



2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances

January 2020

January 1: New Year's Day, the first day of the year according to the modern Gregorian calendar, celebrated within most Western countries.

January 2: Bodhi Day, the Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment, also known as bodhi in Sanskrit and Pali.

January 2: Feast Day of St. Basil, a holiday observed by the Eastern Orthodox Church, commemorating the death of Saint. Basil the Great.

January 3: Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church, commemorates the naming of the child Jesus.

January 4: World Braille Day, observed in order to raise awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. Celebrated on Louis Braille's birthday, the inventor of braille.

January 5: Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birthday, 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 5: Twelfth Night, a festival celebrated by some branches of Christianity that marks the coming of the Epiphany.

January 6: Epiphany or Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day), a holiday observed by Eastern and Western Christians that recognizes the visit of the three wise men to the baby Jesus 12 days after his birth.

January 6: Christmas, recognized on this day by Armenian Orthodox Christians, who celebrate the birth of Jesus on Epiphany.

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January 7: Christmas, recognized on this day by Eastern Orthodox Christians, who celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches because they follow the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.

January 10-12: Mahayana New Year, a holiday celebrated by the Mahayana Buddhist branch, on the first full-moon day in January.

January 13: Maghi, an annual festival celebrated by the Sikhs commemorating the memory of 40 Sikh martyrs.

January 15: Makar Sankranti, a major harvest festival celebrated in various parts of India.

January 18-25: The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, during which Christians pray for unity between all churches of the Christian faith.

January 19: World Religion Day, observed by those of the Bahá'í faith to promote interfaith harmony and understanding.

January 20: Timkat, a holiday observed by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who celebrate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River on Epiphany.

January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day commemorates the birth of Martin Luther King Jr., the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and an activist for nonviolent social change until his assassination in 1968.

January 25: Lunar New Year, one of the most sacred of all traditional Chinese holidays, a time of family reunion and celebration. The Lunar New Year is also celebrated at this time in Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Mongolia.

January 25-26: Losar, the Tibetan Buddhist New Year, a time of renewal through sacred and secular practices.

January 26: Republic Day of India recognizes the date the Constitution of India came into law in 1950, replacing the Government of India Act of 1935. This day also coincides with India's 1930 declaration of independence.

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January 27: The International Day of Commemoration to remember the victims of the Holocaust. The anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945 and U.N. Holocaust Memorial Day.

January 27 (sundown to sundown): Holocaust Remembrance Day, a time to “mourn the loss of lives, celebrate those who saved them, honor those who survived, and contemplate the obligations of the living.” — Former President Barack Obama.

January 29: Vasant Panchami, the Hindu festival that highlights the coming of spring. On this day Hindus worship Saraswati Devi, the goddess of wisdom, knowledge, music, art, and culture.

February 2020

February is Black History Month in the United States and Canada. Since 1976, the month has been designated to remember the contributions of people of the African diaspora.

February 1: National Freedom Day, which celebrates the signing of the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in 1865.

February 1: Imbolc, a Gaelic traditional festival marking the beginning of spring.

February 1: St. Brigid of Kildare, feast day for St. Brigid celebrated by some Christian denominations.

February 2: Candlemas – A Christian holiday that celebrates three occasions according to Christian belief: the presentation of the child Jesus; Jesus' first entry into the temple; and Virgin Mary's purification.

February 3: St. Blaise Day (The Blessing of the Throats), the feast day of St. Blaise of Sebaste celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church and some Eastern Catholic churches.

February 3: Setsubun-Sai (Beginning of Spring), the day before the beginning of spring in Japan, celebrated yearly as part of the Spring Festival.

February 3: Four Chaplains Sunday commemorates the 55th anniversary of the sinking of the United States army transport Dorchester and the heroism of the four chaplains aboard.

February 8: Lantern Festival, the first significant feast after the Chinese New Year, named for watching Chinese lanterns illuminate the sky during the night of the event.

February 8-March 9: Magha Puja Day (also known as Maka Bucha), a Buddhist holiday that marks an event early in the Buddha's teaching life when a group of 1,250 enlightened saints, ordained by the Buddha, gathered to pay their respect to him. It is celebrated on various dates in different countries.

