Mixed Holiday Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. What are the diyas that many people light for Diwali?
   - A. Small oil lamps
   - B. Paper kites
   - C. Colorful wristbands
   - D. Decorated bells

   Correct answer: A. Small oil lamps
   Maharashtra’s tourism department describes diyas as small oil lamps used to decorate homes and outdoor spaces during Diwali.

2. When lighting a Hanukkah menorah, what is the role of the helper light called the shamash?
   - A. It measures the oil used for each light.
   - B. It counts as the light for the first night.
   - C. It provides the flame for lighting the other lights.
   - D. It covers the wick after the lights burn out.

   Correct answer: C. It provides the flame for lighting the other lights.
   Reform Judaism’s guide explains that the shamash is the extra light used to kindle the lights that mark the nights of Hanukkah.

3. Which celebration of African American and Pan-African heritage runs from December 26 through January 1?
   - A. Hanukkah
   - B. Kwanzaa
   - C. Diwali
   - D. Vesak

   Correct answer: B. Kwanzaa
   The U.S. Postal Service’s Kwanzaa stamp announcement records the observance’s seven days, from December 26 to January 1.

4. In Japan, the koinobori streamers flown for Children’s Day are traditionally shaped like which fish?
   - A. Flounder
   - B. Swordfish
   - C. Tuna
   - D. Carp

   Correct answer: D. Carp
   Japanese Children’s Day falls on May 5. A traditional decoration is a carp-shaped cloth streamer called a koinobori.

5. Which country is known for Junkanoo street parades on Boxing Day and New Year’s Day?

A. Barbados
B. The Bahamas
C. Jamaica
D. Saint Lucia

Correct answer: B. The Bahamas
The Bahamas’ tourism authority describes Junkanoo as a Bahamian tradition with costumes, dancing, and music. Major parades take place on both days.

6. Which Islamic holiday marks the end of Ramadan?

A. Eid al-Fitr
B. Eid al-Adha
C. Islamic New Year
D. Laylat al-Qadr

Correct answer: A. Eid al-Fitr
The National Museum of the Philippines identifies Eid al-Fitr as the celebration that ends Ramadan. It also gives the name Hari-raya Puasa.

7. In the Thai government’s account of Songkran, what do younger people traditionally pour onto their elders’ palms as a sign of respect?

A. Tea leaves
B. Rice
C. Flower petals
D. Water

Correct answer: D. Water
Thailand’s public information department describes pouring water on elders’ hands as a gesture of respect at the traditional Thai New Year festival.

8. What type of food is songpyeon, which Korea’s National Folk Museum associates with Chuseok?

A. Wheat flatbreads
B. Buckwheat noodles
C. Rice cakes
D. Pickled vegetables

Correct answer: C. Rice cakes
Songpyeon are rice cakes. The museum describes a custom of making them for Chuseok with newly harvested rice.

9. On which day of the first lunar month does Taiwan’s calendar place the traditional Lantern Festival?

A. The 15th day
B. The 1st day
C. The 5th day
D. The 25th day

Correct answer: A. The 15th day
Taiwan’s published calendar specifies the 15th day of the first lunar month for the Lantern Festival.

10. Ethiopia’s heritage register describes parish processions during Timkat. What kind of place is the destination called Timkete-Bahir?

A. A courtyard reserved for a royal banquet
B. A marketplace for the harvest
C. A hall for civic meetings
D. A body of water, such as a pool, river, or reservoir

Correct answer: D. A body of water, such as a pool, river, or reservoir
The register identifies Timkete-Bahir as the body of water near which the parish’s sacred objects spend the night during the celebration.

11. Which caption fits Te Papa’s account of regional ways to mark the Māori New Year in Aotearoa New Zealand?

A. Puanga and Matariki are two names for the same star cluster.
B. All iwi watch for the same star and call it Puanga.
C. Some iwi watch for the rising of Puanga as a sign of the new year.
D. Puanga is the November full moon that marks the beginning of summer.

Correct answer: C. Some iwi watch for the rising of Puanga as a sign of the new year.
Te Papa describes iwi, or tribal communities, that look for the star Puanga. Other communities mark the new year using the Matariki star cluster.

12. Which pairing fits the Jewish Museum’s description of matzah and bitter herbs at a Passover seder?

A. Matzah is sweet fruit paste. Bitter herbs recall the construction of the Temple.
B. Matzah is unleavened bread. Bitter herbs recall the hardship of slavery.
C. Matzah is leavened bread. Bitter herbs mark the start of a harvest festival.
D. Matzah is a roasted egg. Bitter herbs represent fresh mortar.

Correct answer: B. Matzah is unleavened bread. Bitter herbs recall the hardship of slavery.
The museum identifies matzah as unleavened bread and relates the bitter herbs to the hardship remembered in the Exodus story.

13. Which events in the life of the Buddha are named in the 1999 United Nations resolution recognizing the Day of Vesak?

A. His final journey, first sermon, and birth
B. His marriage, first journey, and enlightenment
C. His birth, first sermon, and marriage
D. His birth, enlightenment, and death

Correct answer: D. His birth, enlightenment, and death
The resolution names the Buddha’s birth, attainment of enlightenment, and passing away as events commemorated on Vesak.

14. Which caption correctly dates the two events the French presidency discusses in its history of the July 14 national holiday?

A. The Bastille fell in 1789. The Festival of the Federation took place in 1790.
B. The Festival of the Federation took place in 1789. The Bastille fell in 1790.
C. The Bastille fell and the Festival of the Federation took place in 1789.
D. The Bastille fell and the Festival of the Federation took place in 1790.

Correct answer: A. The Bastille fell in 1789. The Festival of the Federation took place in 1790.
The French presidency dates the fall of the Bastille to July 14, 1789. It places the Festival of the Federation on the first anniversary in 1790.

15. Which timeline matches the National Library of Jamaica’s account of independence and the later restoration of the August 1 Emancipation Day holiday?

A. Jamaica became independent in 1962 and restored Emancipation Day on August 6 in 1997.
B. Jamaica restored the August 1 holiday in 1962 and became independent in 1997.
C. Jamaica became independent in 1962 and restored the August 1 holiday in 1997.
D. Jamaica restored the August 1 holiday and became independent in 1962.

Correct answer: C. Jamaica became independent in 1962 and restored the August 1 holiday in 1997.
The National Library places Jamaica’s independence in 1962. It dates the restoration of Emancipation Day as an August 1 holiday to 1997.