



A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to be Jewish

Joshua Eli Plaut

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Christmas is not everybody's favorite holiday. Historically, Jews in America, whether participating in or refraining from recognizing Christmas, have devised a multitude of unique strategies to respond to the holiday season. Their response is a mixed one: do we participate, try to ignore the holiday entirely, or create our own traditions and make the season an enjoyable time? This book, the first on the subject of Jews and Christmas in the United States, portrays how Jews are shaping the public and private character of Christmas by transforming December into a joyous holiday season belonging to all Americans.

Creative and innovative in approaching the holiday season, these responses range from composing America's most beloved Christmas songs, transforming Hanukkah into the Jewish Christmas, creating a national Jewish tradition of patronizing Chinese restaurants and comedy shows on Christmas Eve, volunteering at shelters and soup kitchens on Christmas Day, dressing up as Santa Claus to spread good cheer, campaigning to institute Hanukkah postal stamps, and blending holiday traditions into an interfaith hybrid celebration called "Chrismukkah" or creating a secularized holiday such as Festivus.

Through these venerated traditions and alternative Christmastime rituals, Jews publicly assert and proudly proclaim their Jewish and American identities to fashion a universally shared message of joy and hope for the holiday season.

See also: <http://www.akosherchristmas.org>

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