



KWANZAA



Kwanzaa was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga and was first celebrated in 1966-67. Kwanzaa is a week-long celebration held in the United States and is observed from December 26 to January 1-- culminating in a feast and gift-giving. This celebration honors African-Americans culture.

Kwanzaa celebrates what its founder called the seven principles.¹ These seven principles comprise Kawaida, a Swahili word meaning “tradition”. While each family celebrates Kwanzaa in its own way, celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry reading and a large traditional meal. On each of the seven nights, the family gathers and a child lights one of the candles on the Kinara. The first night, the black candle in the center is lit (Umoja/unity is discussed). One candle is lit each evening, and the appropriate principle is discussed.⁵

1. UMOJA (Unity): To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

2. KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.

3. UJIMIMA (Collective Work & Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and to make our brothers’ and sisters’ problems our problems, and to solve them together.

4. UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.



5. NIA (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. KUUMBA (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

7. IMANI (Faith): To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Kwanzaa celebratory symbols include;

MKEKA (mat - on which other symbols are placed on)

KINARA (candle holder) | MISHUMAA SABA (seven candles)

MAZAO (crops) | MUHINDI/VIBUNZI (corn)

KIKOMBE CHA UMOJA (unity cup) | ZAWADI (gifts),¹

The holiday also saw a greater public recognition as the first Kwanzaa stamp, designed by Synthia Saint James, was issued by the United States Post Office in 1997, and in the same year President Bill Clinton gave the first presidential declaration marking the holiday.^{3,4}



For more information on Kwanzaa, please scan the QR code.

UAW-FORD DIVERSITY DIGEST
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1. [HTTP://WWW.OFFICIALKWANZAAWEBSITE.ORG/INDEX.SHTML](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml)
2. ANGAZA, MAITEFA (2007). KWANZAA - FROM HOLIDAY TO EVERY DAY: A COMPLETE FOR MAKING KWANZAA PART OF YOUR LIFE.
3. [HTTP://WWW.PRESIDENCY.UCSB.EDU/WS/?PID=53734](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?PID=53734)

4. [HTTP://WWW.JSTOR.ORG/STABLE/27502744](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27502744)
5. [HTTPS://WWW.HISTORY.COM/TOPICS/HOLIDAYS/KWANZAA-HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/kwanzaa-history)
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