

# Hoyan: Oneida Tradition

## Oneida Nation's Post



Oneida Nation

December 31, 2013

Hoyan is an Oneida word loosely translating to "another", in English. Saying hoyan is a way to acknowledge and celebrate another new year. On New Years Day in Oneida, kids would go from house to house yelling, "hoyan!". People would give them donuts, pieces of fruit and other treats. Some Oneida families continue to follow this tradition to this day.



## ONEIDA

### Welcoming a New Year

Celebrating and welcoming the New Year takes on many forms.

In Denmark they keep and throw old dishes at friends' doors to symbolize friendship.

In Brazil people eat lentils to signify wealth.

No matter the celebration each tradition includes wishes of good fortune, health and prosperity.

As the calendar flips from the old into the new the Oneida Indian Nation, and other Haudenosaunee, greet the first day with "Hoyan (Ho-Yan)" or "New Yaay (New Yea)."

Hoyan is a community event where children go door-to-door and offer well wishes and greetings while armed with a bag or pillow case. The community responds by offering the children a doughnut, a sweet

American Indian cookie drizzled with a thick glaze or some other delicious treat.

"When we were younger, as we would do today, we'd make the kids dance," said Kandice Watson (Wolf Clan) when recalling the celebration of the annual

tradition on Territory Road. "For so long we were so poor here. There were a lot of things going on, so there were other priorities. It started to make a return when more people moved back to the community. That's when it started.

"It's similar to Halloween. You knocked on someone's door and someone gives you a treat. You got baked goods."

For Lisa Latocha (Wolf Clan), Hoyan included a feast with traditional foods. "Which is a treat because you don't get them all at once," she said. The menu could include corn soup, bread and mush, squash, beans, venison, buffalo and wild rice.

"It wasn't a Christian thing, it wasn't a pagan thing, it was a community activity that was also celebrated by the Onondaga, Oneidas, Six Nations Reservation (Canada) and Tuscarora," Kandice explained, adding similar community events include the Oneida

Indian Nation's annual Three Sisters dinner and annual summer picnic. Hoyan was observed and described by Historian Hope Emily Allen who was born in Kenwood and resided at the Oneida Community mansion house. She explains the tradition is perhaps Dutch or German in nature. In her notes, archived at the Syracuse University Library, Special Collections, she relates that in early 1942 Lydia Duxtater of Marble Hill told her:

"On New Year's Day the Indians went about in sleighs to receive fried cakes, saying 'Hoyan' and sometimes firing a salute of guns. They got this habit from the Dutch."

"I find that all the Indians I know recognize 'Hoyan' as the New Year's greeting when doughnuts are given. Saying it means, 'Happy New Year.' Anna [Johnson, Marble Hill Oneida] says that when the Indians went out to get doughnuts they left someone at home to dispense them in turn (sic).

"One woman of old white farmer stock on the West Road says that her people always supplied sleighs to aid the Indians on New Year's Day up to [go to] the Orchard. The Indians now tell me that all New York State Indians have the same custom, and the Irish wife of one says that in Rochester she worked for Germans who had the same custom—also with the same greeting. "I am reminded of Dr. Murray's discussion in the OED [Oxford English Dictionary] s.v. of Hogmanay



(Scottish and North of England for 'New Year's Eve,' when this word is the greeting [with the accompanying custom] indicated by the alternate name 'Cake Day'). Dr. Murray decided that the custom and greeting come from France, where the Norman word-variant seems especially close to Hogmanay. New York State Indian custom should be investigated in this connection as well as the practices of Holland and Palatine [Germany]. A wide-spread, very ancient European custom may be indicated."

The tradition continues within the Oneida Indian Nation community today.



On Oneida Nation of the Thames, many adults spend New Year's Eve baking a batch of doughnuts or scrambling to stock up on the sugary treats from the store or Tim Hortons.

They're preparing for New Year's Day, when children from the community south of London will go door to door to collect as many doughnuts as they can.

"It's almost like trick-or-treat," said Grand Chief Joel Abram of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.

Abram said children will carry bags or pillowcases and ask for a treat by yelling "Hoyan!" — an Oneida word that roughly translates to "another one."

He said people in the community have been celebrating Hoyan, unique to Oneida, since the mid-1800s to mark the start of a new year.

History of the tradition  
Why doughnuts? Abram said the event may have influenced by the Dutch. The Iroquois' very first treaty was made with the Dutch, who also ring in the new year with a doughnut-related tradition in some parts.

Abram said the winter season also marks other traditions in the community, including ones related to hunting, maple syrup and mid-winter ceremonies.

"It's very important," said Abram about the season. "It's part of our ceremonial cycle. It's time for Mother Earth to rest and renew herself so that in the spring time she will be ready to begin the seasons and the living things will begin to come again."



