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| **sm_seder** | Ealing Agreed Syllabus: guidance for teachers |
| **KS1\_4: Special food** | **Overall aim:** to look at examples of food associated with special observances and used as part of religious rituals.  |

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| Meals to remember | Pupils will | understand that special foods are eaten on special occasions and that these foods remind people of the meaning of the occasion; begin to appreciate how certain foods make them remember special occasions. |
| ***Aim:*** to introduce the concept that eating in a certain context can be meaningful. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| *There are more lessons in this scheme than required for a single unit’s work but you can choose those that best suit the time of year or that best suit the age group and/or the mix of traditions in your school. If you are going to bring in examples of the various foods (recipes in background information) you might also want to alternate sweet and savoury dishes. All recipes are suitable for vegetarians.* ***Note:*** *The concepts introduced in this unit will be explored in more depth in the “Food for thought” lesson in the ks2 unit “Seeds of Unity (1)”.* |
| **Starter:** Invite the children to suggest what they might have for supper when they get home. Ask if they would have the same food if a member of the family has a birthday. What might they eat on someone’s birthday? |   |
| **Activity 1:** Invite them to offer examples of other occasions when special food is eaten. Discuss the nature of celebrations. Are all celebrations religious? |   |
| **Activity 2:** Ask children to share examples of festivals when they eat particular dishes. Do they set the table in a special way? Do they invite friends or relatives to share a meal on these special occasions? |  |
| **Activity 3:** Ask class if any of them bring food to their place of worship as an offering? What happens to this food? As an open question ask if there any difference between food given as an act of religious charity (e.g. during harvest festivals) and food given as an act of secular charity? |  |
| **Activity 4:** Discuss the ritual blessing of food, either at the dinner table or in special rituals/ceremonies performed in places of worship. Introduce terms such as kosher (Jewish), halal (Muslim), karah prasad (Sikh) and parsad (Hindu). |  |
| **Plenary:** As a class devise a menu for a special school or class occasion. Would the food be chosen just because it is a special occasion or would they choose food that might represent a certain attitude or belief? Or is there something important that happened to the school or class that they might want to remember with a special meal? |  |

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| Kwanzaa | Pupils will | explore the concept of unity as expressed through a communal meal; understand that on certain occasions sharing food as a family or with others can be as important as the food itself. |
| ***Aim:*** to see how eating a special meal as a family can reinforce unity. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Review the idea of celebration, and recall that special festival foods can remind us of significant times in our religion and/or family traditions. Introduce the festival of Kwanzaa and explain that it is important for people to remember their origins and the traditions of the country from which they have come. Point out that the word Kwanzaa means ‘first fruits of the harvest’. | **Kwanzaa:** 26 Dec – 1 Jan (same every year)Food to taste and share (for recipes see background information)Spiced apple muffinsCorn pudding |
| **Activity 1:** Explain that special family meals at Kwanzaa reinforce unity (*umoja*), which is one of the important principles remembered during the festival. |
| **Activity 2:** Tell the children that there are seven principles of Kwanzaa and outline as many as you feel appropriate (see background information). For example explain the ideas of *ujima,* *kuumba* and *imani*. Identify the ways we try to live these ideas in the classroom. When we succeed in doing this, how does it make us feel? How do putting these ideals into practice help us to enjoy school? It might be helpful to use the class rules as a point of reference. |
| **Activity 3:** Explore the symbolism of the objects displayed during Kwanzaa (see background information). If the children were going to celebrate a holiday that honours things important to them, what objects would they choose to symbolise these values? |
| **Plenary:** Ask the children to draw a picture and, if possible, to write a sentence about one of the principles discussed. Alternatively give them paper with a number of circles and invite them to draw faces in the circles of people living the principles of Kwanzaa. You could show them the Kwanzaa stamp (see background information) and they could design a stamp for their class, family or personal belief group. |

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| Langar | Pupils will | understand that Sikhs express the belief that people are equal through sharing food at the gurdwara; they consider the value of sharing with others. |
| ***Aim:*** to learn how Sikhs express a belief in equality through sharing food.  | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| Starter: Introduce Sikhism, for example by saying that the faith started about 500 years ago in India and that the founder was Guru Nanak, the word guru meaning ‘teacher’. Explain that Sikhs believe in one god and worship in a gurdwara.  | Most gurdwaras have langar twice a day, every day of the year.How does langar express equality in Sikhism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL5uWdsVBfA> Because a fundamental tenet of Sikh belief is to make food available to all, food served in the langar is vegetarian and varied so that neither Sikh nor any visitor can be offended.Food to taste and share (recipes in background information) Activities teaching equality suitable for ks1: <http://the-classroom.org.uk/wp.../KS1-Citizenship-Same-and-Different1.doc>   |
| **Activity 1:** Select and play a YouTube video that demonstrates the importance of langar in Sikhism. |
| **Activity 2:** Explain the idea of equality, perhaps using two columns of unifix cubes. Ask the children why equality is an important concept and how we express it in our class. You could write ideas on the white board. Point out the ways in which equality is expressed in the langar (anyone can eat there irrespective of faith, everyone eats the same food and sits together on the floor or at large communal tables). |
| **Activity 3:** Explain that another important Sikh principle is service (*sewa* or *seva*) and that many Sikhs do this by providing and preparing the food and serving in the langar and doing the washing up, all without getting paid. |
| Plenary: Children could copy and decorate one of the ideas from the board or cut out pictures of food they would like to share and stick these pictures on a paper plate. |