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February 9-10 (sundown to sundown): Tu B'shevat, a Jewish holiday recognizing "The New Year of the Trees." It is celebrated on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. In Israel, the flowering of the almond tree usually coincides with this holiday, which is observed by planting trees and eating dried fruits and nuts.

February 14: St. Valentine's Day, a Western Christian feast day honoring one or two early saints named Valentinus. Typically associated with romantic love and celebrated by people expressing their love via gifts.

February 15: Parinirvana Day (or Nirvana Day), the commemoration of Buddha's death at the age of 80, when he reached the zenith of Nirvana. February 8 is an alternative date of observance.

February 17: Presidents Day, a federally recognized celebration in the United States of George Washington's birthday, as well as every president proceeding Washington.

February 21: Maha Shivarati, Hindu festival celebrated each year to honor Lord Shiva. It is celebrated just before the arrival of spring. It is also known as the Great Night of Shiva or Shivaratri and is one of the largest and most significant among the sacred festival nights of India.

February 23: Meatfare Sunday (The Sunday of the Last Judgment), traditionally the last day of eating meat before Easter for Orthodox Christians.

February 25-March 1: Intercalary Days or Ayyám-i-Há, celebrated by people of the Bahá'í faith. At this time, days are added to the Bahá'í calendar to maintain their solar calendar. Intercalary days are observed with gift giving, special acts of charity, and preparation for the fasting that precedes the New Year.

February 25: Mardi Gras, the last day for Catholics to indulge before Ash Wednesday starts the sober weeks of fasting that accompany Lent. The term "Mardi Gras" is particularly associated with the carnival celebrations in New Orleans, Louisiana.

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February 25: Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. Though named for its former religious significance, it is chiefly marked by feasting and celebration, which traditionally preceded the observance of the Lenten fast. It is observed by various Christian denominations.

February 26: Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent on the Christian calendar. Its name is derived from the symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence. It takes place immediately after the excesses of the two days of Carnival that take place in Northern Europe and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

February 29 (sunset) to March 19 (sunset): Nineteen-Day Fast, a time in the Bahá'í Faith to reinvigorate the soul and bring one closer to God. This fast takes place immediately before the beginning of the Bahá'í New Year.

March 2020

March is Women's History Month. Started in 1987, Women's History Month recognizes all women for their valuable contributions to history and society. **March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**, which was established to increase awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. **March is National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month.** It was established to raise public awareness of the autoimmune disease that affects the brain and spinal cord and assist those with multiple sclerosis in making informed decisions about their health care.

March 1: St. David's Day, the feast day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

March 1: Cheesefare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday, the last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent for Orthodox Christians.

March 2-April 18: Beginning of Great Lent in the Orthodox Christian faith. March 2, the day Great Lent begins this year, is also known as Clean Monday.

March 8: International Women's Day. First observed in 1911 in Germany, it has now become a major global celebration honoring women's economic, political and social achievements.

March 8: Orthodox Sunday, celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. It is the celebration of the victory of the iconodules over the iconoclasts by the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. Therefore, the service is to commemorate the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Christians.

March 9-10: Holi, the annual Hindu and Sikh spring religious festival observed in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, along with other countries with large Hindu and Sikh populations. People celebrate Holi by throwing colored powder and water at each other. Bonfires are lit the day before in the memory of the miraculous escape that young Prahlada accomplished when demoness Holika carried him into the fire. It is often celebrated on the full moon (the Phalguna Purnima) before the beginning of the Vernal Equinox as based on the Hindu calendar.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | March Continued

March 9-10: Purim, a Jewish celebration that marks the time when the Jewish community living in Persia was saved from genocide. On Purim, Jewish people offer charity and share food with friends.

March 10-12: Hola Mohalla, a Sikh festival that takes place on the second day of the lunar month of Chet, a day after the Hindu spring festival Holi.

March 13-April 15: Deaf History Month. This observance celebrates key events in deaf history, including the founding of Gallaudet University and the American School for the Deaf.

March 17: St. Patrick's Day, a holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith.

March 19: St. Joseph's Day, in Western Christianity the principal feast of St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. March 19-20: Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year is a holiday celebrated on the vernal equinox. It is one of the nine Bahá'í holy days on which work is suspended.

