

## Religious Observance Dates by Religion

[Armenian Apostolic](#)

[Baha'i](#)

[Buddhist](#)

[Christian](#)

[Coptic](#)

[Eastern Orthodox](#)

[Hindu](#)

[Islamic](#)

[Jain](#)

[Jewish](#)

[Native American](#)

[Sikh](#)

[Zoroastrian](#)

Note: Holiday listed below with a specific date occur on a fixed date each year. For those observances that change dates each year, a brief explanation of how the date is determined is included and the month(s) when the observance usually occurs is listed.

Refer to the [Yearly Calendars \(July 2012 - June 2017\)](#) for a listing of dates for the major Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Christian, and Orthodox Christian holidays for the current and succeeding academic years.

### Armenian Apostolic

Christmas January 6	Celebration of the birth of Jesus. Celebrated on Epiphany in the Armenian Apostolic church.
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### Baha'i

(Holidays begin at sundown on the previous day.)

Martyrdom of the Bab July 9	The Báb was executed by firing squad on this date in 1850.
Birthday of the Bab October 20	This holiday commemorates the birth of the Báb in 1819.
Birthday of Baha'u'llah	This holiday commemorates the birth of Bahá'u'lláh in 1817.

November 12	
Naw Ruz (New Year) March 21	The New Year is preceeded by the Nineteen Day Fast, a time of spiritual introspection.
Ridvan April 21 - May 2	The Festival of Ridván is a 12-day period commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his mission on the eve of his departure from Baghdád for Constantinople in 1863. The first day commemorates his arrival in the Najíbíyyih Garden, where his declaration took place.
Ninth Day of Ridván April 29	This holiday commemorates the arrival of members of Bahá'u'lláh's family in the Najíbíyyih Garden.
Twelfth Day of Ridván May 2	This holiday commemorates the departure of Bahá'u'lláh for Constantinople and brings to a close the Festival of Ridván.
Declaration of the Bab May 23	The Báb declared his mission to Mullá Husayn on this day in 1844, marking the inception of the Bahá'í era.
Ascension of Baha'u'llah May 29	Bahá'u'lláh passed from this life on this date in 1892.

[Top of the page](#)

### Buddhist

Bodhi Day December 8	Commemorates Buddha's Enlightenment (Mahayana Tradition).
Paranirvana (Nirvana) Day February 8 or 15	Commemorates the day of Buddha's Death in 483 B.C.E. and his attainment of final Nirvana (Mahayana Tradition). Celebrated by some Buddhists on February 8th and by others on February 15th.
Buddha's Birth April 8	Day set aside for the celebration of Buddha's birth in 563 B.C.E. (Mahayana Tradition).



Visakha Day (also known as "Vesak" or "Wesak")  
April or May

Commemorates the birth, enlightenment Nirvana, and passing of Gautama Buddha. The exact date varies according to the various lunar calendars used in different traditions. In Theravada countries following the Buddhist calendar, it falls on the full moon Uposatha day (typically the 5th or 6th lunar month). In China it is the fourth month in the Chinese lunar calendar, coinciding with the first full moon of that month. The date varies from year to year in the Western Gregorian calendar but falls in April or May.

[Top of the page](#)

## Christian

(Includes holidays celebrated by all non-Orthodox Christians as well as holidays mainly celebrated by Roman Catholic and Protestant sects.)

Feast of the Assumption August 15	(Roman Catholic) Celebrates the Virgin Mary's ascent into heaven.
Reformation Day October 31	(Protestant) Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Anniversary of the date in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, in an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church.
All Saint's Day November 1	A feast to honour all saints.
All Soul's Day (Day of the Dead) November 2	Commemorates the departed faithful who have not yet been purified and reached heaven.
Advent (Beginning of) November 27 to December 3	Marks the beginning of the Christmas season. Celebrated the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day.
Feast of the Immaculate Conception December 8	(Roman Catholic) Commemorates the belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived without sin.
Christmas Eve December 24	The day preceding Christmas. Celebrated by both Protestants and Roman Catholics by religious services, usually in the evening or at midnight.

