



November 2025

A newsletter from the City of Dubuque's Office of Human Rights

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Holidays & Observances

November 1: All Saints' Day

/ Day of the Dead

November 5: Kartik Purnima (Hindu)

November 9: World Freedom Day

November 11: Veterans Day

November 13: World Kindness Day

November 16: International Day for Tolerance

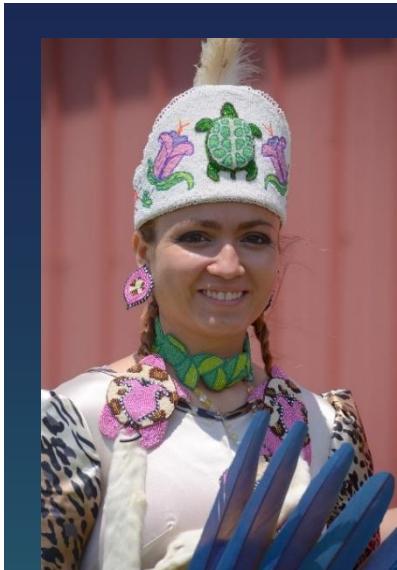
November 20: Hanukkah (Jewish)

November 27: Thanksgiving Day

Native American Heritage Month

The story of Native Americans is one of resilience, deep connection to the land, and enduring cultural richness. Long before the arrival of Europeans, Indigenous peoples across North America had built thriving societies with complex political systems, diverse economies, and vibrant spiritual traditions. Despite centuries of colonization, forced displacement, and assimilation policies, Native communities have preserved their heritage and continue to shape the cultural and political landscape of the United States today. Understanding Native American history and culture requires not only an acknowledgment of historical injustices but also an appreciation for the remarkable strength, innovation, and continuity of Native life.

Before European contact, Native societies were as varied and dynamic as the landscapes they inhabited. From the agricultural pueblos of the Southwest to the mound-building cultures of the Mississippi River Valley, Indigenous nations developed complex systems of governance, trade, and spirituality. Each region reflected an adaptation to its environment, guided by a deep sense of reciprocity with nature. The relationship between people and land was not merely economic but spiritual: the earth was seen as a living entity deserving of respect and care. This worldview continues to inform Indigenous activism around environmental protection and climate justice today.



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Native American Heritage Month

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Throughout the 17th to 19th centuries, Native nations faced relentless pressure from European settlers and later the U.S. government to cede their territories. By the late 19th century, U.S. federal policy shifted from military conquest to cultural assimilation. The reservation system confined tribes to limited tracts of land and sought to suppress Native traditions. Meanwhile, the federal government established boarding schools with the goal of erasing Indigenous identity. Children were taken from their families, forbidden to speak their languages, and forced to adopt European-American customs.

Despite these policies, Native communities found ways to preserve their traditions and rebuild their identities. Elders passed down oral histories, songs, and ceremonies in secret. Cultural survival became an act of resistance. The early 20th century saw the rise of Native political movements, such as the Society of American Indians, which advocated for citizenship rights and better living conditions. In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act granted U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans, though discrimination and systemic inequities persisted.

The mid-20th century marked a new era of Native activism and cultural revitalization. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM), which sought to address police brutality, reclaim treaty rights, and demand sovereignty. Occupations of sites like Alcatraz Island (1969) and Wounded Knee (1973) brought national attention to Native struggles. These movements inspired legislative reforms, including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which gave tribes greater control over their own affairs.

Culturally, this period also saw a renaissance of Native languages, arts, and spiritual practices. Storytelling,

beadwork, basket weaving, and dance, reemerged as expressions of pride and continuity. Powwows became vital spaces for cultural exchange, while Indigenous authors, filmmakers, and scholars began reshaping public narratives about Native life.

Today, Native Americans continue to face challenges rooted in historical injustices—such as poverty, inadequate healthcare, and the effects of environmental degradation on tribal lands. Yet, they also demonstrate extraordinary resilience and innovation. Tribal governments are leading initiatives in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and language revitalization.

Cultural preservation remains central to Native identity. Efforts to teach Indigenous languages in schools, restore traditional ecological knowledge, and protect sacred sites reflect a commitment to both heritage and future generations. Many tribes now operate museums, cultural centers, and higher education institutions that affirm Native ways of knowing. The continued practice of ceremonies, from the Sun Dance to the Potlatch, symbolizes the endurance of traditions that have survived centuries of suppression.

Native American history, heritage, and culture form an essential foundation of the broader American story. It is a history marked by both profound loss and extraordinary survival—a testament to the strength of communities who have endured against immense odds. To honor Native heritage is to recognize the sovereignty and humanity of Indigenous nations and to learn from their philosophies of balance, respect, and interdependence. Native culture is not a relic of the past but a living force that continues to evolve, inspire, and shape the moral and environmental consciousness of the world today.

This article was written with the assistance of artificial intelligence.

A Note from the Office of Human Rights

Gratitude is the heartbeat of a happy life, and our hearts get an extra workout in November as we celebrate Thanksgiving. Even though Thanksgiving is just one day, gratitude is a daily action that can make Thanksgiving last the whole year through.

