

ABOUT THIS CALENDAR

The **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities** calendar is a resource designed to encourage public awareness of the great diversity of religious and ethnic groups that live in the United States. Holidays and festivals are included for many religious, ethnic, and public occasions.

Educators may find the calendar particularly helpful as it identifies opportunities for objective, non-creedal instruction about particular cultures. Employers will find that it serves as a reminder of religious observances that may result in employee absences, as well as opportunities for increased sensitivity in the workplace. Those using this calendar also should remember that it is based on information available at the time of production. Dates for lunar holidays are subject to change.

The **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities** calendar is intended to increase our sensitivity to each other and to our different needs. However, the list is not exhaustive of the observances of any one religious group. Therefore, those using this resource in a classroom or employer setting may wish to add holidays and observances that are not listed in this calendar but are celebrated by students in their school or colleagues in their workplace. As an additional aid to both teachers and employers, an alphabetical glossary of selected observances appears in this calendar.

ABOUT US

The **Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities** works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success by addressing prejudices, in all forms, in order to improve academic achievement, increase workplace civility, and enhance local trust. Through workshops, retreats, and customized programs that raise knowledge, motivation, and skills, VCIC develops leaders who work together to achieve success throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information & resources, please visit our:

WEBSITE: www.inclusiveVA.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/inclusiveVA

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KEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Baha'i	Ba
Buddhist	Bu
Christian	C
Orthodox	O
Protestant	P
Roman Catholic	RC
Hindu	H
Jewish	J
Muslim	M
Pagan	Pa
Sikh	S



VIRGINIA CENTER FOR
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES

Calendar of Holidays & Festivals

**2023-2024
School Year**

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2023-2024 School Year

SEPTEMBER *Hispanic American Heritage Month*

4	Labor Day	F
16-17	Rosh Hashanah*	J
23	Mabon/Autumnal Equinox	Pa
25	Yom Kippur*	J
27	Mawlid al-Nabi*	M
30 - Oct. 6	Sukkot*	J

OCTOBER *Global Diversity Awareness Month*

7	Shemini Atzeret*	J
8	Simchat Torah*	J
15-24	Sharad Navaratri	H
16	Birth of the Báb*	Ba
17	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh*	Ba
24	Dussehra	H

NOVEMBER *Native American Heritage Month*

1	All Saints Day	O,P,RC
1	Samhain*	Pa
11	Veteran's Day	F
12	Diwali	H
23	Thanksgiving	F

DECEMBER *Universal Human Rights Month*

3-24	Advent	P, RC
8	Bodhi Day	Bu
8-15	Hanukkah*	J
21	Yule/ Winter Solstice	Pa
25	Christmas Day	P,RC
26 - Jan. 1	Kwanzaa	

JANUARY

1	New Year's Day	F
6	Epiphany	P,RC
7	Christmas Day	O
13	Maghi	S
15	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	F
17	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	S
25	Tu B'shvat*	J

FEBRUARY

Black History Month

2	Imbolc*	Pa
10	Lunar New Year	
14	Ash Wednesday/Lent Begins	P, RC
15	Nirvana Day/ Parinirvana Day	Bu
19	President's Day	F
25-29	Ayyám-i-Há*	Ba

MARCH

Women's History Month

1-19	Nineteen Day Fast*	Ba
11 - Apr. 9	Ramadan*	M
18	Lent Begins (Clean Monday)	O
20	Ostara/ Spring Equinox	Pa
21	Naw-Ruz (New Year)*	Ba
24	Palm Sunday	P, RC
24	Purim*	J
25	Holi	H
25-27	Hola Mohalla	S
29	Good Friday	P, RC
31	Easter	P, RC

APRIL

10	Eid al-Fitr*	M
13	Vaisakhi	S
21 - May 2	Ridván *	Ba
23-30	Pesach/Passover*	J

MAY

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

1	Beltane	Pa
3	Holy Friday	O
5	Pascha (Easter)	O
6	Yom HaShoah*	J
9	Ascension Day	P, RC
14	Yom Ha'Atzmaut*	J
19	Pentecost	P, RC
23	Vesak (Buddha Day)	Bu
24	Declaration of the Báb*	Ba
27	Memorial Day	F
29	Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh*	Ba

JUNE

Pride Month

12-13	Shavuot*	J
13	Ascension Day	O
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev	S
17	Eid-al-Adha*	M
19	Juneteenth	F
21	Litha (Midsummer)	Pa

Dates of holidays and festivals were researched to the best of our abilities. These dates may vary depending on region and affiliation. VCIC strives to make this resource accurate and inclusive. If you see an error or omission, please notify us at contact@inclusiveVA.org.

** indicates that observance begins at sundown the day before this date.*

Note: US Federal Holidays marked by an F

Explanatory Notes

(Most Civic Holidays and other obvious festivals are not included.)

Advent Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas.

All Saints Day Christian day for honoring all the saints, especially those who do not have a special day.

Ascension Day Celebrates Jesus' Ascension to heaven.

Ash Wednesday Begins Christian Lent. Name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Commemorates the assumption of Mary, mother of Jesus, into heaven.

Ayyam-I Ha This period adjusts the Baha'i year to the solar calendar. It leads to the 19 day fast. Each day of Ayyam-I Ha is marked by a different virtue like hospitality, gift giving, or charity.

Baha'u'llah's Birthday Commemorates the birth of the founders of the Baha'i faith in 1817.

Birth of Bab Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin Prophet Founders of the Baha'i faith, Mirza 'Ali-Muhammed, in 1819

Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Sikh observation of the 1666 C.E. birthday of the tenth and last human guru.

