

DECEMBER

ISSTAATO'SI
(Cold Month)

Pronounced:
"Iss-sta-doo-see"

With colonization and the influence of the
Churches, "The Cold Month" also became
known as:

OMAHKÁTOYIIKI'SOMMIAATO'S
(Big holy moon month)



I'TAAMOMAHKATOIYIKSISTSIKO
(Happy Big Holy Day!)



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Merry Christmas!

On behalf of the Indigenous Education Department, we want to wish everyone a happy and restful holiday season, and that you are able to give the gift of time to the people you love most. We also want to encourage you to take some time to reflect on the Winter Solstice (the longest night of the year) and in your own way, give thanks for the return of Naato'si (the sun).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE

MISÁMIKO'KOMIAATO'S (Long night month)

The Blackfoot people of the past would take special care in selecting their winter camps each year. The big Cottonwood trees that grow along the river bottom would offer ideal protection from the elements as well as an abundance of firewood and access to water. Families would spend most of these cold snowy days inside warm Tipis sharing many Blackfoot stories.

IT'S ABOUT REFLECTION AND PERSONAL WELLNESS...



“The winter solstice time is no longer celebrated as it once was, with the understanding that this is a period of descent and rest, of going within our homes, within ourselves and taking in all that we have been through, all that has passed in this full year which is coming to a close... like nature and the animal kingdom around us, this time of hibernation is so necessary for our tired limbs, our burdened minds.

Our modern culture teaches avoidance at a max at this time; alcohol, lights, shopping, overworking, over spending, comfort food and consumerism.

...and yet the natural tug to go inwards as nearly all creatures are doing is strong and the weather so bitter that people are left feeling that winter is hard, because for those of us without burning fires and big festive families, it can be lonely and isolating. Whereas in actual fact winter is kind, she points us in her quiet soft way towards our inner self, towards this annual time of peace and reflection, embracing the darkness and forgiving, accepting and loving, embracing goodbye the past year.

Winter takes away the distractions, the buzz, and presents us with the perfect time to rest and withdraw into a womb like love, bringing fire & light to our hearth.

.. and then, just around the corner the new year will begin again, and like a seed planted deep in the earth, we will all rise with renewed energy once again to dance in the sunlight.”

–Brigit Anna McNeill