If you do a search online for the effects of gratitude you will find numerous studies that show the powerful benefits of living a grateful life. Gratitude improves mood, reduces depression, boosts self-esteem, and promotes overall better health. It also reduces stress and anxiety which is something we all need as we head into the holiday season.

Gratitude is about more than being thankful for the gifts you've been given in life. A good job, a roof over your head, and a loving family, are all good reasons for being grateful, but have you thought of the small things to be grateful for? Think outside the box! Be grateful for the air you breathe, the flowers that brighten an otherwise dull drive through town, the bees that buzz past you in the morning, even the frosty snowflakes that bring nature's tiny artwork into our lives. Looking for beauty in the small things is an easy way to practice gratitude in your daily life.

Other methods for practicing gratitude include keeping a gratitude journal. Each night before going to bed, meditate for a few minutes and think of three things that you saw or experienced during the day that you're grateful for. Make a conscious expression of gratitude. When was the last time you wrote a letter or note to someone? Try it! If you received a note from someone expressing their gratitude for you, it would make your day, so do that for someone else. Gratitude should be a constant in your life.

Thank you for reading this, thank you for being you, and thank you for all of the good you do in the world – and I promise, you do more good than you realize.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

[First Friday](#) is a free downtown monthly community arts event with open galleries, artists' studios, and live entertainment. Events are held on November 7.

Bellevue Arts Council – Carnegie-Stout Public Library @ 5:30 – 7:30 PM

Gail Chavenelle – Outside the Lines Gallery @ 4:30 PM

Sara Riege – Planted @ 6 – 8 PM

Carnegie-Stout Library Virtual Author Talks

Each month, a selection of authors discusses their books and expert topics. These events are virtual and live; recordings of the talks will be archived for later viewing. [Registration on the library website is required.](#)

Community, Power, and the Search for Indigenous Identity
with Joseph Lee



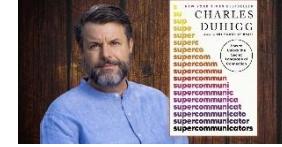
November 5 @ 1 PM

The Search for Truth and the Persistence of Love Across Time
with Amanda Peters



November 13 @ 6 PM

Unlock the Secret Language of Connection
with Charles Duhigg



November 18 @ 1 PM

Volunteer Opportunity of the Month

Bluff Street Neighborhood Association is celebrating Christmas on the Square. They are looking for volunteers to help make this a special event! Help is needed for set up, help throughout the event, and tear down. Visit [volunteerdbq.com](#) to sign up.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

Lunch & Learn:

The Evolution of Thanksgiving

November 5 @ Noon–1 PM

Convivium Urban Farmstead

Thanksgiving is often associated with the harvest feast shared between the Plymouth colonists and the Wampanoag people. However, the journey to its establishment as a national holiday is complex. Over time, Thanksgiving has evolved, reflecting societal changes and cultural influences. In this session, Convivium's Culinary Resource Director, Chef Cena, will present a fact-checked history of Thanksgiving, exploring its origins, transformation into a national holiday, and its cultural impact from past to present. RSVP appreciated.



Spoken Word Open Mic Night

November 7 @ 6:30–7:30 PM

River Lights Bookstore

Come perform family-friendly spoken word including stories, poetry, and slam pieces.



Creatives Café

November 13 @ 6 PM

The Lift

Join us for a fun and inspiring gathering designed to spark ideas, connections, and collaboration among local creatives. Whether you're an artist, writer, designer, musician, or simply passionate about creativity, this event is for you! Conversation prompts will be provided (it's a Trivia night!) and mix things up with a bit of "musical chairs" throughout the evening, ensuring you get to meet and talk with everyone. Come for a relaxed, engaging opportunity to build community, make connections, and have fun! Enjoy complimentary food with a cash bar available.



Historic District Coffee House Open Mic

November 15 @ 7 PM

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Dubuque

It's an open mic event, featuring mostly music, but also storytelling and poetry. Performers are a mixture of professionals and amateurs. Performers can sign up in advance for a slot on the schedule, but many just show up and put their name on the board.

"Upward Thermal" Artist Talk

November 15 @ 1 PM

Rountree Gallery (Platteville, WI)

This is a multi-sensory exhibition exploring the beauty, symbolism, and urgency of bird life through the work of artists: Roberta Condon, Lorraine Ortner-Blake, and Debra Grall. Pieces in pastel, gouache, and beadwork sculpture invite visitors to consider our shared connection with birds—and the fragile ecosystems they depend on. Like birds riding rising currents of warm air, *Upward Thermal* calls us to lift our gaze, reflect on our environment, and find renewal in art.



Discover Japan: From Bowing to Bento

November 9, 23, 30 @ 2 PM

Platteville Public Library (Platteville, WI)

Cory Nickels presents a three-part series on life in Japan. *"More Than Manga and Anime,"* Nov. 9, covers daily life in Japan including work, school life, money, and holidays. *"Am I Doing it Right,"* Nov. 23, covers the intricacies of Japanese manners including showing respect and visiting a shrine. *"Beyond Sushi,"* Nov. 30, covers food, including department store basements, convenience stores, bento shops, and restaurants.