969) was the 34th President of the United States and the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe in WWII. Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock to enforce desegregation policies in the schools, and ordered the complete desegregation of the US Armed Forces. “There must be no second-class citizens in this country,” he wrote. Veterans Day is observed on November 11. Veterans at Harvard can find a range of internal and external resources that support them and their families.

To explore additional Harvard employee events, view the full calendar on HARVie.