

Land Acknowledgement – December 2023



Treaty	Tonight we acknowledge our presence on Treaty 13 land that is the ancestral home of the Wendat, Anishinaabeg Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and which is still the home for many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful as we learn to grow in our relations with all Indigenous people.
General Comment	On December 21st the sun is at its lowest point in the sky resulting in the shortest day and the longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The winter solstice marks the “rebirth of the sun” as sunlight grows longer each day. The solstice is traditionally a time to reflect on the past year; a time to listen to the Elders' and each other's stories; a time to rest, recuperate, and renew our strength; a time to connect with our loved ones; and a time to hope and dream.
Personal Question	(Pause) During this winter solstice what stories will you tell family and friends about our responsibilities to care for each other, the earth and universe?
Club Commitment	(Pause) Together we are working towards truth, healing, justice and reconciliation.

Winter Solstice in the Cree Tradition - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5F9zRYfQ0>

Knowledge and Wisdom Keeper Pauline Shirt talks about the winter solstice - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD5v88d9kJI>

Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway from the Buffalo People Arts Institute talks about the Winter Solstice and what it means to her - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKVgK9n_xcA

More about the Winter Solstice

In December in the Northern Hemisphere, Indigenous Peoples celebrate the beginning of winter and the presence of the storytelling season. During this time, they acknowledge the challenges and successes faced in the prior months and look forward to a new season with the anticipation of community gatherings, feasts and celebrations.

For many Indigenous cultures, winter is a time to connect with the spirits of the past. The December solstice became a time to reflect on and thank their ancestors, share stories, honour their origins, and set intentions for themselves in preparation for the cold months ahead. It's also a time to recognize everyone's fundamental interconnectedness—with each other, nature, and the cosmos.

Indigenous Peoples believe that all have the power to create a world where all are better and more connected, and it all starts within—within self and within community—in carving out time and space to reflect, grow and always give back. One must also show care and compassion to relatives who are less fortunate, who are living in less than ideal situations, who are grieving or struggling with their most basic needs. It is a time to remember Earth and the non-human relations, those who are suffering injustice in different corners of the world and generations that have come before and those who will come after.

The celebration of the solstice isn't limited to Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Cultures around the world have marked the day in their own unique ways, including the Feast of Juul and St. Lucia's Day in Scandinavia, Szczodre Gody in Poland, Yalda in Iran, Chawmos in Pakistan, the Fiesta de Santo Tomás in Guatemala, and Dongzhi in China.

Stories about Solstice around the World - <https://www.threeriversparks.org/blog/winter-solstice-stories-and-traditions-around-world>