Bodhi Day Buddhist celebration of the time when Prince Gautama (Buddha) took his place under the Bodhi tree vowing to remain until he attained supreme enlightenment, ca. 596 B.C.E.

Buddha Day The Day Buddha was born, attained enlightenment, and passed away.

Chinese and Vietnamese New Year A festive holiday celebrated for about two weeks. Each year is symbolized by a different animal.

Cinco de Mayo Celebrated in Mexico and by Mexican-Americans, commemorates the battle of Guadalupe in 1862, when a small Mexican army defeated a large French force.

Diwali Festival of Lights symbolizing the human urge to move toward the light. One of four seasonal celebrations in India.

Dusserah Festival celebrating good over evil; the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.

Epiphany End of the 12 days of Christmas; celebrates visit of the Three Kings to baby Jesus; especially important to Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics of Hispanic descent.

Good Friday The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion.

Hanukkah Festival of Lights; Eight-day commemoration of the Maacabean recapture and rededication of the second Temple in 165 B.C.E.

Holi Spring festival dedicated to the god of pleasure. It is a carnival occasion featuring bright colors, pilgrimages, and bonfires.

'Id al-Fitr A 3 day Islamic fast marking the close of Ramadan

Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib Commemorates the installation of the Sikh scriptures by Guru Gobind Sing; these scriptures were installed as the perpetual guru.

Juneteenth Observed as the day African Americans were emancipated. It is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery.

Kwanzaa Seven day celebration of African American values and traditions and their continued vitality. Kwanzaa is Kiswahili and means "first fruits of the harvest."

Lent Period of preparation for Easter; usually 40 days.

Maghi Commemoration of the battle in which 40 Sikhs (the Immortal Ones) laid down their lives for Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Martyrdom of the Bab Ali Mohammed was executed in 1850 by Persian political and religious powers. Observed by abstaining from commerce and work.

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 C.E., the fifth guru who built the Golden Temple of Amristar.

Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur Anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur in 1675 C.E., the ninth guru.

Mawlid al-Nabi Birthday of the Prophet Muhammed, ca. 570 C.E.

Naw Ruz Baha'i and Iranian New Year.

Navaratri A Hindu Festival of the divine mother honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. It is celebrated according to local custom.

Nirvana Day In the Northern tradition, this is the anniversary of Buddha's passing away. In the Southern tradition, the Buddha's death is commemorated during Visakha.

Pesach (Passover) An 8 day commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.

Pentecost Observation of the day when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, following ascension of Jesus. The name indicates 50 days after Easter.

Explanatory Notes (continued)

Pioneer Day Observance of the arrival of Brigham Young and the first settlers to Great Salt Lake, Utah on July 24, 1847.

Purim Feast of Lots; celebrates deliverance of the Jewish minority in Persia from genocide.

Ramadan The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sunup to sundown. In honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammed.

Ridvan Commemoration of the declaration of Baha'u'llah to his followers in 1863. Work is to be suspended for the 1st, 9th, and 12th days.

Rosh Hashanah New Year; beginning 10 days of penitence concluded on Yom Kippur.

Shavout Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates Moses' descent from Mt. Sinai with the torah and Commandments.

Shemini Atzeret Celebration of the eighth and last day of Sukkot.

Simchat Torah Festival celebrating the completion of the reading cycle of the Torah. Symbolized by singing, dancing, and marching around the synagogue. The first book is begun again.

Sukkot Jewish Feast of Tabernacles or Booths which celebrates the fall harvest and the wandering of Israel in the desert wilderness in tents.

Vaisakhi Hindu and Sikh solar new year. Anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa (the army of the Pure Ones) in 1699. It is the most important holy day of the year for Sikhs.

Yom Hashoah Jewish Holocaust Remembrance Day. This day has been established to remember the six million Jews killed by the Nazis in 1933-45.

Yom Kippur Jewish Day of Atonement. This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with strict fasting, prayer, and ceremonial repentance.

Additional Notes

- All **Baha'i**, **Jewish**, and **Muslim** holidays begin at sunset the previous day.
- **Buddhist** and **Hindu** holidays may be observed at different times than those indicated in the calendar. The observance date is dependent on both religious group affiliation and region. For example, Buddha's birthday is one of the most widely celebrated Buddhist holidays. However, there is no one date accepted by all Buddhists. Therefore, the observance of Buddha's birthday will vary by both tradition and region, as seen by the inclusion of Wesak, Bodhi Day, and Buddha Day in this calendar. (Please note that for all other Buddhist observances, this calendar provides the dates followed by the Theravada tradition.)
- **Christians** follow a number of different calendars depending on their denomination and/or their region. This calendar includes both the dates of the Western calendar which is followed by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and the dates for the Orthodox New Calendar which is the same as the Western calendar for fixed holidays and observances but uses the Julian Calendar for moveable feasts. The Orthodox New Calendar is primarily used by the Greek and Cypriot Orthodox Churches.
- We recognize that for many **Christians**, an integral part of their faith is the observance of days that commemorate the lives of saints. These days have not been included as part of this calendar because they often differ by region, religious affiliation, and personal belief.
- **Jewish** dates on this calendar are in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. The length of some holidays and the extent to which they are observed may vary according to denominational affiliation.
- **Muslim** holidays are subject to change because observance is dictated by the phases and sightings of the moon.
- The **Sikh** calendar – their own Nanakshahi calendar – was adopted for use on March 14, 1999 and aligns with the Gregorian calendar.

The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities acknowledges the work of the former NCCJ of Greater New York for researching the explanatory notes and developing the format for this calendar.



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