

OPINION

A COVID-Friendly Holiday Tour

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

DECK THE HALLS WITH boughs of holly! It's Christmas time ya filthy animals! Normally, now would be a great time to go to a mall, visit Santa and his elves, and have a jolly good time in commercialized wonderlands—but that all sounds incredibly contagious. So, here is a convenient list to plan a COVID safe Christmas trip for you and your friends.

1. Get outside

Walk in a winter wonderland! Go find a lovely little hiking trail and check out the authentic Minnesnowta scenery. You and your friends can take some enchanting photos, have epic snowball battles, and even build a snow fort! Embrace the youthful side of winter! Another option for some youthful Christmas activities is to go sledding! There are plenty of locations where you can have a grand ol' time outside, away from people. Another outdoor idea is ice skating. You could do this with your friends, but personally, I think this is a cuter date idea than anything.

2. Get Online

Of course, it's possible that the only way you can safely be with your loved ones is via the internet, and that is okay! There are still plenty of online options! You could host a Holiday game night! Do movie trivia or something along those lines. And, Jack Box TV is a year round activity. You could also start a virtual book club! Read a cute Christmas book or something aggressively anti-Christmas if that's more your thing. You could meet with your club online; be connected but apart.

A few book ideas would be: *Christmas Carol*, *The Father Christmas Letters*, *Hercule Poirot's Christmas*, *The Valancourt Book of Victorian Christmas Ghost Stories*, and *Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker*

3. Get Creative

Christmas is also a great time to get creative! Make gifts, care packages, decorations, you name it! It's also a good time to bake some gingerbread cookies and houses, decorate cakes and cookies, and share your recipes with your friends and family! The ideas are limitless; so are you! Be sure to have fun.

4. Actual places to visit

There are also several tourist stops to visit, though be sure to check their new regulations before planning your trip!

BENTLEYVILLE TOUR OF LIGHTS (Nov. 23- Dec 28). You and your friends can tour the lights of Bentleyville! Now a drive through attraction, it's \$10.00 per car.

THE EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKET Located at the Union Depot this charming market is reminiscent of traditional pop up markets located this time of year throughout Europe.

HISTORIC HOME TOURS: Mayowood Mansion, Hubbard House, Glensheen, Charles A. Lindbergh House and Museum, and a few more locations offer a glimpse back in time to see what the holidays were like 100 years ago.

These times are crazy, but it's still the most wonderful time of the year! So, don't get the holiday blues. There are still plenty of opportunities to have a jolly time, stay safe, and make magical memories.

Why War is Widespread in Africa

BY RAJEERA GELETA

AS OF 2019, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), there have been at least 15 armed conflicts on the continent of Africa alone. The main reasons for these conflicts are corruption and dictatorships. I believe one of the most effective solutions could be redrawing Africa's borders along ethnic lines and we will look at two countries to see why current African borders aren't effective, those countries being Nigeria and Somalia.

Africa has a border problem because the creation of modern-day African borders wasn't made by Africans, but rather by European countries so they would reduce the possibility of fighting over Africa's abundant resources. When drawing up these borders, preexisting African nations in the continent were not taken into account. After Europe "left" Africa, the borders remained virtually the same. Nigeria, for example, was never a nation before imperialism, and the Somali people were artificially divided up by Europeans among four countries: Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti.

As mentioned before, Nigeria was artificially made, and was named after the Niger river (a name suggested by the first governor of the colony, Frederick Lugard's, wife). Nigeria's three main ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. Throughout Nigeria's history, there were and are many liberation efforts, and some of the most popular ones are the Biafran War and the Oodua Independence Movement. The Biafran war was fought for the independence of Biafra, a region in southern Nigeria composed mostly of Igbos. The reason why Biafra wanted to secede was because the Igbo people were marginalized from the political process, and because they didn't have control of the oil reserves that resided in their land. The Biafrans lost the war, but the legacy of Biafra lives on through the separatist organization the "Indigenous People of Biafra," which aims to liberate Biafra from the rest of Nigeria.

Unlike Nigeria, which is a combination of different groups of people, Somali indigenous lands have been split up between different countries by Europe. The Ogaden region was given to Ethiopia, the part of the northern region was incorporated into Djibouti, the western region was given to Kenya, and the remaining land makes up modern day Somalia and Somaliland. The idea of a unified Somalia, called Greater Somalia, became popular amongst the Somalis after colonialism. Two well-known unification wars that were fought between Somalis and non-Somali governments were the Ogaden War and the Shifta War. In the Ogaden War (1977-1978), Somalia declared war against Ethiopia in hopes of unifying the Ogaden region under Somalia. The Somali government was supported by the Ogaden Somalis and their liberation fronts which caused them to be very successful, but only at first. With the help of nearly every Soviet-aligned country, however, Ethiopia pushed the Somali forces back to Somalia. Similarly, Kenya, during the Shifta War (1963-1967), a war for the unification of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya with Somalia, was once again a territory heavily composed of Somalis and filled with local liberation fronts, but unification once again failed. Even though these unification efforts failed, people still long for unification.

In both of these cases, the borders created by imperialism don't work in modern-day Africa. There are no current plans to fix this border problem, and the most realistic option would be setting referendums for nations that want independence and setting in transitional governments in those nations that would make sure they are peacefully integrated into the international community, but it is laughable to imagine a world where African leaders willingly give up their power, and that is why this cycle of violence will most likely continue.