

THE TALON SENT OUT A SURVEY TO ASK LOS ALTOS WHAT THEY DO DURING THE HOLIDAYS. WE RECEIVED A VARIETY OF RESPONSES THAT WERE FILLED WITH WONDERFUL TRADITIONAL DISHES AND EXCITING GAMES. WE HOPE THAT YOU TAKE THE HOLIDAY SEASON AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RELAX AND INDULGE IN YOUR LONG HELD TRADITIONS.

HAPPY

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ANOOSHKA SHETTY (10)

HOLIDAY: DEEPAVALI

INGREDIENTS:
BOILED RICE
TURMERIC LEAVES
COCONUT
JAGGERY
SALT
CARDAMOM

DIRECTIONS:
1. WASH AND SOAK BOILED RICE FOR 4 HOURS
2. ADD SALT, WATER AND RICE INTO A BLENDER TO FORM A PASTE
3. MIX COCONUT, JAGGERY AND CARDAMOM
4. WRAP RICE MIX IN THE TURMERIC LEAF
5. STEAM FOR 20 MINUTES
6. SERVE



JULIA CHANG (11)

HOLIDAY: KOREAN NEW YEAR (SEOLLAL)

"WE ALWAYS MAKE RICE CAKE SOUP (DDUKKGOOK). THIS DISH INCLUDES OVAL RICE CAKES IN A BROTH, WITH TOPPINGS SUCH AS SLICED EGGS AND SEAWEED. ANNUALLY, OUR FAMILY MAKES DUMPLINGS AND KIMCHI TO INCLUDE WITH THE SOUP. WE ALSO ALWAYS FACETIME OR GO VISIT OUR EXTENDED FAMILY IN KOREA TO SAY "HAPPY NEW YEAR AND LOTS OF LUCK!" IT'S A GREAT TIME TO RECOGNIZE THE GREAT PEOPLE THAT WE LOVE AND SURROUND EACH OTHER WITH."



JESSICA SHAPIRO (9)

HOLIDAY: HANUKKAH

"WE ALL MAKE LATKES TOGETHER. IT COMES FROM MY LOVE TO COOK AND MY FAMILY ALWAYS BEING TOGETHER AROUND HANUKKAH."

INGREDIENTS:
5 RUSSET POTATOES
1 ONION
SALT AND PEPPER
6 EGG WHITES
1 C. FLOUR
OIL FOR FRYING

DIRECTIONS:
1. SHRED POTATOES AND ONIONS WITH A FOOD PROCESSOR
2. ADD SALT AND LET SIT FOR 10 MINUTES
3. SQUEEZE OUT MOISTURE WITH A CHEESE CLOTH AND PLACE IN LARGE BOWL
4. ADD PEPPER, EGG WHITES AND FLOUR AND MIX
5. HEAT 1/4 CUP OF OIL IN LARGE PAN
6. SCOOP MIXTURE INTO PAN AND FLATTEN WITH SPATULA
7. SERVE WITH APPLESAUCE AND SOUR CREAM



ANDREA GORMAN

HOLIDAY: CHRISTMAS

"WHEN MY CHILDREN WERE GROWING UP, EACH YEAR WE CELEBRATED AN "ORNAMENT EXCHANGE" WITH TWO OTHER FAMILIES. I HAVE A LARGE COLLECTION OF ORNAMENTS THAT HAVE SPECIAL MEANING TO ME. THE TRADITION OF HAVING AN ORNAMENT EXCHANGE AND COLLECTING ORNAMENTS IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE EACH ORNAMENT HOLDS SPECIAL MEANING. WHENEVER WE GO ON VACATION, WE PURCHASE AN ORNAMENT COMMEMORATING THAT TRIP. MY FRIENDS KNOW I COLLECT CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS SO THEY GIVE THEM TO ME YEAR ROUND! I HAVE BOXES AND BOXES OF ORNAMENTS, AND EACH ONE HAS SPECIAL MEANING TO ME."