March 20: Ostara, a celebration of the spring equinox commemorated by Pagans and Wiccans. It is observed as a time to mark the coming of spring and the fertility of the land.

March 20-21: Nowruz/Norooz, Persian New Year, a day of joy, celebration and renewal. It is held annually on the spring equinox.

March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed annually in the wake of the 1960 killing of 69 people at a demonstration against apartheid pass laws in South Africa. The United Nations proclaimed the day in 1966 and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is a United Nations international observation that offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. First observed in 2008, the international day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | March Continued

March 25: Hindi New Year.

March 25: Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, a Christian celebration of the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus.

March 28: Khordad Sal (Birth of prophet Zoroaster), birth anniversary (or birthdate) of Zoroaster, a spiritual leader and ethical philosopher who taught a spiritual philosophy of self-realization and realization of the divine. Zoroastrians celebrate this day with prayer and feasting.

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility, celebrated to bring awareness to transgender people and their identities as well as recognize those who helped fight for rights for transgender people.

April 2020

April is Celebrate Diversity Month, started in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will get a deeper understanding of each other. **April is Autism Awareness Month**, established to raise awareness about the developmental disorder that affects children's normal development of social and communication skills.

April 2: World Autism Awareness Day, created to raise awareness of the developmental disorder around the globe.

April 2: Ram Navami, a Hindu day of worship and celebration of the seventh avatar of Vishnu (Lord Rama). Devotees typically wear red and place extravagant flowers on the shrine of the God.

April 3: Lailat al Miraj, a Muslim holiday that commemorates the prophet Muhammad's nighttime journey from Mecca to the "Farthest Mosque" in Jerusalem, where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily. Note that in the Muslim calendar, a holiday begins on the sunset of the previous day, so observing Muslims will celebrate Lailat al Miraj on the sunset of Wednesday, April 3.

April 5: Palm Sunday, a Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of the Holy Week.

April 6: Mahavir Jayanti, a holiday celebrated by the Jains commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavir.

April 7: Lord's Evening Meal, Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate an event believed to have occurred on the first night of Passover in approximately 33 CE, the Last Supper, known as the Lord's Evening Meal.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | April Continued

April 8: Buddha Day (Vesak or Visakha Puja), a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May April and it is a gazetted holiday in India.

April 8-16: Passover, an eight-day Jewish holiday and festival in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.

April 8: Lailat al Bara'a, also known as Barat, or Night of Forgiveness, an Islamic holiday during which practitioners of the faith seek forgiveness for sins.

April 9: Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), the Christian holiday commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion. It is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter.

April 10: Good Friday, a day celebrated by Christians to commemorate the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. It is recognized on the Friday before Easter.

April 11: Lazarus Saturday, a day celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy to commemorate the raising of Lazarus of Bethany.

April 12: Easter, a holiday celebrated by Christians to recognize Jesus' return from death after the Crucifixion.

April 13: Vaisakhi (also known as Baisakhi), the celebration of the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated) and the birth of the Khalsa.

April 17: The Day of Silence, during which students take a daylong vow of silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students and their straight allies due to bias and harassment.

April 19-May 1: The Festival of Ridvan, a holiday celebrated by those of the Bahá'í faith, commemorating the 12 days when Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder, resided in a garden called Ridvan (paradise) and publicly proclaimed his mission as God's messenger for this age.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | April Continued

April 19: Orthodox Easter (also called Pascha), a later Easter date than observed by many Western churches.

April 21: Yom HaShoah, Israel's day of remembrance for the approximately 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

April 22: Earth Day promotes world peace and sustainability of the planet. Events are held globally to show support of environmental protection of the Earth.

April 23: St. George's Day, the feast day of St. George celebrated by various Christian churches.

April 23-May 23 (sundown to sundown): Ramadan, an Islamic holiday marked by fasting, praise, prayer and devotion to Islam.

April 24: Armenian Martyrs' Day recognizes the genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.

April 27-28: Ninth Day of Ridvan, a festival of joy and unity in the Bahá'í faith to commemorate the reunification of Bahá'u'lláh's family, and by extension the unity of the entire human family the Bahá'í faith calls for. It permeates the symbolic meaning of the Ninth Day of Ridvan.

