

## Celebrating Christmas with the Rabbi

I feel incredibly lucky to be part of a large and very mixed family. Although all my grandparents and parents are Jewish between my sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, niece, nephews and their spouses and children, we span religions and the world. We joke when we are all out together that people must wonder what our connection is and we are the united nations of families. Before this year of pandemic, despite not all living close, we would find any excuse for a get together. Finding time where 32 people all have a day off together is tricky so our get togethers would often coincide with the days around Christmas.

So, for many years now my Jewish, Muslim, Humanist, Hindu, Christian family from UK, USA, Guyana, Mauritius, Palestine, Portugal, and Spain have woven together our own 'Christmas' traditions. Picking a few days in December to get together, feast and celebrate.



As I am sure you can imagine, with such a diverse family the spread of food is varied and delicious. Our get together would not be complete without gefilte fish, chopped liver and tabouleh. There is always a wonderful spread of cheeses and salads and in the past, we've even be known to have curried goat. Each family unit brings their own contribution and together we have an eclectic spread that lasts the days we are together and beyond. While my grandma was alive, we used to host our meals in in the lower room of her accommodation and invite some of her friends who lived there too.



It is amazing seeing all the cousins running around together with the older ones looking after the younger ones (and no doubt teaching them things they should not know). Like many who cannot be with their families this year, I will miss our giant Christmas get together but know when we can finally reunite it will be all the more sweet.

While it may not be usual for the Rabbi to celebrate Christmas, it is a blessing or a

curse of living in a Christian country that most people are afforded time off during that time. Like many mixed families, mine have woven their own traditions and ways to be together and celebrate each other. I am excited to get to know all of you more and hear stories of your own family traditions and celebrations.



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