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| Christmas | Pupils will | understand that Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas; they will think of ways that they can be a ‘light’ to their surroundings. |
| ***Aim:*** to look at special rituals and meals held at Christmas. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Discuss the meaning of the words special and celebrate. Introduce the idea of celebrating someone’s birthday when they or their family have never met this person. Explain that in the traditions represented in the class/school it is common to celebrate the birthdays of important people in the history of those beliefs (e.g. religious founders, great thinkers like Darwin, or inspired leaders like Martin Luther King).  |  **Christmas:** 25 DecemberFood to taste and share: Star-shaped biscuitsThe star shape of these biscuits is a reminder that one of the names for Jesus is ‘Light of the world’ and that the star features in the story of the wise men (or astrologers).The Christmas story can be read from any children’s Bible or online at <http://www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/nativity/index.htm>. Ideas for activities:http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/christmas  |
| **Activity 1:** Ask class if any of their families have a special meal at Christmas? What special food do they eat? Is the food special, or is it the fact that it is an important family meal that is special. Are all the families that observe certain aspects of Christmas (e.g. they have a tree, exchange gifts and have a big meal) Christian? Point out that many people living in Britain celebrate Christmas even though they aren’t Christian, but that Christmas is one of the most important festivals for Christians. Why? |
| **Activity 2:** Before reading the Christmas story or playing a video say to the children that they should listen for any mention of stars. Then, after reading the story or playing the video ask them where the star featured in the story. |
| **Activity 3**: Explore the symbolism of the Star. Explain that the star reminds Christians that Jesus is special. Also that people used the star as a guide to travel to another country in order to honour the baby. The star also reminds Christians that one of Jesus’ names is ‘Light of the world’. Discuss the difference between being in light and being in the dark. Point out that having star-shaped biscuits at Christmas reminds Christians of the importance of the star in the nativity story. It is also why many people put a star on top of their Christmas tree. |
| **Activity 4:** Ask class if there is any special food that their family has at Christmas? While they are doing this children can do a craft activity (see activity village website) or draw the stars in the sky on a picture of shepherds. Those who are able to do so can number each star. More able children can write words for the numbers. |
| **Conclusion:** Pass out star-shaped biscuits. While they are enjoying these, ask class to share ideas about how we can all make a positive difference. How can they be a beacon to other people? What does this mean? |

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| Chinese New Year | Pupils will | understand that different cultures celebrate New Year at different times of the year; they will reflect on how we can learn new things from people whose traditions are different to our own. |
| ***Aim:*** explore rituals and food associated with starting a new year. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Ask class if their birthday is the same date every year. Then, if there are Muslim pupils in the class, ask if the Eid at the end of Ramadan is on the same date every year. Explain that some calendars are based on the cycles of the moon and some are based on both the moon and the sun. And that both of these are different to the calendar most of us are familiar with, which is based on the sun. This is why Ramadan and Muslim festivals like the two Eids ‘move round the year’. In contrast, the Jewish and the Chinese calendar are based on sun and moon, so although the exact dates change each year the festivals occur around the same time, e.g. Chinese New Year is usually in January or February and the Jewish festival of lights always occurs around Christmas. | <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chinese_new_year.htm> provides information and craft ideas. Poster showing the animals associated with the Chinese zodiac: <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chinese-zodiac-poster>Food to taste and share Tangerines or oranges, whose names in Chinese sound like the words for ‘gold’ and ‘wealth’. |
| **Activity 1:** Ask pupils if they identify with a particular animal, and if so, why. Explain to the children that each year in China is associated with an animal from their zodiac: hence year of the monkey, year of the snake etc. Show the children pictures of the various animals and tell them that some people believe that they share certain characteristics of the animal of their birth year. You could talk about the characteristics they believe various animals have.  |
| **Activity 2:** Tell the children a bit about the Chinese New Year and how most of the food Chinese people eat at this time is symbolic, i.e. that they like to eat food that symbolises the health, wealth, peace and wisdom that they hope they and their family will enjoy in the coming year. This is similar to how many people wish a person good luck for the next year when it’s their birthday. Or the belief that if you make a wish while blowing out your birthday candles the wish will come true. You could share tangerine or orange segments and explain why these are symbolic for the Chinese.  |
| **Activity 3:** Explain that in Chinese culture red is considered a very lucky colour, and for that reason a bride might wear a red dress for her wedding. It is also common for people to exchange gifts of money in red envelopes on special occasions, symbolic of the bounteous gifts they wish for the other person. Children could make (or decorate) red envelopes as a craft activity: they could draw a picture that symbolises something special they would like to give as a gift to someone and place it in the envelope. Alternatively they could design banners with messages intended to bring good luck for the class, like those the Chinese display in their homes at New Year. |
| **Activity 4:** Ask class if any of them have ever been to Chinatown in central London. Show class a video of Chinese New Year celebrations in Soho and ask them to compare them to the traditional New Year fireworks set off at midnight on December 31st. Talk about how fun and interesting it is to see these celebrations, that these different ways of celebrating special times enrich our lives. They show us that there isn’t always just one way of doing a thing. |  |
| **Plenary:** Have an open discussion about why people might want to mark the start of a new year. Did any members of the class do something special at the start of the school year? Did the school mark it in any way?  |  |

