

2019-2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR (13-Month)

*All information from 2019 and 2020 Anti-Defamation League Calendar of Observances –
Anti-Defamation League, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158; www.adl.org*

SEPTEMBER 2019 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **September 2 GANESH CHATURTHI** • Hindu – Celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, the elephant-deity.
- **September 10 ASHURA** • Islamic – A day of fasting observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram to celebrate Moses' exodus from Egypt. Mourns the martyrdom of Hussein at the Battle of Kerbala in 680 CE.
- **September 15 - October 15 NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH** • Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
- **September 17 CITIZENSHIP DAY** • Honors all who have become U.S. citizens.
- **September 23 AUTUMNAL EQUINOX** – The date when night and day are nearly of the same length. It marks the first day of fall. Wiccan holy day.
- **September 29 – October 7 NAVARATRI** • Hindu - Nine-day festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It worships God in the form of the universal mother commonly referred to as Durga, Devi or Shakti, and marks the start of fall.
- **September 30 – October 1 ROSH HASHANAH** • Jewish – Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.

OCTOBER 2019 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **October Full Month LGBT HISTORY MONTH** • Marks and celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the United States.
- **September 29 – October 7 NAVARATRI** • Hindu - Nine-day festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It worships God in the form of the universal mother commonly referred to as Durga, Devi or Shakti, and marks the start of fall.
- **September 30 – October 1 ROSH HASHANAH** • Jewish – Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.
- **October 8 DUSSEHRA/DASSERA** • Hindu - Anniversary of the day when Rama killed the evil demon Ravana. Also known as Durga Puja, which celebrates the goddess Durga.
- **October 9 YOM KIPPUR** • Jewish – The “Day of Atonement” marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah.
- **October 14-20 SUKKOT** • Jewish – The week-long “Feast of Booths” commemorates the 40-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert on the way to the Promised Land.
- **October 20 BIRTH OF THE BÁB** • Bahá’í - Bahá’í observance of the anniversary of the birth in 1819 of Siyyid, “the Báb,” the prophet-herald of the Bahá’í Faith, in Shíráz, Persia.
- **October 20 GUR-GADDI GURU GRANTH SAHIB** • Sikh - Since 1708, Sikhs have accepted Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their eternal Guru that holds the spirit of all Ten Gurus of the Sikhs. They consider Guru Granth Sahib to be a spiritual guide not only for Sikhs but for all of mankind; it plays a central role in guiding the Sikhs' way of life.
- **October 21 SHEMINI ATZERET** • Jewish - “The Eighth (Day) of Assembly” is observed on the day immediately following Sukkot.
- **October 22 SIMCHAT TORAH** • Jewish - “Rejoicing in the Torah” celebrates the conclusion of the public reading of the Pentateuch and its beginning anew.
- **October 27 DIWALI** • Hindu - Also called Deepavali, “Festival of Lights,” it celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.
- **October 27 BANDI-CHHOR DIWAS** • Sikh - A commemorative occasion having no fixed date which occurs in October or November and celebrates the release of the Sixth Guru Har Gobind Sahib from imprisonment and coincides with Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.
- **October 31 HALLOWEEN** Christian/Wiccan - The eve of All Saints’ Day.

NOVEMBER 2019 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **November Full Month NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH**
Celebrates and honors the history and culture/religions of Native Americans in the United States.
- **November 1 ALL SAINTS' DAY** • Western Christian - Commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints. Eastern Christianity observes it on the first Sunday after Pentecost.
- **November 2 ALL SOULS' DAY** • Christian - Commemoration of all faithful Christians who are now dead. In Mexican tradition it is celebrated as *Día de los Muertos* between October 31 and November 2, and is an occasion to remember dead ancestors and celebrate the continuity of life.
- **November 10 MAWLID AL-NABI** (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic - (Sunni) The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
- **November 12 BIRTH OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH** • Bahá'í - Observance of the anniversary of the birth in 1817 of Bahá'u'lláh, prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith, in Núr, Persia.
- **November 12 GURU NANAK DEV JI'S BIRTHDAY** • Sikh - A very important holiday in the Sikh faith as Guru Nanak Dev was the First Guru of the Sikhs and the Founder of Sikhism. He was born in mid-November; the holiday is celebrated according to the lunar date.
- **November 15 MAWLID AL-NABI** (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic - (Shi'a) The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
- **November 26 DAY OF THE COVENANT** • Bahá'í - Day of the Covenant is a festival observed to commemorate Bahá'u'lláh's appointment of His son, Abdu'l-Baha, as His successor.
- **November 28 THANSIVING** • Commemoration of the Pilgrims' Harvest Feast in autumn of 1621.