#### **Oneida welcomes a new year with doughnut tradition**

Kids go door to door asking for doughnuts for Hoyan

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## Basic Traditional Indian Donut Recipe

Recipe by Chef Tawnya Brant

Kahsherhón:ni (dough making)

### Ingredients

- 3 Eggs
- 1 cup Brown Sugar
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla
- 2 Teaspoons Butter (room temperature)
- ½ teaspoon Salt
- 3 ½ cups Flour
- 1 tablespoon Baking Powder
- 1 cup Buttermilk or sour milk\*
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon

\*(To sour add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice into 1 cup of milk stir and let it rest for 10 minutes before using)

### Method

1. Measure buttermilk or sour the milk and set aside.
2. Cream together butter, eggs, brown sugar and vanilla this can be done by hand or with a mixer use paddle attachment.
3. In a separate bowl mix together all dry ingredients Flour, Baking powder, salt and spices nutmeg, ginger and cinnamon.
4. Alternate dry ingredients and milk into wet ingredients. Add half of the dry ingredients into wet mix 15 seconds then half of the milk and mix. Add the rest of the dry then the rest of the milk in the same fashion. This can be done with mixer on low to keep flour from getting all over.
5. Add ins such as raisins, dried cranberries, blueberries, nuts, chopped apples or even chocolate chips can be added at this point if desired. 1 cup mix 15seconds.
6. Turn batter out on to a heavily floured surface and kneed as few times as possible until dough is no longer sticky (about 5 times).
7. Roll dough out to 1/2 inch thick.
8. Cut into your favourite shape or traditional donut shapes.
9. Fry in 300°f sunflower oil approx. 3 minutes per side or until brown and cooked throughout.
10. Place on paper towels to absorb excess oil and allow to cool.

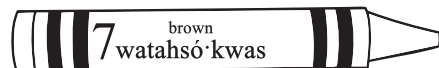
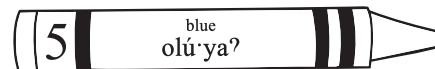
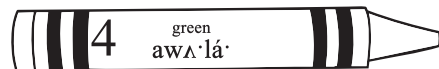




## Checking for understanding

1. What do many adults of the Oneida Nation do on New Year's Eve to prepare for the holiday?
2. How do children in the community celebrate New Year's Day, and what phrase do they use when asking for treats?
3. What does the word "Hoyan" mean, and how is the tradition similar to another holiday?
4. Why are doughnuts an important part of this tradition, according to Grand Chief Joel Abram?
5. What other seasonal traditions are mentioned, and why is the winter season considered important in the community's ceremonial cycle?