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| Passover | Pupils will | learn about the Jewish festival of Passover, which starts with a symbolic meal; consider what foods might represent the ‘taste of freedom’ to them. |
| ***Aim:*** to learn about a religious observance that revolves around a meal where every element is symbolic. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Tell the children that Jewish people celebrate a festival each year called Passover, when they remember the story in the Jewish sacred book (the Torah) that relates the escape of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt many thousands of years ago. The name of the festival comes from the belief that, during a time of plague in Egypt, the angel of death had ‘passed over’ the homes of the Jews when the blood of a sacrificial lamb was left as a mark on the lintel above the door.  | *Food to taste and share (see background information for recipes)*Chocolate matzohCoconut pyramidsHorseradish<http://www.holidays.net/passover/> has much information including the story of Passover, description of foods and traditions including the Seder meal, the four questions asked by the youngest child at the family celebration, the tradition of a place at table and a cup for the prophet Elijah; and the new tradition of the Miriam cup that celebrates the role of Moses sister, the prophetess. <http://www.dltk-kids.com/World/jewish/passover.htm> have a variety of craft activities.<http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/default_cdo/jewish/Passover.htm> is a site specifically for children. |
| **Activity 1:** Ask class to share examples of foods that remind them of something that happened in their family. (E.g. “Whenever we have beets I think of the time we had beets at my grandparents’ house when my dad came home and told us that we had a new sister.”) |
| **Activity 2:** Read the story of the Exodus from a Bible appropriate to the age of the class. |
| **Activity 3:** Explain that on the first or second day of the festival Jewish families gather for a special meal (*seder*) that includes several symbolic foods. Show class a seder plate, or a picture of one, which has places for all the symbolic foods. Describe the symbolism of each food in an age appropriate way. You could give pupils a little taste of horseradish, which is often used by Jews on Passover to remind them of the bitterness of slavery. |
| **Activity 4:** Show some matzoh and explain that bread without any raising agent is eaten throughout Passover to remind them that the Jews left Egypt very quickly without time to wait for their bread to raise. And that no food with raising agents (e.g. yeast) is eaten throughout the Passover period. Not only that, they go through the house the day before the start of Passover trying to find any speck of leftover bread. |
| **Activity 5:** Explain that Passover is significant for Christians because Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover the night before his crucifixion. This became known as the Last Supper, and each year Passover and Easter occur around the same time.  |
| **Plenary:** Talk about ‘taste’ reminders and the value of remembering special times and people. How can we help ourselves to remember things, how can we help others? Be sure and highlight the fact that although the bitter taste of horseradish reminds Jews of the slavery of the Israelites, the honey and nut mixture reminds them of the joy when they reached ‘the promised land’. |

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| Fasting | Pupils will | look at some religious reasons for going without food for specific periods of time; they will think about things they’d be willing to give up in order to focus on their spiritual life.  |
| ***Aim:*** to explore the religious tradition of fasting. | SEN |  |
| Gifted |  |
| **Possible activities** | **Suggested resources** |
| **Starter:** Talk about how the children feel before their snack break or before their lunchtime. Do they feel hungry? Distracted? How easy would it be to listen/concentrate if they had no food before dinner? Would they have to try very hard to learn? |  |
| **Activity 1:** Introduce the word ‘fast’. Ask if any of the children know what it means. Have they ever fasted or seen one of their family fasting? Why did this person fast? |
| **Activity 2:** Ask children if they’ve ever heard the phrase “giving [something] up for Lent”? Explain that Christians believe it is important to give up something for 40 days to remind them of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness. They also see it as a time to concentrate on spiritual matters. Point out that this is the same with the Muslim observance during Ramadan. That is that it is considered a time when a Muslim focusses on things relating to their faith. |
| **Activity 3:** Look at the Shrove Tuesday observance, which might be better known amongst the children as Pancake Day. Explain that the origin of Pancake Day comes from the fact that in times past Christians wanted to use up all the butter, flour and eggs in the house prior to the start of the Lenten fast. |
| **Activity 4:** Then look at the ways Muslims break their fast, first each night at sunset, and then at the end of the month of Ramadan on Eid-ul-Fitr. Point out that the word “Fitr” means “to break”. Fasting is actually forbidden on this Eid. Muslims often break the Eid fast with a drink of water and some dates, which is traditionally how the prophet Muhammad broke his fast. Ask a Muslim member of staff or a Muslim student to explain about how Muslim children ‘train’ to do the fast, which is not required until after reaching the age of puberty. |
| **Plenary:** Ask a Hindu member of staff to talk about fasting in their tradition. Explain that the religious word for fasting in Hinduism comes from an ancient language that means “to stay near” (Sanskrit *upavassa*). This refers to the fact that the intention behind fasting is to pay less attention to your next meal or snack and instead to concentrate on spiritual matters. End the lesson with a few moments’ reflection, asking the children to imagine that they had nothing to think about but “Being a Beacon”. If it seems appropriate, you could end this reflection with a small sip of water and a piece of date. | You might cut up some dates to pass round, along with little paper cups of water, so that the children can imagine ‘breaking the fast’. |