April 28-29 (sundown to sundown): Yom Ha'Atzmaut, national Independence Day in Israel

May 2020

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the United States. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks on the project were Chinese immigrants. **May is Older Americans Month**, established in 1963 to honor the legacies and contributions of older Americans and to support them as they enter their next stage of life. **May is Jewish American Heritage Month**, which recognizes the diverse contributions of the Jewish people to American culture.

May 1: Beltane, an ancient Celtic festival celebrated on May Day, signifying the beginning of summer.

May 3: Saints Philip and James, a Roman Rite feast day for the anniversary of the dedication of the church to Saints Phillip and James in Rome.

May 5: Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867). This day celebrates Mexican culture and heritage, including parades and mariachi music performances.

May 7: National Day of Prayer, a day of observance in the United States when people are asked to "turn to God in prayer and meditation."

May 11-12 (sundown to sundown): Lag BaOmer, a Jewish holiday marking the day of hillula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, a global celebration of sexual-orientation and gender diversities.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | May Continued

May 19: Laylat al-Qadr, the holiest night of the year for Muslims, is traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is known as the Night of Power and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad.

May 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, a day set aside by the United Nations as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together in harmony.

May 21: Ascension of Jesus, celebrated as the ascension of Christ from Earth in the presence of God within most of the Christian faith.

May 22-23 (sundown to sundown): Declaration of the Báb, the day of declaration of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith.

May 23-24 (sundown to sundown): Eid al-Fitr, the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the end of Ramadan. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutuba (sermon), and give Zakat al-Fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid al-Fitr.

May 25: Memorial Day in the United States, a federal holiday established to honor military veterans who died in wars fought by American forces.

May 28: Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, commemorates the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith.

May 28-30 (sundown to sundown): Shavuot, a Jewish holiday that has double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in Israel and commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.

May 31: Pentecost, the celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments by God at Mount Sinai.

June 2020

June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, established to recognize the impact that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on the world. LGBTIA+ groups celebrate this special time with pride parades, picnics, and parties, memorials for those lost to hate crimes and HIV/AIDS, and other group gatherings. The last Sunday in June is Gay Pride Day.

June 7: Trinity Sunday, observed in the Western Christian faith as a feast in honor of the Holy Trinity.

June 11: Corpus Christi, a Catholic holiday celebrating the presence of the body and blood of Christ, in the Eucharist.

June 14: Flag Day in the United States, observed to celebrate the history and symbolism of the American flag.

June 14: All Saints' Day, celebrated by many Eastern Christian churches on this day in June, in recognition of all known and unknown saints.

June 15: St. Vladimir Day, a Roman Catholic feast celebrating St. Vladimir.

June 15: Native American Citizenship Day, commemorating the day in 1924 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation recognizing the citizenship of Native Americans.

June 16: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, observed by members of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh guru and the first Sikh martyr.

June 19: Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. It is observed as a public holiday in 14 U.S. states. This celebration honors the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas and Louisiana finally heard they were free, two months after the end of the Civil War. June 19, therefore, became the day of emancipation for thousands of African Americans.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | June Continued

June 19: Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart is a solemnity in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.

June 19: New Church Day, according to Christian belief, on this day the Lord called together the 12 disciples who had followed him on earth, instructed them in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, and sent them out to teach that “the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages.” This was the beginning of the New Christian Church.

June 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day or First Nations Day, a day that gives recognition to the indigenous populations affected by colonization in Canada.

June 24: Litha, the summer solstice celebrated by the Wiccans and Pagans. It is the longest day of the year, representing the sun’s “annual retreat.”

June 29: Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul, a liturgical feast in honor of the martyrdom in Rome for the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Last Sunday in June: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Pride Day in the United States. It celebrates the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969.

July 2020

July 1: Canada Day, or Fête du Canada, is a Canadian federal holiday that celebrates the 1867 enactment of the Constitution Act, which established the three former British colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as a united nation called Canada.

July 4: Independence Day (also known as the Fourth of July), a United States federal holiday that celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The original 13 American colonies declared independence from Britain and established themselves as a new nation known as the United States of America.

July 4: Asalha Puja, or Dharma Day, is a celebration of Buddha's first teachings.

July 8-9 (sundown to sundown): The Martyrdom of the Bab, a day when Bahá'ís observe the anniversary of the Báb's execution in Tabriz, Iran, in 1850.