Christmas December 25	Celebration of the birth of Jesus by Protestants and Roman Catholics.
Epiphany January 6	Celebrates the visit of the Magi (the three kings) to the infant Jesus.
Shrove Tuesday February 3 to March 9	Mardi Gras (French for "Fat Tuesday") is the last day before the beginning of Lent, a period of fasting and repentance leading up to Easter. It's the day before Ash Wednesday.
Ash Wednesday February 4 to March 10	Beginning of Lent, a 40-day period of prayer and fasting extending up to Easter Sunday (in counting the 40 days, Sundays are excluded). Observed in memory of Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert.
The Feast of the Annunciation March 25	Commemorates the angel Gabriel's revelation to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive a child.
Palm Sunday March 15 to April 18	Celebrates Jesus' last entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of Holy Week for Christians. Falls on the sixth Sunday of Lent and the last Sunday before Easter.
Good Friday March 20 to April 23	Commemorates the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Falls on the Friday preceding Easter Sunday.
Easter March 22 to April 25	Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. Easter falls at some point between late March and late April each year (early April to early May in Eastern Christianity), following the cycle of the moon.
Ascension Day May or June	Celebrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven, forty days following his resurrection. Observed on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter.
Pentecost May 10 to June 13	Commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. In most Christian traditions, Pentecost Sunday occurs 50 days following Easter Sunday (counting Easter Sunday since it is the first day of the week).

[Top of the page](#)

**Coptic**

<p>Christmas January 7</p>	<p>Celebration of the birth of Jesus. Those using the Julian and Coptic calendars presently celebrate Christmas on January 7 (13 days after those using the Gregorian calendar, who celebrate Christmas on December 25).</p>
<p>Easter (Pascha) April 4 to May 8</p>	<p>Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. The day of Pesach is always at the first or second full moon following the vernal equinox, or the second Sunday after Spring's full Moon.</p>
<p>Ascension Day May 14 to June 17</p>	<p>Celebrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven, forty days following his resurrection. Observed on a Thursday, 40 days after Easter.</p>
<p>Pentecost May 24 to June 27</p>	<p>Commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. In most Christian traditions, Pentecost Sunday occurs 50 days following Easter Sunday (counting Easter Sunday since it is the first day of the week).</p>

[Top of the page](#)

**Eastern Orthodox**

<p>Christmas January 7</p>	<p>Celebration of the birth of Jesus according to those following the Julian calendar.</p>
<p>Clean Monday February 15 to March 21</p>	<p>Start of the Lenten season for those following the Julian calendar.</p>
<p>Palm Sunday March 28 to May 1</p>	<p>Celebrates Jesus' last entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of Holy Week for Christians. Falls on the sixth Sunday of Lent and the last Sunday before Easter.</p>
<p>Holy Friday April 2 to May 6</p>	<p>Commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus.</p>

Easter (Pascha) April 4 to May 8	Celebration of Easter by Orthodox Christians following the Julian calendar.
Ascension Day May 14 to June 17	Celebrates the ascension of Jesus into heaven, forty days following his resurrection. The Eastern Orthodox Church uses a different method of calculating the date of Pascha (Easter), so the Eastern Orthodox commemoration of Ascension will usually be after the western observance.
Pentecost May 24 to June 27	Commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. The Feast of Holy Pentecost is celebrated each year on the fiftieth day after the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha (Easter) and ten days after the Feast of the Ascension of Christ.