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| Key words | Kosher, halal, karah Prasad, parsad, blessing, Kwanzaa, langar, equality, sewa/service, New Year, Passover, seder, fast, Ramadan, Lent, Eid-ul-Fitr, Ekadashi, Upavaasa |
| **Points to note** |  If you are preparing any food for this lesson, be sure that parents know that these ‘tastes’ are for educational purposes only, and not a part of any religious ritual. Also, make sure that the pupils realise that they are under no obligation to eat or taste anything they don’t want to. |
| Sample assessment activities |
| **Outcomes**Pupils are working at an **emerging** level if they:* are able to name several foods eaten on special occasions.
* know that Christians give up something for Lent/ Muslims fast during Ramadan.
* can talk about a food that reminds them of something.

Pupils are working at **expected** levels if they:* understand that special foods are eaten on special occasions and that these foods remind people of the occasion being remembered.
* understand that many people fast or give up certain foods as part of their religious practices.
* understand that many foods eaten on special occasions have symbolic significance.

Some pupils will **exceed** expectations and will be able to do all of the above. In addition they will:* be able to explain how some foods remind people of a historical event.
* be able to give a reason why Christians sacrifice something during Lent/Muslims fast during Ramadan.
* be able to explain the symbolism of certain foods eaten on special occasions.
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| Background information |
| Kwanzaa Stamp 1997[everydaysaholiday](http://everydaysaholiday.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/kwanzaa-stamp1.jpg) | **Kwanzaa** is a celebration that focuses on traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement. It was established in America in 1966 by Dr Maulana Karenga, and since that time it has come to be observed by more than 18 million people worldwide.A word meaning “first fruits of the harvest” in the African language Kiswahili, Kwanzaa lasts from 26 December to 1 January, and is based on seven guiding principles, one for each day of the festival’s observance: * Unity, umoja, stressing the importance of togetherness for the family and the community.
* Self-determination, kujichagulia, requiring that common interests are defined and decisions are made in the best interest of family and community.
* Collective work and responsibility, ujima, reminding individuals of their obligation to the past, present and future, and that they have a role to play in the community, society, and world.
* Cooperative economics, ujamaa, emphasising collective economic strength and encouraging individuals to meet common needs through mutual support.
* Purpose, nia, encouraging people to look within themselves and to set personal goals that are beneficial to the community.
* Creativity, kuumba, making use of creative energies to build and maintain strong and vibrant communities.
* Faith, imani, focusing on honouring the best of a people’s traditions, and helping individuals strive for a higher level of life for humankind by affirming self-worth and confidence in the ability to succeed and triumph in righteous struggle.

