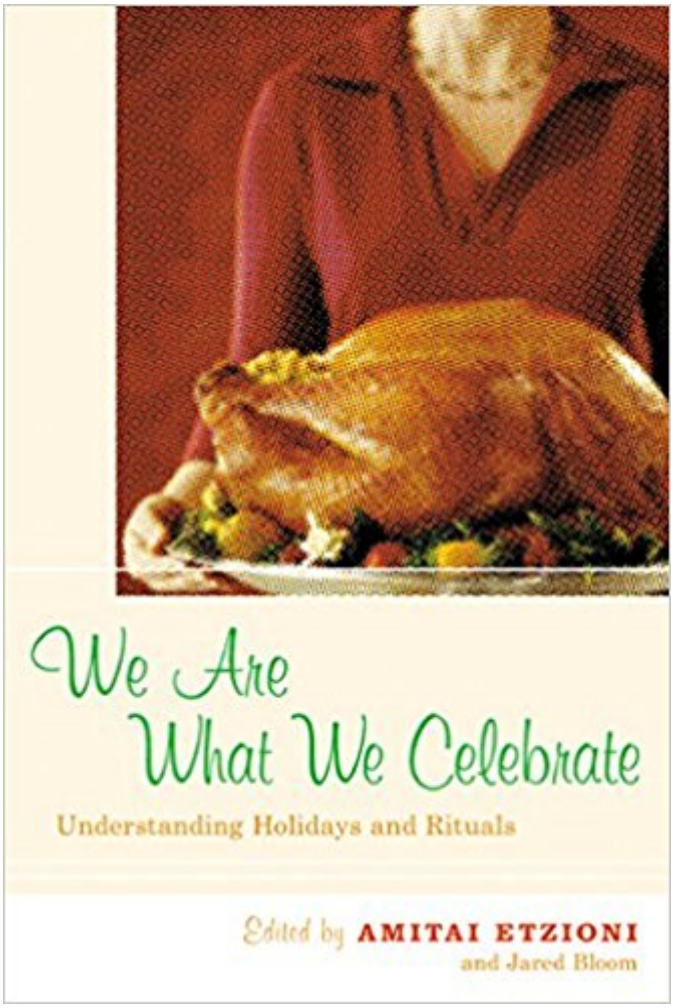
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We Are What We Celebrate: Understanding Holidays And Rituals



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Synopsis

How did Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday become a national holiday? Why do we exchange presents on Christmas and Chanukah? What do bunnies have to do with Easter? How did Earth Day become a global holiday? These questions and more are answered in this fascinating exploration into the history and meaning of holidays and rituals. Edited by Amitai Etzioni, one of the most influential social and political thinkers of our time, this collection provides a compelling overview of the impact that holidays and rituals have on our family and communal life.From community solidarity to ethnic relations to religious traditions, We Are What We Celebrate argues that holidays such as Halloween, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve, and Valentine's Day play an important role in reinforcing, and sometimes redefining, our values as a society. The collection brings together classic and original essays that, for the first time, offer a comprehensive overview and analysis of the important role such celebrations play in maintaining a moral order as well as in cementing family bonds, building community relations and creating national identity. The essays cover such topics as the creation of Thanksgiving as a national holiday; the importance of holidays for children; the mainstreaming of Kwanzaa; and the controversy over Columbus Day celebrations.Compelling and often surprising, this look at holidays and rituals brings new meaning to not just the ways we celebrate but to what those celebrations tell us about ourselves and our communities. Contributors: Theodore Caplow, Gary Cross, Matthew Dennis, Amitai Etzioni, John R. Gillis, Ellen M. Litwicki, Diana Muir, Francesca Polletta, Elizabeth H. Pleck, David E. Proctor, Mary F. Whiteside, and Anna Day Wilde.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"[P]rovides readers with a deeper insight into the ways in which holidays have been used and misused throughout American history. We learn of how Americans come together on their special days and how those days, sometimes, reveal social strains. A necessary volume for anyone who cares about how Americans reveal community and perform civic obligation."-Gary Alan Fine,author of Difficult Reputations: Collective Memories of the Evil, Inept, and Controversial"[O]ffers an effervescent mix of sociological and historical reflections on the state of holidays and rituals in American culture."-Leigh E. Schmidt,author of Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays"[A] new and welcome framework for understanding the meanings of holidays in our multi-cultural society. Any simple explanation of even the most familiar celebrations will be challenged in reading this wide-ranging collection."-Penne L. Restad,author of Christmas in America: A History

Amitai Etzioni is University Professor at the George Washington University, where he is the director of the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies. He is the author of numerous books, including The Monochrome Society, The Limits of Privacy, and The New Golden Rule. He is a past president of the American Sociological Association. Jared Bloom is Research Assistant at the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies, George Washington University.

Not what I was looking for but an interesting read anyway.

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