

**2019-2020**

**Major Religious Holidays and Observances**

**JULY 2019**

**July 10**

**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 16**

**DHARMA DAY • Buddhist**

Also known as *Asala Puja*, it commemorates the historical Buddha's first discourse following his spiritual awakening.

**AUGUST 2019**

**August 11**

**TISHA B'AV • Jewish**

Mourning of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE.

**August 12–15**

**EID AL-ADHA • Islamic**

Commemoration of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience of a command from God. Marks the end of the annual Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

**August 15**

**RAKSHA BANDHAN • Hindu**

Also called *Rakhi*, this festival celebrates the protective relationship between brothers and their sisters.

**August 15**

**ULLAMBANA (also known as Obon) • Buddhist**

Ullambana, a Sanskrit term that means “hanging upside down and suffering,” honors the spirits of past ancestors and strives to relieve aching souls from suffering. It lasts about half of the month of August. Obon, the Japanese transliteration of Ullambana, is only three days and varies from region to region—July in the eastern region and August in the western region.

**August 24**

**KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI (Also known as JAYANTI) • Hindu**

Celebrates Krishna's birthday, Vishnu's eighth incarnation on earth.

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August 31

**MUHARRAM • Islamic**

The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year. This first day, 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 Shī'ite Remembrance of Muharram, a period of intense grief and martyrdom of Hussein, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad.

#### SEPTEMBER 2019

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. For Shi'a Muslims, it also marks the climax of the ten-day Remembrance of Muharram, which mourns the martyrdom of Hussein at the Battle of Kerbala.

September 16

**MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE 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

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.

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- 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**                         **REFORMATION DAY • Christian**  
Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.
- October 31**                         **HALLOWEEN**  
The eve of All Saints’ Day.

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### Major Religious Holidays and Observances

#### NOVEMBER 2019

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 is celebrated in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. 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's 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 is celebrated in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Sunni Muslims celebrate it five days earlier than Shi'a 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.

#### DECEMBER 2019

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

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before Christmas. In Eastern Christianity, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November.

**December 8**

### **BODHI DAY • Buddhist**

Also known as *Rohatsu*, commemorates the day that the Buddha, Siddharta Gautama, experienced enlightenment or spiritual awakening (bodhi). 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 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 24**

### **CHRISTMAS EVE • Christian**

Celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus.

**December 25**

### **CHRISTMAS • Western Christian**

Commemorates the birth of Jesus.

**December 26– January 1,  
2020**

### **KWANZAA**

A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. “Kwanzaa” means “first fruits (of the harvest)” in Swahili.

**JANUARY 2020**

**January 5**

### **GURU GOBIND SINGH JI’S BIRTHDAY • Sikh**

Guru Gobindh Singh was the 10th Sikh guru of Nanak and founder of the Khalsa.

**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.

**Source:** Anti-Defamation League: <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-of-observances> - Prepared by the office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion

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January 6	<b>EPIPHANY • Christian</b> Known as <i>Theophany</i> 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 7	<b>CHRISTMAS • Eastern Christian</b> 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	<b>MAHAYANA NEW YEAR • Buddhist</b> In Mahayana countries the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January.
January 15	<b>MAKAR SANKRANTI • Hindu</b> Seasonal celebration marking turning of the sun toward the north.
January 19	<b>WORLD RELIGION DAY • Bahá'í</b> Observance to proclaim the oneness of religion and the belief that world religion will unify the peoples of the earth.
January 25	<b>LUNAR NEW YEAR • Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist</b> Also known as the Spring Festival, an important festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar.
January 27	<b>HOLOCAUST REMBRANCE DAY</b>
<b>FEBRUARY 2020</b>	
February 10	<b>TU B'SHVAT • Jewish</b> 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	<b>NIRVANA DAY • Buddhist</b> Celebrates the day when the historical Buddha achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Sometimes celebrated on February 8.

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<b>February 22</b>	<b>MAHA SHIVARATRI • Hindu</b> Also called <i>Shiva Ratri</i> , the Great Night of Shiva, is a festival in reverence of the god Shiva. The festival is celebrated at the 13th night or 14th day of the waning moon in the Hindu calendar (month of February or March of the English calendar).
<b>February 25</b>	<b>SHROVE TUESDAY • Western Christian</b> A day of penitence as well as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Also known as Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday and Carnival Day as this day is observed in many ways worldwide.
<b>February 26</b>	<b>ASH WEDNESDAY • Western Christian</b> The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches, a 40-day period of spiritual preparation for Easter, not counting Sundays.
<b>February 26–29</b>	<b>AYYÁM-I-HA OR INTERCALARY DAYS • Bahá'í</b> 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 by inserting days into the calendar in order to maintain their solar calendar.
<b>MARCH 2020</b>	
<b>March 1– March 19</b>	<b>NINETEEN-DAY FAST • Bahá'í</b> 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.
<b>March 2</b>	<b>CLEAN MONDAY • Eastern Christian</b> The beginning of <i>Great Lent</i> for Eastern Christian churches, which starts 40 days before Orthodox Easter (Pascha), counting Sundays.
<b>March 9</b>	<b>MAGHA PUJA • Buddhist</b> Also known as <i>Sangha Day</i> , it commemorates the spontaneous assembly of 1,250 disciples, completely enlightened monks, in the historical Buddha's presence.
<b>March 10</b>	<b>PURIM • Jewish</b> The “Feast of Lots” marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from extermination.

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<b>March 10</b>	<b>HOLI • Hindu</b> A spring festival in India and Nepal dedicated to the god of pleasure, also known as the festival of colours or the festival of sharing love.
<b>March 10</b>	<b>HOLA MOHALLA • Sikh</b> 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.
<b>March 17</b>	<b>ST. PATRICK'S DAY • Christian</b> 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.
<b>March 28</b>	<b>KHORDAD SAL • Zoroastrian</b> The Zoroastrian celebration of the birth of Zoroaster, the founder of the Zoroastrianism religion. The holiday is specifically celebrated in India and Iran, immediately following the Persian new year, Nowrúz.
<b>APRIL 2020</b>	
<b>April 2</b>	<b>RAMA NAVAMI • Hindu</b> Celebrates the birthday of Rama, king of ancient India, hero of the epic Ramayana, and seventh incarnation of Vishnu.
<b>April 5</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY • Christian</b> Observed the Sunday before Easter/Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
<b>April 7–9</b>	<b>THERAVADA NEW YEAR • Buddhist</b> In Theravada countries the New Year is celebrated on the first full moon day in April.
<b>April 9–16</b>	<b>PASSOVER/PESACH • Jewish</b> The eight-day "Feast of Unleavened Bread" celebrates Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.





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- 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**  
Commemorates the night that the *Qur'an* was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It is known as the "Night of Power." Often set on the 27th day of Ramadan, Sunnis may observe it on the 21st, 23rd, 25th or 29th and Shi'ite (Shiite) observe it on the 19th, 21st or 23rd day of Ramadan.
- May 21**                      **ASCENSION DAY • Christian**  
Celebrated 40 days after Easter/Pascha, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
- May 21**                      **NOWRÚZ • Zoroastrian**  
A traditional ancient Iranian festival celebrating the first day of Spring and the Iranian New Year. Also celebrated as New Year's Day in Baha'i tradition (Naw-Ruz). (This date may vary based on region or sect.)
- May 23**                      **DECLARATION OF THE BÁB • 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.

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**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**

**June 14**

**RACE UNITY DAY • Bahá'í**

Observance promoting racial harmony and understanding and the essential unity of humanity.

**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.