July 11: St. Benedict Day, the feast day of St. Benedict celebrated by some Christian denominations.

July 11: World Population Day, an observance established in 1989 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. The annual event is designed to raise awareness of global population issues.

July 14: Bastille Day, a French federal holiday that commemorates the Storming of the Bastille, a fortress-prison in Paris that held political prisoners who had displeased the French nobility. The Storming of the Bastille, which took place on July 14, 1789, was regarded as a turning point of the French Revolution. Celebrations are held throughout France.

July 15: St. Vladimir of the Great Day, feast day for St. Vladimir celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | July Continued

July 18: Nelson Mandela International Day, launched on July 18, 2009, in recognition of Nelson Mandela's birthday via unanimous decision of the U.N. General Assembly. It was inspired by a call Nelson Mandela made a year earlier for the next generation to take on the burden of leadership in addressing the world's social injustices: "It is in your hands now". It is more than a celebration of Mandela's life and legacy; it is a global movement to honor his life's work and to change the world for the better.

July 23: The birthday of Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia whom the Rastafarians consider their savior.

July 24: Pioneer Day, observed by the Mormons to commemorate the arrival in 1847 of the first Latter Day Saints pioneer in Salt Lake Valley.

July 25: St. James the Greater Day, feast day for St. James the Greater celebrated by some Christian denominations.

July 26: Disability Independence Day, celebrating the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

July 29-30: Tisha B'Av, a fast in commemoration of the destruction of two holy and sacred temples of Judaism destroyed by the Babylonians (in 586 B.C.E) and Romans (in 70 C.E.). At the Tisha B'Av, after select passages from the Torah are read and understood, netilat yadayim, or the washing of the hands, is performed.

July 29-July 30 (sundown to sundown): Waqf al Arafa, the second day of pilgrimage within the Islamic faith.

July 30-31: Eid al-Adha, an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. Muslims around the world observe this event.

July 30: International Day of Friendship, proclaimed in 2011 by the U.N. General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

August 2020

August 1: Lammas, a festival to mark the annual wheat harvest within some English-speaking countries in the Northern Hemisphere.

August 1: Lughnasadh, a Gaelic festival marking the beginning of the harvest season.

August 3: Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu holiday commemorating the loving kinship between a brother and sister. "Raksha" means "protection" in Hindi and symbolizes the longing a sister has to be protected by her brother. During the celebration, a sister ties a string around her brother's (or brother-figure's) wrist and asks him to protect her. The brother usually gives the sister a gift and agrees to protect her for life.

August 6: Transfiguration of the Lord (Feast of the Transfiguration), celebrated by various Christian denominations, the feast day is dedicated to the transfiguration of Jesus.

August 10: Krishna Janmashtami, a Hindu celebration of Lord Vishnu's most powerful human incarnations, Krishna, the god of love and compassion. Celebrations include praying and fasting.

August 13- 15: Obon (Ulambana), a Buddhist festival and Japanese custom for honoring the spirits of ancestors.

August 14: Fast in Honor of Holy Mother of Jesus, beginning of the 14-day period of preparation for Orthodox Christians leading up to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary.

August 15: Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, according to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy, as well as parts of Anglicanism, the day commemorates the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into heaven at the end of her earthly life.

August 15: Dormition of the Theotokos, a Great Feast of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches that commemorates the "falling asleep," or death, of Mary the Theotokos ("Mother of God") and her bodily resurrection before ascending into heaven.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | August Continued

August 16-August 23: Paryushana Parva, a Jain festival lasting about eight to ten days that is observed through meditation and fasting. Its main focus is spiritual uplift, pursuit of salvation and a deeper understanding of the religion.

August 17: Marcus Garvey Day, which celebrates the birthday of the Jamaican politician and activist who is revered by Rastafarians. Garvey is credited with starting the Back to Africa movement, which encouraged those of African descent to return to the land of their ancestors during and after slavery in North America.

August 19: Hijri New Year, the day that marks the beginning of the new Islamic calendar year.

August 21: Ganesh Chaturthi, a Hindu holiday lasting around 10 days, where the elephant-headed Hindu God is praised and given offerings.

August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition and the anniversary of the uprising in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) that initiated the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean.

