

What to do on a holiday you don't celebrate

Being alone, or not celebrating during a holiday can be awkward or lonely. But it doesn't have to be. With some forethought, you can create a day for yourself that is enjoyable, restful or rejuvenating.

Here are a few ideas:

- **See a movie:** Most movie theaters are open on holidays. This also has the advantage that there will be other people there. And if you are prone to feeling constrained in your home all day, going to a movie gets you out of the house.
- **Binge watch a show** you've been meaning to catch.
- **Read a book** you've been wanting to dive into.
- **Dig into a craft or artistic or organizational project.** If you are not crafty, tackle a project you've been wanting to take care of. For instance, clean out a closet or organize your desk. You'll have a nice feeling of accomplishment.
- **Get active:** Some fitness facilities have limited hours on holidays - get a guest pass if you are not a member. And some recreational departments offer walk or run events. Or get active on your own – go for a walk or jog, put an exercise video on tv, or go to the park and shoot some hoops. Physical activity is not only good for your physical health – it is a powerful mood booster as well.
- **Volunteer:** There's nothing like helping others to reduce feeling sorry for yourself. Many shelters and food banks provide services or activities on holidays and need helpers. For more ideas go to <https://cuvolunteer.org/opportunities/calendar>
- **Be self-indulgent:** Redefine a holiday on your own as the ultimate me time. Stock up on favorite foods, plan a bubble bath or home facial, put some flowers around ...whatever makes you feel pampered and taken care of.

- **Cook something fantastic for yourself:** So what if you don't want turkey, stuffing other traditional holiday foods. Consider a meal that will feed your body and soul – something you adore. And make a feast for yourself.
- **Take a road trip to somewhere you've never been before.** This gets you out of the house, if being alone there would not be fun. It also provides a unique adventure. And you've have something to talk about when people ask - "what did you do during the holidays"?
- **Bond with nature:** Just because it's cold during the winter holidays doesn't mean you can't go outside. Make sure you are dressed properly. Getting some fresh air and communing among the trees could fill your soul.
- **Go out to eat:** This may not be the easiest thing to do on a holiday, but there are usually a few restaurants open. For instance, hotel restaurants are often open because their lodgers need a place to eat. Restaurants serving food from other cultures (e.g. Chinese, Indian, etc.) may also be open. Finally, check into local coffee shops. A common haven for people who are by themselves but want to be surrounded by people, many coffee shops are open at least for part of the holidays.

Whatever you decide to do, be sure to plan ahead: Don't let holidays you will not be celebrating sneak up on you. Decide ahead of time what you will do, and make sure you have the resources handy for doing it (since most stores are closed on holidays).

If you still feel lonely, acknowledge it. Human emotion doesn't stop because the calendar says it's a holiday. Make the best you can of the day and know that this too shall pass.