As seen in the illustration, seven symbolic objects have come to be associated with the observance of Kwanzaa: the mkeka, the straw mat on which all other objects are placed; the mazao (fruits and vegetables), which symbolize the harvest origins of the holiday; the kinara, which is a candle holder for the mishumaa, the three green, three red and one black candle that represent the nguzo saba, or seven priniciples; muhindi, ears of corn representing the children in the house and community; kikombe cha umoja, the ‘unity cup’ and zawadi, gifts for the children, which should always include a book and a heritage symbol.Other possible activities for celebrating Kwanzaa are suggested at <http://www.holidays.net/kwanzaa/> and <http://www.dltk-holidays.com/kwanzaa/index.htm> . These include colouring pages, crafts and additional recipes. |
| Because **Kwanzaa** is a ‘first fruit’ or harvest festival, *mazao* (the crops) are an important part of the celebration. Baked goods with flour as well as foods with corn and other grain can be made.[recipes.holidays.net](http://recipes.holidays.net/view_recipe.php?id=150)**Apple Spiced Muffins**Ingredients1 cup milk 2 eggs, beaten6 tbsp. sugar 1/2 cup butter, melted 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour 1 tbsp. baking powder 1/2 tsp. salt 1 tsp. ground cinnamon 4 sm. apples, peeled, cored and chopped  | ***Topping:***1 tsp. ground cinnamon 6 tbsp. brown sugar*Method*Preheat oven to 400F. Line 12 muffin pans with paper or grease. Mix together egg, sugar, milk and cooled butter in large bowl. Sift in flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Add chopped apples; combine. Spoon mixture into muffin tins. Mix topping ingredients together. Sprinkle over top of uncooked muffins. Bake for 30-45 minutes, until well-risen and golden brown. | [flickr.com](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3281/3075579645_2f41e5265f.jpg)**Sweetcorn pudding** (Serves 3-4)Ingredients275 ml milk25g butter125g bread (crusts removed)330g can sweetcorn kernels, drained1 egg | 1T chopped fresh parsley½ tsp paprikasalt, freshly ground black peppera little grated cheese*Method*Set the oven to 190C (gas mark 5).Heat milk and butter gently in a saucepan until the butter has melted.Remove from the heat and crumble bread into the milk, allowing it to soften. Leave for a few minutes until the bread is soft.Stir in the sweetcorn, egg, parsley, paprika, salt and pepper.Spoon into a greased baking dish and sprinkle with cheese.Bake 35-40 minutes until golden brown.<http://recipes.holidays.net/view_recipe.php?id=150> |
| *Guru ka Langar* (literally ‘langar or refectory of the Guru’) is a community kitchen, one aspect of the pillar of Sikhism known as *Vand Ke Chakna*, i.e. sharing the fruits of one’s labour with others before considering oneself. Langar Ramgharia Sabha, Southall | The institution of langar was started by the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak, in an attempt to abolish divisions based on religion, caste, colour, age, gender or social status. As langar embodies the ethics of sharing, community and inclusiveness, only vegetarian food is served, to ensure that all people—with whatever their dietary restrictions—will feel welcome to eat as equals.Mata Khivi, the wife of the second Guru, Guru Angad, would supervise the langar herself, serving the food with her own hands to all who came. Such was her dedication that langar came to be known as Mata Khivi ji ka Langar. Even the Mughal Emperor Akbar sat with everyone else when he came to langar. Mata Khivi serving langar[sikhiwiki](http://www.sikhiwiki.org/images/thumb/1/1a/Khivi.jpg/250px-Khivi.jpg)No one is ever turned away. The food is normally served twice a day, every day of the year, and each week it falls to one or more families to provide and prepare the meal, which they do on a voluntary basis as part of their commitment to serve their community. Besides the langars attached to gurdwaras, there are improvised open-air langars at the time of festivals and gurpurbs. These special langars are possibly the most largely attended community meals anywhere in the world. |
| ***http://festivals.iloveindia.com/images/langar1.jpgKarah prasad****Karah Prashad* is given on religious festivals. Prayers are said while it is being made and it is so quick to make that, by the time the prayers are over, the dish is ready.*Ingredients*100g unsalted butter50g plain flour100g semolina¾ pint water and 100g sugar, boiled together*Method*1. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the flour and beat well with a wooden spoon.
2. Keep the heat low at all times. Pour in the semolina and beat well. Heat until the butter separates.
3. Gradually add the sugared water and beat until a paste is formed. If the mixture gets too firm, add more butter.

***Note:*** If you make karah prashad to share with the class it is very important to point out to the children that they are just getting to see what it tastes like, that ‘real’ karah prashad has had special prayers said over it. | *Dahl**Dahl* is a very versatile food. It can use any ingredients suitable for a vegetarian casserole and be made with as much or as little spice as preferred.Put half a pack of orange lentils in a saucepan and cover to about 2cm above with water. Add turmeric, half an onion (chopped), garlic, grated ginger, a cardamom pod and a slice of lemon.Simmer on a very low heat keeping an eye on it. Add more water if necessary.Other ingredients can be added such as coriander leaves, cumin, or cauliflower florets.Finish by gently frying chopped onions in oil until brown and crispy. Add cumin and/or coriander seeds, and when the seeds begin to sizzle, pour over the dahl.langar_dahl |
| Cheese stars*Ingredients*150g self-rising flour½ tsp salt75g butter or margarine75g cheese, finely grated1 egg and 1Tbsp milk beaten togetherstar shaped cutter and greased baking sheet1. Sift the flour and salt. Add the butter or margarine and rub to make fine crumbs
2. Leave a Tbsp of the cheese aside and add the rest to the bowl and stir in.
3. Put a Tbsp of the egg and milk mixture in a cup and mix the rest into the flour to make a dough.
4. Sprinkle flour onto a clean work surface. Roll the dough until it is about ½ cm.
 | 1. Cut the star shapes, re-rolling scraps to make more.
2. Brush the stars with the rest of the egg mixture and sprinkle the rest of the cheese.
3. Put onto a greased baking sheet and bake in the oven 8-10 minutes until golden.

