

2008-2009 Holy Days Calendar

Date	Observance (Religion)
September	
Monday, September 1	Ramadan begins at sundown (Muslim) The holy month during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown for thirty days, commemorating the giving of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammed. Each day ends with a celebratory Iftar, or breaking-of-the-fast.
Tuesday, September 2	First day of Ramadan (Muslim)
Wednesday, September 3	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu) Marks the birth of Ganesh, Lord of power and wisdom.
Monday, September 8	Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Roman Catholic) A celebration of the birth of Mary, mother of Jesus.
Sunday, September 14	Holy Cross Day (Christian) This day recalls the dedication, in the days of Constantine, of the shrine built over the site where the crucifixion of Jesus was believed to have taken place. It is observed in the liturgical churches as a day of veneration of the cross.
Monday, September 22	Mabon (Pagan/Wiccan) The celebration of the harvest at the time of the autumn equinox, the moment when night and day are equal in length.
Saturday, September 27	First day of Banned Books Week (Atheist/Secular) Banned Books Week is an eight-day celebration of the democratic freedom to express opinions, including those that may be deemed unpopular or unorthodox by others.
Sunday, September 28	Lailat-al-Qadr begins at sundown (Muslim) Commemorates the revelation of the Quran to Muhammed. The night is spent in worship.

Monday, September 29

Lailat-al-Qadr (Muslim)

Monday, September 29

St. Michael and All Angels (Christian)

Commonly known as Michaelmas, is a celebration of all those understood to be messengers of God, visible and invisible.

Monday, September 29

Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown (Jewish)

Rosh Hashanah is the name given to the new year in the Jewish calendar, marking the beginning of the High Holy Days of the year 5768. Sweet foods are served, symbolizing the hope for a sweet year ahead. Some Jews observe one day away from work, others two.

Tuesday, September 30

First day of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)

Tuesday, September 30

First day of Navaratra Dashara (Hindu)

The nine-night festival of the Goddess in the form of universal mother, honoring Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings. It incorporates **Saraswati Puja**, dedicated to the goddess of learning. It closes with **Vijaya Dasami**, a special puja (offering or act of worship), celebrating the victory of good over evil.

October

Wednesday, October 1

Second day of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)

Thursday, October 2

Eid-UI Fitr (Muslim)

Also known as Seker Bayram or Ramazan Bayram, marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It is a day of thanksgiving.

Saturday, October 4

Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Christian)

St. Francis of Assisi is honored for his connection to nature, and his feast day is often celebrated as a time of giving thanks for animals.

Monday, October 6

Saraswati Puja (Hindu)

Part of Navaratra Dashara, the nine-night festival of the Goddess, dedicated to the goddess of learning.

Wednesday, October 8

Yom Kippur begins at sundown (Jewish)

The Jewish day of atonement, a solemn day dedicated to fasting and prayer.

Thursday, October 9

Yom Kippur (Jewish)

Thursday, October 9

Vijaya Dasami (Hindu)

The last night of Navaratra Dashara, the nine-night festival of the Goddess, when a special puja (offering or act of worship) is offered, celebrating the victory of good over evil.

Monday, October 13

Indigenous Peoples' Day (Interfaith)

Celebrates the survival and traditions of indigenous peoples in the Americas.

Monday, October 13

Sukkot begins at sundown (Jewish)

Sukkot is the week-long Jewish Feast of Booths or Tabernacles, during which meals are eaten out of doors in a sukkah (tent), in remembrance of the years spent by the people of Israel in the wilderness. The first two and last two days are times to refrain from work.

Tuesday, October 14

First day of **Sukkot (Jewish)** Wednesday, October 15 Second day of **Sukkot (Jewish)**

Monday, October 20

Birth of Bab (Baha'i)

Commemorates the birth of the forerunner to the prophet and founder of the Baha'i faith.

Monday, October 20

Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)

Marks the passing of the role of guru to the Sikh Scriptures, by the tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh Ji.

Monday, October 20

Concluding days of **Sukkot** begin at sundown (**Jewish**)

Tuesday, October 21

Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)

The eighth and last day of Sukkot (see September).