DECEMBER 2019 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **December 1 - 24 ADVENT** • Christian - Advent is a season of spiritual preparation in observance of the birth of Jesus. In Western Christianity, it starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. In Eastern Christianity, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November.
- **December 8 FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** • Western Catholic – Catholic holy day of obligation commemorating the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary
- **December 8 BODHI DAY** • Buddhist - Also known as Rohatsu, it observes the spiritual awakening (bodhi) of founder Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, ca. 596 BCE. Celebrated on the eighth day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
- **December 12 OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE** • Christian - Celebrates the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (by her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico and the Americas) before Juan Diego, an indigenous convert to Roman Catholicism, on the Mexican hill of Tepeyac in 1531.
- **December 13 ST. LUCY** • Christian – In commemoration of St. Lucy or Santa Lucia, it is commonly known as a festival of lights.
- **December 21 WINTER SOLSTICE** In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter. Wiccan holy day.
- **December 23 - 30 CHANUKAH** • Jewish - Eight-day “Festival of Lights”, celebrating the rededication of the Temple to the service of God in 164 BCE. Commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek King, Antiochus, who sought to suppress freedom of worship.
- **December 25 CHRISTMAS** • Western Christian - Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
- **December 26 – January 1, 2018 KWANZAA** A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. “Kwanzaa” means “first fruits (of the harvest)” in Swahili.

JANUARY 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **January 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY** Western Catholic - The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, commonly used for civil dating purposes. Catholic Solemnity of Mary, holy day of obligation.
- **January 5 GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S BIRTHDAY** • Sikh - Guru Gobind Singh was the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs who initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa (the pure ones) and is known as the Father of the Khalsa.
- **January 6 EPIPHANY** • Christian - Known as Theophany in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as Christ. In addition, the Western Church associates Epiphany with the journey of the Magi to the infant Jesus, and the Eastern Church with the baptism of Jesus by John.
- **January 6 CHRISTMAS** • Armenian Orthodox Christian – Armenian Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on Epiphany, except for Armenians living in Israel, who celebrate Christmas on January 19th.
- **January 7 CHRISTMAS** • Eastern Christian - Most Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches based on their use of the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.
- **January 10 - 12 MAHAYANA NEW YEAR** • Buddhist - In Mahayana countries the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January.
- **January 15 MAKAR SANKRANTI** • Hindu - Seasonal celebration recognizing the increasing length of days.
- **January 19 WORLD RELIGION DAY** • Bahá'í - Observance to proclaim the oneness of religion and the belief that world religion will unify the peoples of the earth.
- **January 25 LUNAR NEW YEAR** • On this day Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese New Years are celebrated.

FEBRUARY 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **February Full Month BLACK HISTORY MONTH** • Celebrates Black History and African American culture in the United States.
- **February 10 TU B'SHVAT** • Jewish - New Year's Day for Trees, and traditionally the first of the year for tithing fruit of trees. Now a day for environmental awareness and action, such as tree planting.
- **February 15 NIRVANA DAY** • Buddhist - Celebrates the day when the historical Buddha achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Sometimes celebrated on February 8.
- **February 22 MAHA SHIVARATRI** • Hindu - Also called Shiva Ratri, it is the Great Festival of Shiva.
- **February 25 SHROVE TUESDAY** • Western Christian - A day of penitence as well as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Also known as Mardi Gras.
- **February 26 ASH WEDNESDAY** • Western Christian - The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches, a 40-day period of spiritual preparation for Easter, not counting Sundays.
- **February 26 – February 29 AYYÁM-I-HA OR INTERCALARY DAYS** • Bahá'í - The Ayyám-i-ha, or “Days of Ha,” are devoted to spiritual preparation for the fast, celebrating, hospitality, charity and gift-giving. They are celebrated the four days, five in leap year, before the last month of the Bahá'í year.