Cinnamon starsMakes about 40. Takes an hour or so, plus chilling.[channel4.com](http://www.channel4.com/food/recipes/occasions/christmas/cinnamon-stars-recipe_p_1.html) | *Ingredients*3 egg whites 2 tbsp lemon juice 350g icing sugar 100g mixed peel, finely chopped 300g ground almonds 1 tbsp ground cinnamon 1 tsp lemon zest (from an unwaxed lemon) 1. Using an electric hand whisk, whisk the egg whites in clean bowl with a pinch of salt and lemon juice. Continue to whisk, while gradually adding the sugar until stiff peaks form. Set aside one third of the meringue.
2. Add the mixed peel to the larger quantity of meringue, then add 250g of the ground almonds, cinnamon and lemon zest, use a spatula to combine to a doughy paste – you may have to use your hands to finish it. Cover with cling film, then chill for 45 minutes.
 | 1. Preheat oven to 180°C/ fan160°C
2. Knead the dough through. Sprinkle the remaining almonds on a work surface, then use a rolling pin to roll the dough out to 1/2cm. Spread the smaller quantity of meringue on top with a palette knife. Leave to dry for at least 1 hour and up to 3 – the topping needs to have formed a crust.
3. Dip a 5cm star-shaped cutter into cold water to stop the meringue and paste from sticking and cut out star shapes – as close together as you can to avoid waste. Put on baking parchment set on a baking sheet and bake for 8–10 minutes on the lowest shelf in the oven. (The top should remain white and the base should be slightly brown.) Leave to cool. Store in a biscuit tin for up to 4 weeks.