Wednesday, October 22

Simchat Torah (Jewish)

The day of rejoicing in the Law. Along with Shemini Atzeret, these two observances conclude the feast of Sukkot, and mark the ending of the year's cycle of readings from the Torah, and the beginning of the new cycle.

Tuesday, October 28

Diwali (Hindu)

Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, marking the end of the Hindu year. It is the first of five days of celebration, known as Deepavali. It is marked by fireworks and festivity.

Tuesday, October 28

Birth of Confucius (Confucian)

Observed in all religions emanating from China.

Tuesday, October 28

Mahavira Nirvana (Jain)

The day on which the prophet Mahavira attained Nirvana, on the first day of Diwali, the beginning of the new year.

Tuesday, October 28

Bandi Chhor Divas (Sikh)

Marks the return of the Sixth Guru after his release from prison on the first day of Diwali.

November

Saturday, November 1

Samhain (Pagan/Wiccan)

The observance of the mid-point between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice, the moment of descent into the depths of winter. It is the time when souls who have died are bid farewell, and when the veil between physical and spiritual worlds is at its thinnest. It passed into Christian tradition as All Hallows Eve (Halloween).

Saturday, November 1

All Saints Day (Christian)

All Saints Day is observed by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and some Protestants, and celebrates the lives of the saints (individuals honored for their holiness).

Sunday, November 2

All Souls Day (Christian)

Marked in Mexico as the Dia de los Muertos, is a day of remembering and interceding for those who have died.

Tuesday, November 11

Birth of Baha'u'llah begins at sundown (**Baha'i**)

Wednesday, November 12

Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)

Marks the birth of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

Monday, November 24

Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh)

Marks the birth of the First Guru and founder of the Sikh faith in 1469 C.E.

Monday, November 24

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)

Defender of Sikhism, Hinduism, and of religious liberty, was executed by the Moghul Emperor in India in 1675 C.E.

Friday, November 28

Ascension of Abdul'Baha (Baha'i)

Marks the ascension to heaven of the son of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith.

Sunday, November 30 **First Sunday of Advent (Christian)**

The season of preparation for the coming of Christ, also the beginning of the Christian liturgical year. Advent candles are lit in progression each week until the celebration of Christmas begins.

December

Sunday, December 7

Waqf al-Arafa (Muslim)

The day during the annual Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) when pilgrims pray for forgiveness and mercy.

Monday, December 8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic)

Celebrates the conception of Mary, mother of Jesus.

Monday, December 8

Bodhi Day (Buddhist)

The celebration of the day when Prince Gautama vowed to remain under the bodhi tree until he attained enlightenment.

Monday, December 8

Eid al-Adha begins at sundown (Muslim)

The three day Eid al-Adha commemorates Abraham and his offering of his son, Ishmael, in obedience to Allah. It is observed as a time of the distribution of meat to the poor.

Tuesday, December 9

Eid al-Adha (Muslim)

Friday, December 12

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Roman Catholic)

Celebrates Mary as the patron saint of Mexico, honoring her appearance near Mexico City in 1531, C.E.

Sunday, December 21

Hanukkah begins at sundown (Jewish)

Also known as the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah lasts for eight days, and commemorates the victory of Judah the Maccabee, and the rededication of the Temple in 165 B.C.E. Jews light successive candles on the menorah on each of the eight days.

Sunday, December 21

Yule (Pagan/Wiccan)

Commemorates the rebirth of the sun after the longest night of winter, and also the wintertime birth of God in the form of a King.

Tuesday, December 23

HumanLight (Atheist/Humanist/Freethought)

A celebration of the humanist vision for a future in which all people learn to co-exist peacefully and with goodwill toward one another.

Wednesday, December 24\

Christmas Eve (Western Christian)

The eve of Christmas Day

Thursday, December 25

Christmas Day (Western Christian)

Observed on December 25 in the West, on January 6 by Armenian Christians, and on January 25 by Orthodox Christians, it is the celebration of the birth of Christ. The feast of Christmas lasts for twelve days, from the eve of Christmas Day to the eve of the Epiphany.