MARCH 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **March Full Month NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH** • Honors women as significant agents of historical change.
- **March 1 – March 19 NINETEEN-DAY FAST** • Bahá'í - Baha'is between 15 and 70 years of age do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset and set aside time for prayer and meditation.
- **March 2 CLEAN MONDAY** • Eastern Christian - The beginning of Great Lent for Eastern Christian churches, which starts 40 days before Orthodox Easter (Pascha), counting Sundays.
- **March 9 MAGHA PUJA** • Buddhist - Also known as Sangha Day, it commemorates the spontaneous assembly of 1,250 arahants, completely enlightened monks, in the historical Buddha's presence.
- **March 10 PURIM** • Jewish - The “Feast of Lots” marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from extermination.
- **March 10 HOLLA MOHALLA** • Sikh - An annual event which is a martial arts parade historically coinciding with Holi, the Hindu festival of colors. Celebrations related to Holla Mohalla may be held in various locations over several weekends preceding the actual date of the holiday.
- **March 10 HOLI** • Hindu - Also called Holaka or Phagwa, this festival celebrates spring and commemorates various events in Hindu mythology.
- **March 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY** • Christian - Feast day of the patron saint of Ireland. In the U.S., a secular version is celebrated by people of all faiths through appreciation of all things Irish.
- **March 19 VERNAL EQUINOX** • The date when night and day are nearly the same length. It marks the first day of the season of spring. Wiccan holy day.

APRIL 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **April 2 RAMA NAVAMI** • Hindu - Celebrates the birthday of Rama, king of ancient India, hero of the epic Ramayana, and seventh incarnation of Vishnu.
- **April 5 PALM SUNDAY** • Christian - Observed the Sunday before Easter/Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- **April 7 - April 9 THERAVADA NEW YEAR** • Buddhist - In Theravada countries the New Year is celebrated on the first full moon day in April.
- **April 9 -April 16 PASSOVER/PESACH** • Jewish - The eight-day “Feast of Unleavened Bread” celebrates Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
- **April 9 HOLY THURSDAY** • Christian - Also known as Maundy Thursday, it is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion.
- **April 10 GOOD FRIDAY** • Christian - Known as Holy Friday in Eastern Christianity, it commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus on the Friday before Easter/Pascha.
- **April 12 EASTER** • Christian - Known as Pascha in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.
- **April 14 VAISAKHI** (also spelled Baisakhi) • Sikh - The festival which celebrates the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated). On this day, Sikhs gather and celebrate Vaisakhi at their local Gurdwaras (Sikh house of worship) by remembering this day as the birth of the Khalsa.
- **April 20 – May 1 FESTIVAL OF RIDVÁN** • Bahá’í - Annual festival commemorating the 12 days when Bahá’u’lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá’í Faith, resided in a garden called Ridván (Paradise) and publicly proclaimed His mission as God’s messenger for this age. The first (April 21), ninth (April 29), and twelfth (May 2) days are celebrated as holy days when Bahá’ís suspend work.
- **April 24 – May 23 RAMADAN** • Islamic - A month of strict fasting from dawn until dusk in honor of the first revelations of the Qur’an to the Prophet Muhammad.