<http://www.channel4.com/food/recipes/occasions/christmas/cinnamon-stars-recipe_p_1.html> |
| Chinese zodiac[ava7.com](http://ava7.com/images/chinese-zodiac/chinese-zodiac-chart.gif) | It is said that the legendary Chinese Emperor Huangdi invented the calendar in 2637 BCE, when he introduced the first cycle of the zodiac. Years in the Chinese calendar are marked not only by number but are also allocated to one of 12 animals. The story goes that, before he departed from this life, the Buddha summoned all the creatures in his kingdom. Only twelve came to bid him farewell—the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig—each of whom was rewarded by having a year named after them.The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. The year begins with the first new moon of the lunar cycle, the extended festivities lasting until the Lantern Festival, which occurs 15 days later at the time of the full moon. Preparations for New Year—also known as the Spring Festival (Yuan Tan)—actually begin on the 23rd day of the last lunar month, with a ritual known as “sending off the kitchen god.” This is the deity who protects the home and audits the family’s behaviour. Each year he is recalled to heaven; after offering him a sticky cake—said to both sweeten his mood and make it difficult for him to speak (in case he was thinking of giving them a bad report)—the family set his image alight, thus sending him on his way.**Yuan Tan** is celebrated as a time of reunion and thanksgiving. Houses are cleaned, debts are paid, new clothes are bought and every effort is made to remove all traces of ill fortune lingering from the previous year. The entrance to the home is decorated with calligraphic banners (chun lian, “spring couplets”), hopeful messages intended to elicit good fortune. A feast called “surrounding the stove” is held on New Year’s Eve, when it is believed that the spirits of the ancestors join the living round the family banquet table. Parents encourage their children to stay awake as long as possible in the belief that battling sleep will increase their parents’ longevity. At midnight, firecrackers are set off and lion-dancers re-enact the story of Nian, a mythic beast who appeared in the days of Huangdi to terrorise the countryside. This creature was so fierce that only a lion was able to drive it off. The next year, when the beast returned to take his revenge, the people created a lion out of bamboo and cloth; two men crawled inside and, prancing and roaring, once again managed to banish the beast, and from that moment onward, lion dances became a vital part of the New Year tradition. |
| *Chi fan le mei you*, (“Have you eaten yet?”) is a common greeting to guests as they enter a home on Chinese New Year. Many of the traditions of the New Year centre on food either being cooked or eaten. Dinners tend to be very elaborate involving tables laden with auspicious foods. In fact, nearly everything eaten will have symbolic significance.Nian gao[www.greenfield-thong.com](http://www.greenfield-thong.com/images/chinesenewyear/4.niangao.jpg)Whole steamed carp[flickr.com](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3092/2814348180_b5611237f2.jpg?v=0) | On New Year’s Eve, families have a reunion feast which includes *nian gao,* a sticky rice pudding cake which is said to make people “advance toward higher positions and prosperity step by step.” A New Year’s Eve tradition from Northern China is dumplings (*jiao zi*) that look like the golden ingots (*yuan bao*) used during the Ming Dynasty. In addition *jiao zi* sounds like the word for the earliest paper money, so serving them brings the promise of wealth and prosperity! Many families eat these at midnight in the hope that they will have money to bring from the old year into the new. Another traditional dish is long noodles, eaten to symbolise the hope that all at the table will have a long life.Almost every dish has a symbolic meaning or name that sounds like a Chinese character for fortune, happiness, longevity or prosperity. *Hoe see fat choy* (hair seaweed, *fat choy,* with dried oysters, *ho see*) sounds like “wealth and good business,” lotus roots (*lin ngau*) mean abundance year after year, while lettuce translates into “growing wealth.” When Cantonese families visit each other to exchange New Year greetings they customarily take gifts such as tangerines and oranges, as their Chinese names sound like ‘gold’ and ‘wealth’. In many homes, a platter with either five meat or five vegetable dishes might be served. Whether meat or vegetable dishes are included, this dish is called “the five blessings of the New Year,” referring to longevity, riches, peace, wisdom and virtue.On New Year’s Eve, when everyone gathers around the table for the big family reunion, carp is a typical main course, because it symbolises a profitable year ahead. The fish is never fully eaten to ensure that the family will have an excess of good fortune through the year. Vegetables embody the freshness of ‘evergreen’ and are said to store good fortune in their roots. Fish balls (*yu-wan*) and meat balls (*jou-wan*) are symbolic of ‘reunion,’ as the round shape of the meat and fish balls portrays ‘togetherness.’ Great care is taken to serve an even number of dishes to bestow ‘double happiness’ on the family.To ensure completeness and to avoid misfortune, most New Year dishes are prepared with uncut or whole ingredients, such as a duck or chicken being served with the head and feet. When cooking, people generally avoid chopping up fish, leafy greens and other items such as noodles. In fact, using knives, cleavers or sharp objects during the holiday season is considered unlucky as this could sever the entire family’s good fortune; if chopped ingredients are used for the recipes, they are prepared before the New Year.During the week-long celebrations, every household keeps their table topped up with sweet and savoury specialties so they can welcome family and friends with a choice of festive treats. Another prerequisite of the New Year is the “tray of togetherness”, a tray or special box filled with an assortment of auspicious treats: among the more popular treats are sweetened lotus roots (symbolising abundance), sweetened lotus seeds (suggesting fertility), dried melon seeds (symbolising profuse earnings), and all kinds of candies to symbolise an abundance of the ‘sweet’ things of life.  |
| Illuminated HaggadahHamburg, 1740[www.huc.edu](http://www.huc.edu/libraries/exhibits/haggadah/images/hu000090.jpg) | The Jewish festival of **Pesach**—more commonly known by the English word ‘Passover’—commemorates the liberation of the ancient Israelites from slavery as told in the biblical book of Exodus. Typically lasting from 6-8 days, the highlight occurs on one of the first two nights, when friends and family gather for a special meal, the seder. Seder means ‘order’ and the sequence of ritual and narrative to be followed during the meal can be found in special books known as Haggadah, (Hebrew, ‘telling, story, narrative.’) Each item in the meal is replete with symbolic significance, for example bitter herbs (most often horseradish) representing the bitterness of slavery, the karpas (greens such as parsley dipped in salt water) to represent tears, and charoset (a paste made of fruit, nuts and wine), which is meant to symbolise the mortar used by the slaves during their forced labour. The observance is also known as the feast of unleavened bread. Before the festival begins there is a great spring cleaning, when all foods containing leaven are scrupulously removed from the house. Only unleavened bread such as matzah can be eaten during Pesach, symbolic of the bread eaten during the exodus: “With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.” (Exodus 12:39)Occasionally a family will eat the seder meal reclining, to show that nowadays, unlike during the flight from Egypt, they are not in a hurry. |
|  | *Symbolic foods on the seder plate:***Sweet mixture: a mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices.** Symbolic of the mortar the Jewish slaves made in their building for the Egyptians.**Roast bone: a shankbone or neck of poultry, roasted**. Symbolic of the Paschal lamb offered as the Passover sacrifice in Temple days. **Roast egg: hard-boiled egg**. An egg is used because it is a traditional food for mourners, reminding Jews of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.**Spring vegetable: a vegetable such as parsley, representing spring and growth.** Dipped in salt water to represent the tears of the slaves.  **Maror (bitter herbs): herbs such as horseradish**. Represents the bitter life of the Israelites during the time of their enslavement in Egypt.  **Bitter vegetable/salt water: a bitter vegetable such as celery or lettuce.** Those who do not put such a vegetable on their Seder Plate sometimes put a dish of salt water in its place. |
| *Chocolate-covered matzoh*[kidscooking.about.com](http://kidscooking.about.com/od/passoverrecipes/r/chocolatematzoh.htm) | Matzoh is unleavened bread that reminds those observing Passover that the Israelites had to leave Egypt so quickly that there was not time to wait for the bread to rise.*Ingredients:*3-4 boards matzoh 3/4 cup margarine or butter 1/2 cup brown sugar 1-1/2 cups semisweet or dark chocolate chips 1 cup chopped walnuts, hazelnuts or pecans (optional but probably not good to use if bringing to school) 1/4 tsp. kosher salt or sea salt | *Preparation:*1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Spray with cooking spray.
2. Spread the matzohs in the pan in a single layer, breaking them to fit if necessary.
3. Heat the margarine and brown sugar in a medium saucepan to a boil. Pour evenly over matzoh, spreading with a knife to make sure the matzoh is well covered.
4. Bake 10-12 minutes. Turn off the oven, and remove the matzoh.
5. Sprinkle the chocolate chips evenly over the matzoh. Return the matzoh to the oven. Let it sit in the warm (turned off) oven for 2 minutes. Remove and spread the chocolate evenly with a knife.
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| [flickr.com](http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2350/2223930483_9c16576d61.jpg?v=0) | *Coconut pyramids* Because yeast products are removed from the house during Passover, ordinary cakes are not eaten. However, coconut pyramids provide a sweet alternative. The pyramid shapes are a reminder of the time when the Hebrew ancestors of the Jews were slaves in Egypt. *Ingredients (makes about 24)*2 standard eggs200g desiccated coconut125g caster sugar | Method1. Line a baking tray with rice paper
2. Beat the eggs well and stir in sugar and coconut.
3. Leave to stand for 20 minutes
4. With wet hands shape into 24 pyramids.
5. Bake at 180C, Gas4, 350F until golden
6. Remove from tray and take off excess rice paper.
7. Cool on a wire rack and store in an airtight tin.
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| [aboutfestivalsofindia.com](http://aboutfestivalsofindia.com/articles/fasting-in-hinduism/) | Most devout Indians fast regularly or on special occasions like festivals and *Ekadashis*. On such days they do not eat at all, eat once or make do with fruits or a special diet of simple food.Fasting in Sanskrit is called *upavaasa.* Upa means ‘near’ and *vaasa* means ‘to stay’. *Upavaasa* is a reference to the kind of fasting that brings one closer to ‘divinity’. Fasting is also called *vrata*. Vrata is a broader term, standing for a religious practice that is undertaken to carry out certain obligations for achieving divine blessings. It may include *upavaasa* or fasting along with other physical obligations like not sleeping or not speaking for a certain period of time, or taking baths at particular holy river on earmarked auspicious days and so on.A lot of time and energy is spent in procuring food items, preparing, cooking, eating and digesting food, and certain food types in particular can dull the mind. Hence certain days are set aside to save time and conserve energy by eating either simple, light food or totally abstaining, in the hope that the mind, which might be pre-occupied by the thought of food will focus on the spiritual. However fasting should not make a person weak or irritable or create an urge to indulge later. For this reason the Bhagavad Gita urges believers to eat appropriately—neither too less nor too much (*yukta-aahaara)*.