[Top of the page](#)

## Hindu

Janmashtami August or September	Birth of Lord Krishna, Hindu night festival. Celebrates the birthday of Lord Krishna, the eight incarnation of the God Vishnu. Dates depend on the lunar calendar.
Navaratri / Dassehra September or October	Ten day festival honoring Durga, the Mother goddess; the nine nights of Navaratri culminate on the tenth day with the celebration of Dassehra (also called Vijaya Dasami). The festival falls in September or October --the date changes every year, depending on the movements of the planets.
Diwali (Festival of Lights) October 13 to November 14	The most important Hindu festival of the year and the beginning of a five-day period which honors various Hindu gods and goddesses. On the Hindu calendar, Diwali is celebrated for the five days from the 13th day of the dark half of the lunar month Asvina to the second day of the light half of Kartika. On the Gregorian (western) calendar, Diwali (also known as Divali or Dipavali) falls in the months of October or November, and always on a new moon day. This festival is also celebrated by Sikhs and Jains.
Maha Shivaratri (Shiva's Nights) February or March	Hindu festival honoring Shiva, the god of destruction--celebrates his wedding anniversary and the night of his celestial dance. It is held on the 14th day of the dark half of the lunar month of Phalgun.
Holi March	Hindu annual festival celebrating spring. It is observed on the day after the full moon in the Hindu month of Phalgun (usually in March).



Ramanavami  
March or April

Celebration of the birth of Rama, one of the incarnations of the God Vishnu.

[Top of the page](#)

**Islamic**

Muslim holidays are based on the actual sighting of the new crescent moon in each respective month. The Islamic calendar is ten to eleven days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, so all Muslim holidays move earlier by that number of days in the Gregorian calendar each year. (Holidays begin at sundown on the previous day.)

Ramadan  
July, June or  
May (2012-17)

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year (around September), when observant Muslims fast, pray, and read the Qur'an. The dates of Ramadan vary, moving earlier in the Gregorian calendar by around ten to eleven days each year.

Laylat al-Qadr (Night  
of Power)  
August, July or  
June (2012-17)

Commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad; traditionally celebrated on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan.

Eid al Fitr (Breaking  
of the Fast)  
August or July (2012-  
17)

Three-day festival which celebrates the Breaking of the Fast. It comes at the end of Ramadan.

Eid al-Adha (Feast of  
the Sacrifice)  
October or  
September (2012-17)

Commemorates the story of the sacrifice of Abraham as told in the Qur'an. Culminates the three-day festival connected with the hajj, the annual pilgrimage by Muslims to the holy city of Mecca. It comes at the end of the annual pilgrimage.

Muharram (New  
Year)  
November or October  
(2012-17)

Beginning of the new year based on the Islamic lunar calendar. Celebrates the hegira, the flight of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.

Ashura  
November or October  
(2012-17)

Islamic holy day observed on the 10th of the Islamic month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic year. The word 'ashura literally means "10th." Regarded by Shi'ite Muslims as a major festival,



	commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussein.
Maulid an-Nabi January or December (2012-17)	Anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in 570 C.E. Celebrated five days later by Shite Muslims.

[Top of the page](#)

### Jain

Paryusana Parva August or September	The most important festival for Jains -- an eight day period of repentance and austerity, when many Jains fast and perform religious activities. Period falls in the Hindu months of Shravana and Bhadra (August or September).
Diwali Night (Lord Mahavir's Nirvana) October or November	For Jains, Diwali (or Deepawali or Divali) marks the anniversary of Lord Mahavir's attainment of nirvana. This occurred in 527 B.C.E. The festival is celebrated on the last day of the Hindu month of Asvina (which falls in October or November). Diwali is an important celebration for Hindus and Sikhs as well as Jains.
Mahavir Jayanti March or April	Festival celebrates the birth of Lord Mahavira in 599 B.C.E., the last and the greatest of the Tirthankaras or enlightened ones of the Jain religion. Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated in the Hindu month of Chaitra, which occurs in March or April.

[Top of the page](#)

### Jewish

(Holidays begin at sundown on the previous day.)