August 26: Women's Equality Day, which commemorates the August 26, 1920, certification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote. Congresswoman Bella Abzug first introduced a proclamation for Women's Equality Day in 1971. Since that time, every president has published a proclamation recognizing August 26 as Women's Equality Day.

August 28-29: Ashura, an Islamic holiday commemorating the day Noah left the ark and the day Allah saved Moses from the Egyptians.

September 2020

Hispanic Heritage Month is observed from September 15 to October 15. This month corresponds with Mexican Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 16, and recognizes the revolution in 1810 that ended Spanish dictatorship.

September 2: Hungry Ghost Festival, a Chinese holiday where street, market, and temple ceremonies take place to honor dead ancestors and appease other spirits.

September 7: Labor Day in the United States. Labor Day honors the contribution that laborers have made to the country and is observed on the first Monday of September.

Sept 11: Beheading of St. John the Baptist, a holy day observed by various Christian churches that follow liturgical traditions. The day commemorates the martyrdom by the beheading of St. John the Baptist on the orders of Herod Antipas through the vengeful request of his stepdaughter, Salome, and her mother.

September 11: Ethiopian New Year. Rastafarians celebrate the New Year on this date and believe that Ethiopia is their spiritual home.

September 19-September 20 (sundown to sundown): Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year celebration, marking the creation of the world.

September 22: Ostara Mabon, a celebration of the vernal equinox commemorated by Pagans and Wiccans.

September 25: Native American Day, a federal holiday observed annually on the fourth Friday in September in the state of California and on the second Monday in October in South Dakota, United States.

September 27: Elevation of the Life Giving Cross (Holy Cross), a day that commemorates the cross used in the Crucifixion of Jesus in some Christian denominations.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | September Continued

September 27-28 (sundown to sundown): Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, a day of atonement marked by fasting and ceremonial repentance.

September 28: Meskel, religious holiday in the Ethiopian Orthodox and Eritrean Orthodox churches that commemorates the discovery of the True Cross by the Roman Empress, Helena, in the fourth century.

September 28: Teacher's Day in Taiwan. This day is used to honor teachers' contributions to their students and to society in general. People often express their gratitude to their teachers by paying them a visit or sending them a card. This date was chosen to commemorate the birth of Confucius, the model master educator in ancient China.

September 29: Michaelmas, or the Feast of Michael and All Angels, is a minor Christian festival dedicated to Archangel Michael that is observed in some Western liturgical calendars.

October 2020

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This observance was launched in 1945 when Congress declared the first week in October as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1998, the week was extended to a month and renamed. The annual event draws attention to employment barriers that still need to be addressed.

October is LGBT History Month, a U.S. observance started in 1994 to recognize lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history and the history of the gay-rights movement.

October 2-9: Sukkot, a seven-day Jewish festival giving thanks for the fall harvest.

October 4: St. Francis Day, feast day for St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment, celebrated by many Catholic denominations.

October 4: Blessing of the Animals, in congruence with St. Francis Day. Many Unitarian Universalists have picked up on the Catholic tradition of blessing animals, particularly pets, as St. Francis was known for his special connection to animals.

October 9-11 (sundown to sundown): Shemini Atzeret, a Jewish holiday also known as The Eighth (Day) of Assembly, takes place the day after the Sukkot festival, where gratitude for the fall harvest is deeply internalized.

October 10-11 (sundown to sundown): Simchat Torah, a Jewish holiday, marks the end of the weekly readings of the Torah. The holy book is read from chapter one of Genesis to Deuteronomy 34 and then back to chapter one again, in acknowledgement of the words of the Torah being a circle, a never-ending cycle.

October 11: National Coming Out Day (U.S.). For those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, this day celebrates coming out and the recognition of the 1987 march on Washington for gay and lesbian equality.

October 12: Canadian Thanksgiving, a chance for people to give thanks for a good harvest and other fortunes in the past year.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | October Continued

October 12: National Indigenous Peoples Day, an alternative celebration to Columbus Day, gives recognition to the indigenous populations affected by colonization.

October 17-25: Navaratri, the 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.

October 18: Birth of Báb, a Bahá'í holiday celebrating the birth of the prophet Báb.

October 18-19 (sundown to sundown): The birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í religion.

