

Happy Holidays

We want to take a moment to thank all our great friends for their support, and wish you all the best for the holidays.

Whatever holiday you are celebrating, may it be filled with pleasant memories.

Holidays

December is a month filled with Holidays. They range in scope from sacred to silly. Whatever days you celebrate, we wish you the best.

Here's most of the major holidays by date:

Winter Solstice, Yule - Winter solstice, around 21-22 December - in the northern hemisphere and 21-22 June in the southern hemisphere The celebrations on the winter solstice, the longest night and shortest day of the year, are traditionally marked with anything that symbolizes or encourages life. Decorations of evergreens, bright objects and lights; singing songs, giving gifts, feasting and romantic events are often included.

Hanukkah - 26 Kislev - 2/3 Tevet - Almost always in December Jewish holiday celebrating the defeat of Seleucid forces who had tried to prevent Israel from practicing Judaism, and also celebrating the miracle of the Menorah lights burning for eight days with only enough olive oil for one day.

Christmas Day - 25 December - Christian holiday commemorating the traditional birth-date of Jesus. Observances include gift-giving, the decoration of trees and houses, and Santa Claus folktales.

Kwanzaa (USA) - 26 December - 1 January - A modern American Holiday held from December 26 to January 1 honoring African-American heritage, primarily in the United States. It was invented in 1966 by black activist and marxist Ron Karenga.

St Stephen's Day or Second Day of Christmas - 26 December - Holiday observed in many European countries as in "Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen,"

Boxing Day - 26 December or 27 December - Holiday observed in many Commonwealth countries on the first non-



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Sunday after Christmas.

New Year's Eve - 31 December)

Night before New Year's Day. Usually observed with celebrations and festivities in anticipation of the new year.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day - December 7

December is also:

Hi Neighbor Month
National Stress Free Family Holiday Month
Read A New Book Month
Safe Toy and Gift Month
Universal Human Rights Month
Write to a Friend Month
Here is a short list of some of the more (or less) notable days in December

December 1st

Eat A Red Apple Day
National Pie Day
Rosa Park's Day
World AIDS Day



December 2nd

National Fritters Day

December 4th

National Cookie Day
Wear Brown Shoes Day

December 7th

National Cotton Candy Day
Pearl Harbor Day

December 8th

National Brownie Day

December 12th

Poinsettia Day

December 13th

National Cocoa Day



December 16th

National Chocolate Covered Anything Day

December 17th

National Maple Syrup Day
Underdog Day

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December 18th

Wear a Plunger On Your Head Day

December 21st

First Day of Winter
Humbug Day
Look at the Bright Side Day
National Flashlight Day

December 24th

National Egg Nog Day

December 25th

Christmas
National Pumpkin Pie Day

December 26th

Boxing Day
Kwanzaa Begins
National Whiners Day

December 31st

New Year's Eve

Holiday Shopping

Many large stores have an online presence that will allow you to shop without leaving the couch. Walmart and K-Mart, Hastings, Barnes and Noble, even Papa John's Pizza will let you order online. PC Club, for instance will let you order computers and parts online and have it delivered to a local store. The list has grown quite a bit over the last few years, and includes Staples and Office Max; Lowes and Home Depot; Warner Studios and Disney. Online stores will ask you to set up an account to order, but will let you browse around and compare prices, without registering.

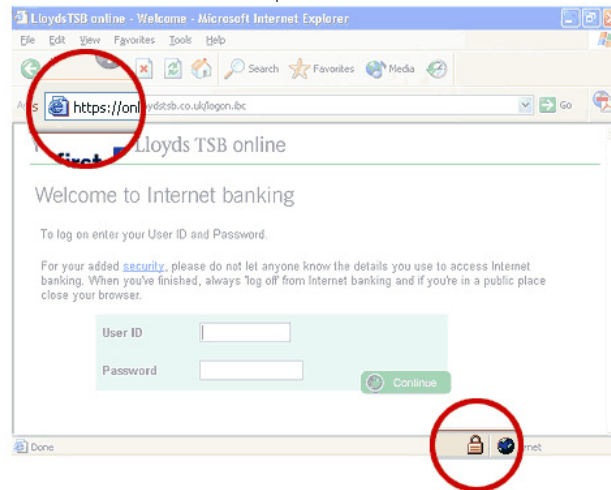
Some online stores will let you create wish lists, and even email item descriptions to yourself. Generally, just typing the name of the store in a search engine will deliver the web page address. Be sure to read the result before you click on the link, so you don't wind up in the wrong place.

SSL

Most shopping places will use SSL. Short for Secure Sockets Layer, it is a protocol developed by Netscape for transmitting private documents via the Internet. SSL works by using a private key to encrypt data that's transferred over the SSL connection.

When you are ordering, look at the status bar of your browser - that's at the bottom of the window. You will see an icon like this:

When you transmit data via SSL, like credit card info, the lock icon tells you that the data is encrypted, while it travels to the other server. The icon also lets you know that the site belongs to the people the domain name is registered to. When your information moves from your computer to the server, it is encrypted. The encryption changes everything into garbled characters that no one can decipher without the key that lives on the web page's server.



Many shopping pages will give you the model number of the item. Entering the brand and model number in a search engine will usually return a bunch of hits - and different pricing. Some of the search engines even offer a comparative shopping feature that will let you choose multiple entries and compare them side by side. Many times the search will return a link to the manufacturer's site, where you will be able to get the complete specifications as well as item specific support.

Caveat Emptor

It means buyer beware in Latin. See, things haven't changed that much. Before ordering, you may want to check a few things. Most places will have a stated return policy - do they pay the shipping if an item has to be returned? What about re-stocking fees? What are the shipping options? What's the lead time? Will it get here by the Holidays? Reputable sites will have all these policies written down somewhere for you to read, it's worth the time.

And don't forget the Online only stores like Amazon.com, Newegg.com and on and on. One good place to look is Froogle, Google's product search engine <http://froogle.google.com>. If you are looking for something, you'll probably find one on the Internet.

These are a few examples of online stores.

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| Walmart | www.walmart.com |
| KMart | www.kmart.com |
| Barnes and Noble | www.barnesandnoble.com |
| Hastings | www.gohastings.com |
| Newegg | www.newegg.com |
| Amazon | www.amazon.com |
| Sharper Image | www.sharperimage.com |