Tisha B'av July or August	Tisha B'av is an annual fast day in Judaism, commemorating the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E and again in 70 C.E. Named for the ninth day (Tisha) of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar. It falls in July or August in the Gregorian calendar.
Rosh Hashanah (New Year)	Beginning of the Jewish year; signifies the start of the Days of Awe or Repentance, a period which extends up to Yom Kippur. Conservative and

September or October	Orthodox Jews celebrate two days. It is observed on the first day of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar.
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) September or October	The holiest day in Judaism - a day of repentance and forgiveness and the end of the ten-day period known as the Days of Awe or the Days of Repentance that start with Rosh Hashanah. Yom Kippur is the tenth and final day of the Ten Days of Repentance which begin with Rosh Hashanah.
Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles) September or October	Eight-day harvest festival named for the booths that are erected and hung with fruits and vegetables to recall the temporary dwellings used by the Hebrew during the time of their captivity in Egypt. It occurs in autumn on the 15th day of the month of Tishri (late September to early October).
Shemini Atzeret September or October	Concludes Sukkoth and marks the end of the holiday period that begins with Rosh Hashanah. It is celebrated on the 22nd day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei.
Simchat Torah September or October	Marks the completion and new beginning of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah in synagogues. Usually celebrated on the day following Shemini Atzeret.
Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) Late November or December	Eight-day holiday commemorating the victory of the Jews, led by the Maccabees, over the Greeks in 165 B.C.E and the rededication of the temple. It is observed for eight nights, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, and may occur from late November to late December on the Gregorian calendar.
Purim (Feast of Lots) February or March	Commemorates the events in Persia in the 5th Century B.C.E. which resulted in Queen Esther's saving the Jewish people from destruction. Purim is celebrated annually according to the Hebrew calendar on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar.
Passover (Pesach) March or April	Eight-day holiday celebrating the Israelites liberation from slavery in Egypt, circa 1300 B.C.E. The first two and the last two days of Passover are usually considered the most important days of the period. Passover begins on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew calendar in accordance with the Hebrew Bible.
Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) April or May	Day set aside as a memorial to the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II. Held on the 27th day of the month of Nisan.
Shavuoth (Festival of Weeks) May or June	Marks the end of the seven weeks following Passover. Also commemorates Moses receiving the Torah and the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. It occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan (late May or early June).



[Top of the page](#)

## Native American

Spiritual festivals, activities, and ceremonies are closely related to earth-based, seasonal events, and community or individual needs. The dates and nature these celebrations and observances will vary **according to community and the individual observant.**

[Top of the page](#)

## Sikh

<p>Diwali (Bandi Chhor Divas) October or November</p>	<p>Commemorates the day the sixth Guru, Hargobind, was released from prison in 1619 C.E. On the Gregorian (western) calendar, the festival falls in the months of October or November, and always on a new moon day. Diwali is also an important celebration for Hindus and Jains.</p>
<p>Guru Nanak Dev Gurburab (Bikrami Calendar) November</p>	<p>Guru Nanak's birthday celebration. He was born in 1469 C.E. in modern-day Pakistan. His birthday falls during the month of November on the Gregorian calendar.</p>
<p>Guru Gobind Singh Gurburab (Nanakshahi Calendar) January 5</p>	<p>Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, was born in 1666 C.E. His birthday is celebrated on January 5th by Sikhs following the Nanakshahi calendar. Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa and nominated Guru Granth Sahib as his successor and final and perpetual guru.</p>
<p>Vaisakhi April 13 or 14</p>	<p>Vaisakhi, in April, began as a Hindu festival of thanksgiving but for Sikhs, marks the founding of the Khalsa in 1699 C.E.. Those ready to be initiated into the Khalsa are usually baptized on this day, and the Sikh flag is replaced. It falls on the first day of the Vaisakh month in the solar Nanakshahi calendar, which corresponds to April 13 or April 14 in the Gregorian calendar.</p>

[Top of the page](#)

## Zoroastrian

<p>Birthday of Prophet Zarathusthra (Zoroaster) March 26</p>	<p>Khordad Sal (Fasli): The birthday of Zoroaster, celebrated on this date in the Fasli calendar</p>
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