## Color By Number

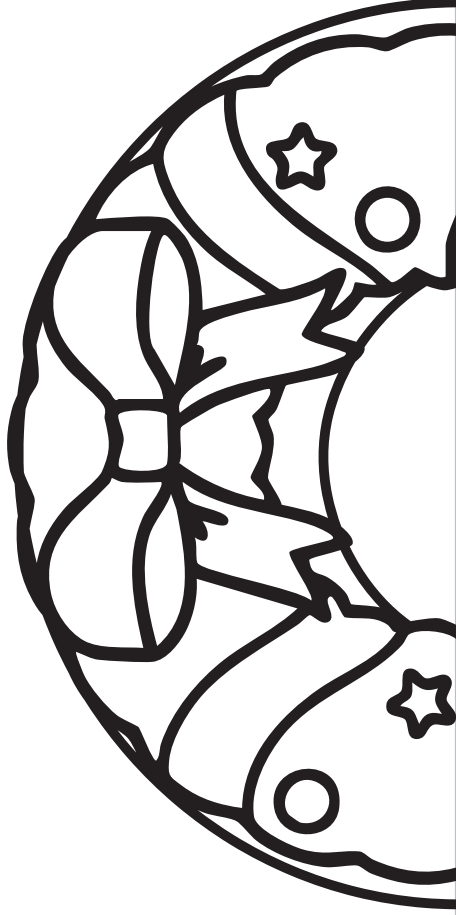


## Critical Thinking Questions

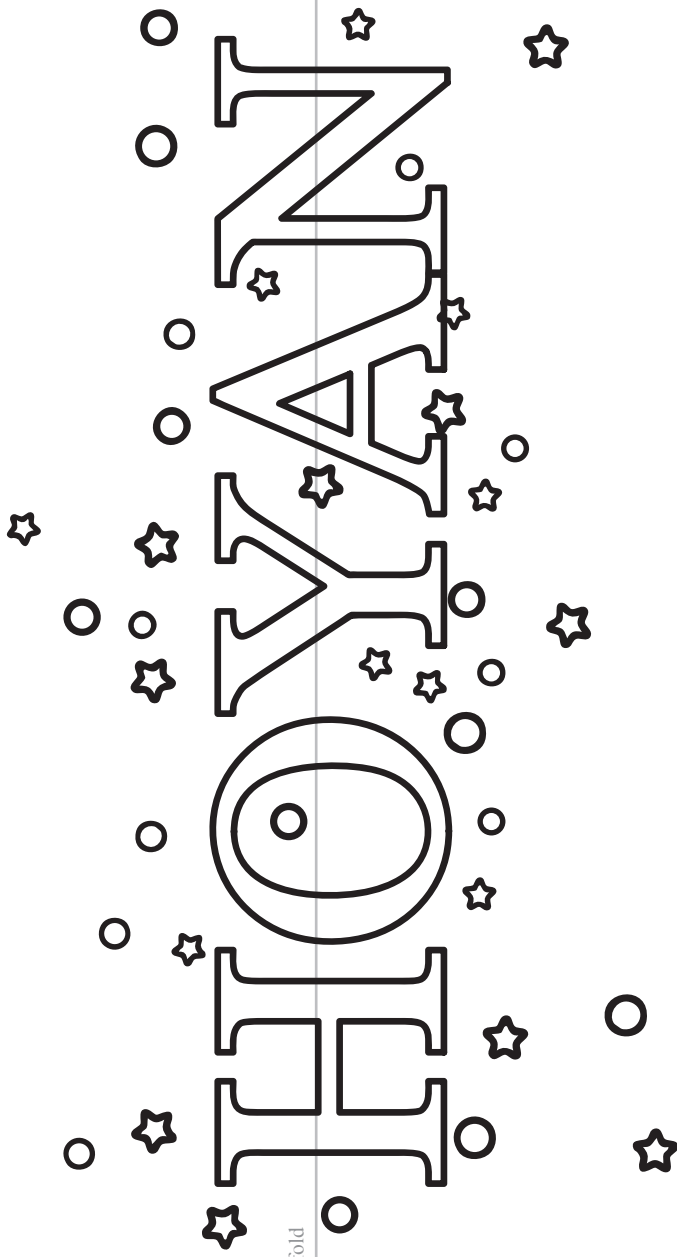
1. Why do you think the Hoyan tradition has remained strong in the Oneida community since the mid-1800s, despite changes in society and culture?
2. How does the Hoyan tradition compare to other cultural celebrations you know of? What similarities or differences stand out to you?
3. What might be the significance of using the word "Hoyan," which means "another one," during this tradition? How does language play a role in preserving cultural practices?
4. The passage mentions that the Dutch may have influenced the doughnut tradition. How do historical interactions between cultures shape traditions over time? Can you think of other examples?
5. Winter is a time for Mother Earth to rest and renew herself. How does this perspective on nature differ from or align with modern views of seasonal change? What lessons could this teach us today?

HOYAN

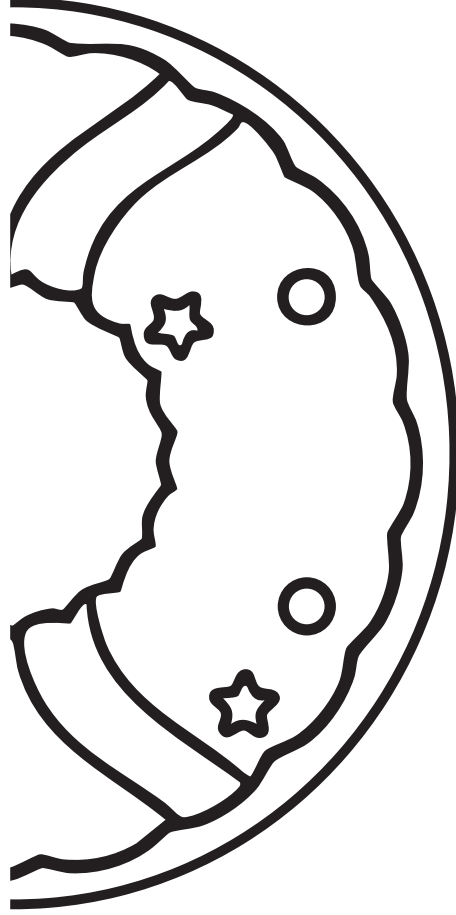
Hoyan Card Directions: Color, cut on the dotted line, fold on the gray lines to make the donut meet in the middle.



fold

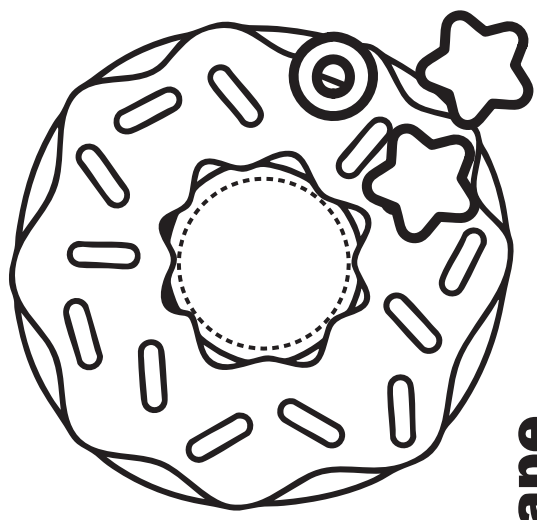


fold



cut

# HOYAY GLASSES



**Color, cut and assemble with tape**