Friday, December 26

First day of Kwanzaa (African American/Interfaith)

A week-long celebration of African American life and culture.

Friday, December 2

Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian)

Marks the death of the prophet Zarathustra.

Sunday, December 28

Al-Hijra begins at sundown (Muslim)

The Muslim new year, timed to mark the arrival of Muhammed and his first followers in Medina in 622 C.E.

Monday, December 29

Al-Hijra (Muslim)

2009

January

Saturday, January 3

Vasant Panchami (Hindu)

A celebration dedicated to Saraswati, goddess of learning.

Monday, January 5

Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (Sikh)

Marks the birth in 1666 C.E. of the Tenth Guru (the final master) of the Sikh faith.

Tuesday, January 6

Epiphany (Christian)

The twelfth night of Christmas, marking the visit of the sages to the Christ child. This date is observed as the birth of Christ in the Armenian tradition.

Tuesday, January 6

Theophany (Orthodox Christian)

The Eastern Orthodox celebration of Christmas.

Wednesday, January 7

Ashura (Muslim)

Commemorates tests endured by the prophets and righteous leaders, including Noah and Moses; and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, grandson of Muhammed.

Wednesday, January 7

Nativity of Christ (Orthodox Christian)

Eastern Orthodox celebration of Christmas.

Tuesday, January 13

Maghi (Sikh)

Marks the remembrance of the battle in which 40 Sikhs died for Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Sunday, January 18

Beginning of **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Christian)**

A week when Christians pray that past divisions and schisms be healed and forgiven.

Monday, January 26

Chinese New Year (Taoist/Buddhist/Confucian)

Observed as a festival day by Buddhists, Taoists, and all religions of China.

February

Monday, February 2

Imbolg (Pagan/Wiccan)

The feast of waxing light marks the mid-point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It speaks of hope and regeneration.

Monday, February 2

Candlemas (Christian)

The feast of the presentation of Christ to the aged Simeon, who proclaimed him a light to the world. This day is celebrated by Eastern Orthodox Christians as the *Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple*.

Sunday, February 8

Tu B-Shvat begins at sundown **(Jewish)**

A celebration of the coming of spring, a day of environmental awareness, often marked by the planting of trees.

Monday, February 9

Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)

Thursday, February 12

Darwin Day (Atheist/Secular)

The anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species* is an international celebration of scientific discovery as a human achievement and as a pointer to the essential unity and equality of all human life.

Sunday, February 15

Nirvana Day (Buddhist)

Marks the anniversary of the death of the Buddha.

Monday, February 23

Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)

The festival of Shiva, celebrated as the one whose cosmic dance creates and re-creates the universe.

Tuesday, February 24

Mardi Gras (Christian)

Also known as Shrove Tuesday, preparation for the beginning of Lent, marked in some places by feasting and carnival activities.

Wednesday, February 25

Ash Wednesday (Christian)

The first day of Lent, the season of 40 days (excluding Sundays) of prayer and self-examination leading to Holy Week. Ashes are placed on the heads of the faithful as a sign of penitence.

Thursday, February 26

First day of Ala` (Baha'i)

A month of fasting and meditation for Baha'is, with no food consumed between the rising of the sun and its setting. Months in the Baha'i calendar last for nineteen days, so this is also sometimes referred to as the Nineteen Days of Fasting.

March

Sunday, March 8

Mawlid al-Nabi begins at sundown (Muslim)

Commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammed in about 570 C.E. Monday,

March 9

Mawlid al-Nabi (Muslim)

Monday, March 9

Purim begins at sundown (Jewish)

Marks the events told in the Biblical Book of Esther, celebrating victory over the oppression and the deliverance of the people of Israel in exile from a genocidal ruler.

Tuesday, March 10

Purim (Jewish)

Tuesday, March 10

Holi begins at sundown (Hindu)

A spring festival celebrating color and joy.

Wednesday, March 11

Holi (Hindu)

Saturday, March 21

Ostara (Pagan/Wiccan)

The festival of the spring equinox, the return of light and celebration of the reawakening of seeds in the belly of the earth.

