



## HOLIDAYS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

By Nicolas Moore

From Thanksgiving to Christmas, the holiday season looks different all across the United States.

The holiday season kicks off with Thanksgiving, which kicks off the winter season to most parts of the country. This forces families to bundle up and stay inside in those colder states. In Florida however, the weather is so nice that the holiday has potential to be celebrated outside in the sun. It is believed that Florida was the place where the first Thanksgiving was celebrated, before the Pilgrims. According to Florida Politics, the holiday was first celebrated 50 years prior to the pilgrims by the Spanish near the St. Augustine river. In the current day, the holiday can be celebrated by people of all cultures like the Spanish Thanksgiving would have. In South Florida specifically, due to the large Cuban population, there is a Cuban style implemented for Thanksgiving. This version of celebrating the holiday brings in styles of Cuban culture and cuisine in order to make the holiday feel more like their own.

The next holiday on the calendar is Hanukkah, which is a Jewish holiday that is celebrated in the beginning of December. The holiday is celebrated all over the world, typically inside Jewish temples. Typically, this does not cause any issues with weather since the temples would keep everyone safe from the Earth's elements, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused an issue with that this past year. Due to South Florida having great weather in December however, this was no issue for Jewish people looking to celebrate. Sun Sentinel reported last year that Jewish secs in the South Florida region were able to hold drive through services, services outside,

as well as virtual services that were doable because of the great weather. With no snow, people were able to be outside with no issues. Typically, the holiday is celebrated in the same way all over, but the pandemic made Florida the most ideal place to do so.

Christmas is the holiday that follows Hanukkah on the calendar. Christmas is a Christian holiday that celebrates the Birth of Jesus Christ, but has become popular and commercialized over the years. Christmas is notorious for being depicted in snowy wonderlands. Christmas in Florida is depicted very differently due to there being no snow and all sun. This does make certain activities possible during this holiday however. In places where it snows, children cannot play with new toys they receive that need to be used outside. Celebrating in Florida fixes that problem as long as the sun stays shining. Also, in South Florida, there are touches of Cuban style that influence the celebration of Christmas. In Cuba, the people did not traditionally celebrate Christmas (due to them traditionally celebrating epiphany), but they do in the Miami/ Fort Lauderdale area. Many people of Cuban descent tend to celebrate "noche buena", which is the celebration of Christmas Eve. This puts an emphasis on celebrating with family and puts a Cuban twist on the holiday.

The final holiday in December is Kwanzaa, which is a holiday that celebrates African-American heritage from December 26th to January 1st. It celebrates the African-American communities in America and the values that Dr. Karenga, the creator of the holiday, created. Florida is a great place to celebrate this holiday because of the atmosphere that

Southern Florida brings. Of course, the weather helps as well because outdoor festivals/celebrations would still be possible.

Overall, holidays spent in South Florida are different than in other parts of the country, and are still celebrated in many unique ways.

Sources:  
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