MAY 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **May Full Month ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH** • Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.
- **May Full Month JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH** • Recognizes the history of Jewish contributions to American culture, acknowledging the diverse achievements of American Jews.
- **April 20–May 1 FESTIVAL OF RIDVÁN** • Bahá'í - Annual festival commemorating the 12 days when Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith, resided in a garden called Ridván (Paradise) and publicly proclaimed His mission as God's messenger for this age. The first (April 21), ninth (April 29), and *twelfth (May 2) days are celebrated as holy days when Bahá'ís suspend work.*
- **April 24 – May 23 RAMADAN** • Islamic - A month of strict fasting from dawn until dusk in honor of the first revelations of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.
- **May 7 BUDDHA DAY** • Buddhist - Also known as Vesak or Visakha Puja, it marks the occasion of the birth, spiritual awakening and death of the historical Buddha.
- **May 12 LAG B'OMER** • Jewish - Celebrates the end of a divine-sent plague and/or Roman occupation during Rabbi Akiva's lifetime (died c. 135 CE).
- **May 19 LAILA AL-QADR** • Islamic - “The Night of Power” marks the night in which God first revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Often fixed as the 27th day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, Sunnis may also observe it on the 21st, 23rd, 25th or 29th. Shi'ites observe it on the 19th, 21st or 23rd of Ramadan.
- **May 21 ASCENSION DAY** • Christian - Celebrated 40 days after Easter/Pascha, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
- **May 21 NAW-RUZ** • Bahá'í – New Year's Day in the Bahá'í tradition.
- **May 23 DECLARATION OF THE BAB** • Bahá'í - Commemoration of May 23, 1844, when the Báb, the prophet-herald of the Bahá'í Faith, announced in Shíráz, Persia, that he was the herald of a new messenger of God.
- **May 24 EID AL-FITR** • Islamic - The “Feast of the Breaking of the Fast” marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting from dawn until dusk.
- **May 28 ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH** • Bahá'í - Observance of the anniversary of the death in exile of Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith.
- **May 29 – 30 SHAVUOT** • Jewish - The “Feast of Weeks” celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel and the revelation of the Ten Commandments
- **May 31 PENTECOST** • Christian - Also known as Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter/Pascha commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and women followers of Jesus. Marks the birth of the Christian Church.

JUNE 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **June Full Month LGBTQ + PRIDE MONTH** • Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern gay rights movement in the United States.
- **June 14 ALL SAINTS DAY** • Eastern Christian - In Orthodox churches observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, it commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints.
- **June 20 SUMMER SOLSTICE** • In the northern hemisphere, the longest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of summer. Wiccan holy day.

JULY 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **July 5 DHARMA DAY** • Buddhist - Also known as Asala Puja, it commemorates the historical Buddha's first discourse following his spiritual awakening.
- **July 9 MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB** • Bahá'í - Observance of the anniversary of the execution by a firing squad in Tabríz, Persia, of the 30-year-old Siyyid'Alí-Muhammad, the Báb, the prophet-herald of the Bahá'í Faith.
- **July 13-15 OBON** • Buddhist - Also known as Bon, the Japanese Buddhist festival honors the spirits of past ancestors.
- **July 30 TISHA B'AV** • Jewish - Mourning of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE.
- **July 31 – August 3 EID AL-ADHA** • Islamic – The “Feast of Sacrifice” concludes Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and is a three-day festival recalling Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.

AUGUST 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **July 31 – August 3 EID AL-ADHA** • Islamic – The “Feast of Sacrifice” concludes Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and is a three-day festival recalling Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.
- **August 3 RAKSHA BANDHAN** • Hindu - Also called Rakhi, this festival celebrates the protective relationship between brothers and their sisters.
- **August 12 KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI (JAYANTI)** • Hindu - Celebrates Krishna’s birthday, Vishnu’s eighth incarnation on earth.
- **August 20 MUHARRAM** • Islamic - The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year. The first day of the month, al-Hijra, remembers the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. It also marks the beginning of the ten-day Shi’ite Remembrance of Muharram, a period of intense grief and mourning of the martyrdom of Hussein, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad.
- **August 22 GANESH CHATURTHI** • Hindu – Celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, the elephant-deity.
- **August 29 ASHURA** • Islamic – A day of fasting observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram to celebrate Moses’ exodus from Egypt. Mourns the martyrdom of Hussein at the Battle of Kerbala in 680 CE.

SEPTEMBER 2020 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR

- **September 2 ULLAMBANA** • Buddhist – Buddhist Ghost Festival. The unsettled spirits of dead ancestors are calmed with chanting and offerings to enable them to pass peacefully into the next world.
- **September 15-October 15 NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH** • Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
- **September 19 – 20 ROSH HASHANAH** • Jewish – Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.
- **September 22 AUTUMNAL EQUINOX** – The date when night and day are nearly of the same length. It marks the first day of fall. Wiccan holy day.
- **September 28 YOM KIPPUR** • Jewish – The “Day of Atonement” that marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begins with Rosh Hashanah.