Saturday, March 21

Naw Ruz (Persian New Year)

The Persian new year, celebrated as a festival by people of all faiths of Iranian origin.

Thursday, March 26

Khordad Sal (Zoroastrian)

The birthday of the prophet Zarathustra.

April

Friday, April 3

Ramanavami (Hindu)

The last day of a week of celebration marking the birth of Rama, hero of the epic poem, Ramayana.

Sunday, April 5

Palm Sunday (Christian)

Also known as Passion Sunday, marks the beginning of the Christian Holy Week, leading to Easter. On this day, Jesus entered Jerusalem and was acclaimed as a king.

Monday, April 6

Founding of the Church (Latter-day Saint)

The commemoration of the founding by Joseph Smith in 1830 C.E. of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Tuesday, April 7

Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)

Marks the birth of Mahavira, founder of the Jain religion, in 540 B.C.E.

Wednesday, April 8

Passover begins at sundown (Jewish)

Also known as Pesach, is the eight-day feast commemorating the exodus of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The first two and last two days of the festival are observed as holidays from work.

Thursday, April 9

First day of Passover (Jewish)

Thursday, April 9

Holy Thursday (Christian)

Also known as Maundy Thursday, marks Christ's Last Supper, upon which the Eucharist (mass, communion) is based.

Friday, April 10

Second day of Passover (Jewish)

Friday, April 10

Good Friday (Christian)

Good (Holy) Friday is the day on which the death of Christ is remembered.

Saturday, April 11

Holy Saturday (Christian)

A day of vigil culminating in the feast of the resurrection.

Sunday, April 12

Easter Sunday (Christian)

The feast of the resurrection of Christ, the most important feast of the church. Christians commonly gather to celebrate at sunrise. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, it is always timed to follow Passover.

Tuesday, April 14

Baisakhi (Sikh)

The harvest festival of North India, the beginning of the solar year. For Sikhs, it represents the founding of the Khalsa, a Sikh brotherhood.

Tuesday, April 14

Seventh day of Passover begins at sundown (Jewish)

Wednesday, April 15

Seventh day of Passover (Jewish)

Thursday, April 16

Eighth day of Passover (Jewish)

Friday, April 17

Holy Friday (Orthodox Christian)

Sunday, April 19

Easter/Pascha (Orthodox Christian)

Monday, April 20

Yom HaShoah begins at sundown (Jewish)

The remembrance of the Holocaust.

Tuesday, April 21

Yom HaShoah (Jewish)

Tuesday, April 21

First day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

A twelve-day festival commemorating the declaration of Baha'u'llah in 1863 C.E. that he was God's messenger. Work ceases on the first, ninth, and twelfth days.

Wednesday, April 22

Earth Day (Interfaith)

A day of reflection and activities focusing on the need for a healthy, sustainable environment.

Wednesday, April 29

Ninth day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

May

Friday, May 1

Beltane (Pagan/Wiccan)

The mid-point between the spring equinox and summer solstice, a celebration of the earth's fertility.

Saturday, May 2

Twelfth Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)

Saturday, May 9

Visakha Puja (Buddhist)

Also known as Wesak, marks the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. It is the most important day of the calendar for Buddhists.

Thursday, May 21

Ascension of Christ (Christian)

The feast of the Ascension of Christ marks the raising of Christ to heaven on the 40th day after Easter.

Saturday, May 23

Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)

Commemorates the declaration in 1844 by Ali Muhammed, forerunner to the founder of the Baha'i faith, that he was the anticipated "coming one."

Thursday, May 28

Shavuot begins at sundown (**Jewish**)

The giving of the Torah (law) to the Jewish people is commemorated.

Friday, May 29

First day of **Shavuot (Jewish)**

Friday, May 29

Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)

The commemoration of the Ascension of Baha'u'llah marks the ascension into heaven of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

Saturday, May 30

Second day of **Shavuot (Jewish)**

Sunday, May 31

Pentecost (Christian)

The 50th day after Easter, and the day upon which the Spirit of God descended upon the first Christians with the appearance of wind and fire.