MAYU AND

WINTER HOLIDAYS

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GRACE PATTERSON (10)

HOLIDAY: CHRISTMAS

"EVERY CHRISTMAS EVE, WE HAVE CHEESE FONDUE. IT'S A SPECIAL TREAT AND QUICK AND EASY THING TO MAKE, AS WE USUALLY GET BACK LATE FROM NUTCRACKER PERFORMANCES. THEN, ON CHRISTMAS MORNING, WE ALWAYS HAVE COFFEE CAKE BEFORE WE OPEN OUR PRESENTS. WE'VE DONE THIS TRADITION FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS NOW. IT'S RARE THAT OUR WHOLE FAMILY GETS TOGETHER FOR A MEAL WHICH MAKES THIS TIME SPECIAL."



EMILY

REGARDLESS OF RELIGION, THE WINTER HOLIDAYS BRING THE WORLD TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE THE END OF THE YEAR IN THEIR OWN WAYS. BUT FOR MIXED PEOPLE LIKE US, IT'S A TIME TO HONOR TWO CULTURES' TRADITIONS: HANUKKAH AND CHRISTMAS.

MAYU

I've never felt very connected to my Jewish or Buddhist sides, but every year when the winter holidays come around, I feel closer to my roots than ever. Hanukkah is the one time of the year that I am guaranteed contact with Judaism. Christmas, though not a Buddhist tradition, is one that has been passed down from my Japanese ancestors—and they've both given me a lot.

My mother is Buddhist and my father is Jewish, and neither of them are devout despite growing up in households where religion took precedence over most things. They have fostered an environment for my siblings and I to be free in choosing what we believe in. Still, there are certain traditions that both have passed down.

Over the years, I've learned a few measly prayers for both Buddhism and Judaism, have a basic grasp of their ideals and recognize several important symbols in both religions. However, it's only during the holidays that I truly feel connected to my cultures. Over Thanksgiving break, I

always visit my dad's side of the family. Their affectionate and easygoing natures have given me a sense of what I believe to be Jewish culture. Over the summer, I visit my Japanese side, who regularly attend temple and strongly believe in the power of prayer. Often, I find myself comparing the two and seeing which side I fit into the best. I always come out unsatisfied.

I used to want to naturally assimilate into one of the two cultures, but just looking at me would show you that I could never fit either of their exact expectations. But I realized that confining yourself within self-perceived standards will never help you find your unique set of beliefs. Every different experience you face shapes what you believe and why. I've found that my particular values are a combination of both my parents'—a new category that I didn't even know existed. And it is thanks to my parents' efforts that I understand the importance of certain cultural beliefs and rituals that have contributed to who I am today. In the end, Hanukkah and Christmas have given me more than just a few days of gifts.

EMILY

I'm lucky to have grown up in a supportive, Christian-Jewish fusion home (my mom is Christian and my dad is Jewish); I've gained a better understanding of each religion, and of course I'm very fortunate to be able to celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas. However, deeper than Michael Bublé Christmas music and oily potato latkes is a time of reflection for me about my views.

My relationship with religion has always been a little iffy. I feel too Jewish to commit myself to everything being preached in Church, but my dad also almost never takes us to Temple. I've only been to two bat mitzvahs, both my cousins'. I have never celebrated Easter and I can count the number of times we have had Passover on one hand. Honestly, I'm neither Jewish or Christian.

It's been made clear how alienated I am from Christianity and Judaism. While people describe the times they've had a spiritual moment with Jesus, I avert my eyes and wonder if I'll ever have a spiritual connection. I've also had someone tell me that I'm "not even that Jewish." In all honesty, I mean, she's not wrong. That being said, those words have scarred me as if the Jewish part of

me isn't real.

Despite how religion is treated very open-mindedly at home, when I attend Church with my mom I can't help but notice the empty spot where my dad might have been. It also deeply pains me hearing about the heinous way Jews have been mistreated, I feel deeply loyal to my Jewish culture, but at the same time guilty that part of me is also not Jewish. Growing up, I felt like my life was a set path that ultimately led to a day when I would commit myself to a religion—and it terrified me. I would let down my mom if I chose Judaism, and my dad if I chose Christianity. Looking back, I couldn't have been more wrong.

My future religious life still feels very uncertain. It's hard to commit myself to a specific religion when I am still learning more about the teachings. One thing is for sure though; I've learned how powerful faith is and the importance of trusting someone or something "up there" when you feel out of control of everything else.

For now, I am happy to practice parts of Christianity and Judaism through our traditions. I love reciting Hebrew prayers with my mom and helping my dad decorate our Christmas tree. These traditions bring my family