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| Eid fireworks, Dubai[www.dubaichronicle.com](http://www.dubaichronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/dsf-fireworks.jpg) | Eid is an Arabic word meaning a recurring event, and in Islam it denotes the religious festivals. Fitr means “to break” and this particular festival marks the breaking of the fasting period of Ramadan. This Eid is known as the ‘small’ festival, al-Eid al Saghir, as it lasts only three days compared with the four days of Eid-ul-Adha, the festival of sacrifice.For a Muslim, **Eid-ul-Fitr** is a day of thanksgiving. Fasting is forbidden and in the morning, Muslims are encouraged to enjoy a sweet snack such as dates. Other practices include bathing and wearing one’s best or new clothes. Thanks to Allah are expressed by distributing alms among the poor and needy and offering special prayers. On this day, gifts are also given to children and loved ones, but it is also a time of forgiveness, and for making amends.The first Eid was celebrated in 624 CE by the Prophet and his friends and relatives after the victory of the battle of Jang-e-Badar. Therefore it can be said that Muslims are not only celebrating the end of fasting, but also thanking Allah for the help and strength they received throughout the previous month. The festival begins with the first sighting of the new moon, although Muslims in most countries rely on news of an official sighting. There are special services out of doors and in Mosques, processions through the streets, fireworks and a special celebratory meal—the first daytime meal Muslims will have had in a month. The traditional greeting at this time is Eid Mubarak, i.e. “a happy and blessed Eid”. |
| Christ in the wildernessIvan Kramskoy, 1872[www.auburn.edu](http://www.auburn.edu/forlang/russian/art/kramskoy-christ.jpg)ConfessionDetail of a fresco by Giotto Upper Church of St Francis, Assisi | Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:1-4)The word Lent probably derives from a Teutonic word referring to the lengthening of days in spring, as reflected in the Anglo-Saxon name for March, Lenctenmonat. Originally it simply referred to the season of spring, but it came to be used to translate the Latin quadregesima, meaning ‘forty days’ (or more literally ‘the fortieth day’).Forty days is a period of time often mentioned in the Bible. In the Old Testament story of the flood, the deluge is said to have lasted forty days and nights; Moses remained on the mountain for forty days, and most significantly for Lent, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness praying and fasting prior to undertaking his ministry. In the earliest days of the Church, **Lent** was observed as a preparation for Easter, a time when converts were instructed in the faith and baptized and the faithful could rededicate themselves. Sanctuaries are decorated with purple, symbolising not only the pain and suffering Jesus endured, but also, as it was considered the colour of royalty, his subsequent enthronement in heaven. For many Christians it is a time of fasting and discipline—a time to “give something up”—and churches hold group meetings for prayer, study and Bible reading.**Shrove Tuesday** gets its name from the ritual of shriving, when, in order to receive absolution or forgiveness, a Christian would confess their sins. Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent; it is observed as a day of penance, but also a day of celebration, the last chance to feast before the fast of Lent begins.In earlier times many observant Christians would not eat foods such as meat and fish, butter, eggs, and dairy products during Lent. In order that food wouldn’t be wasted, families would have a feast, consuming everything that wouldn’t last the forty days, a habit that gave rise to the French name Mardi Gras, “fat Tuesday”. Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday as they were a dish that incorporated the eggs, butter and milk that needed to be consumed.<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/shrove.html> Names for Shrove Tuesday around the world and a site suitable for children to explore.More background information: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/lent_2.shtml>  |