October 20: Sikh Holy Day, the day Sikhs celebrate Sri Guru Granth Sahib, their spiritual guide.

October 25: Dasara, or Vijayadashami, in the eastern and northeastern states of India, it marks the end of Durga Puja, remembering goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to help restore dharma.

October 28: Milvian Bridge Day, a one-day festival in Fayetteville, West Virginia. It is the only day of the year people can BASE jump off a bridge into New River Gorge.

October 28-29 (sundown to sundown): Eid Milad un-Nabi, an Islamic holiday commemorating the birthday of the prophet Muhammad. During this celebration, homes and mosques are decorated, large parades take place, and those observing the holiday participate in charity events.

October 29: Mawlid Al-Nabi, the observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad, celebrated during the month of Rabiulawal, the third month of the Muslim calendar. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.

October 31: All Hallows' Eve (Halloween), a celebration observed in a number of countries on the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day. It begins the three-day observance of Allhallowtide, the time in the liturgical year dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs and all the faithful departed.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | October Continued

October 31: Reformation Day, a Protestant Christian religious holiday celebrated alongside All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) during the triduum of All hallow tide in remembrance of the onset of the Reformation.

October 31-November 1 (sundown to sundown): Samhain, a Gaelic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter or the "darker half" of the year.

November 2020

November is National Native American Heritage Month, which celebrates the history and contributions of Native Americans.

November 1: All Saints' Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all known and unknown Christian saints. (In Eastern Christianity, the day is observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost.)

November 2: All Souls' Day, a Christian holiday commemorating all faithful Christians who are now dead. In the Mexican tradition, the holiday is celebrated as Dia de los Muertos (October 31- November 2), which is a time of remembrance for dead ancestors and a celebration of the continuity of life..

November 11: Veterans Day, a U.S. federal holiday honoring military veterans. The date is also celebrated as Armistice Day, or Remembrance Day, in other parts of the world and commemorates the ending of World War I in 1918.

November 14: Diwali, the Hindu, Jain and Sikh five-day festival of lights celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and lightness over darkness.

November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance, established in 1998 to memorialize those who have been killed as a result of transphobia and to raise awareness of the continued violence endured by the transgender community.

November 22: Feast of Christ the King, a Catholic holiday established in thanking God for the gift of time and a rededication to the Christian faith.

November 25-January 6: Nativity Fast, a period of abstinence and penance practiced by the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches in preparation for the Nativity of Jesus.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | November Continued

November 26: Thanksgiving in the United States. It began as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year.

November 27: Native American Heritage Day, held annually the Friday after Thanksgiving, encourages Americans of all backgrounds to observe and honor Native Americans through appropriate ceremonies and activities. The day was signed into law by George W. Bush in 2008.

November 29- December 24: Advent, a Christian season of celebration leading up to the birth of Christ.

November 30: St. Andrew's Day, the feast day for St. Andrew within various Christian denominations.

December 2020

December 1: World AIDS Day, commemorating those who have died of AIDS, and to acknowledge the need for a continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

December 3: International Day of Disabled Persons, designed to raise awareness in regards to persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.

December 8: Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception celebrates the solemn celebration, by various Christian denominations, of belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

December 10: International Human Rights Day, established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

December 10-18: Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that is celebrated around the world for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees, or Israelites, over the Greek-Syrian ruler, Antiochus, approximately 2,200 years ago.

December 12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City in 1531.

December 13: St. Lucia's Day, a religious festival of light in Scandinavia and Italy commemorating the martyrdom of St. Lucia, a young Christian girl who was killed for her faith in 304 C.E. She secretly brought food to persecuted Christians in Rome while wearing a wreath of candles on her head so both her hands would be free.

December 16-24: Las Posadas, a nine-day celebration in Mexico commemorating the trials Mary and Joseph endured during their journey to Bethlehem.

2020 Diversity Holidays & Observances | December Continued

December 21: Yule Winter Solstice, celebrated by Pagans and Wiccans. The shortest day of the year represents a celebration focusing on rebirth, renewal and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the Earth. A solstice is an astronomical event that happens twice each year when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky.

December 25: Christmas Day, the day that many Christians associate with Jesus' birth.

December 26: Boxing Day, a secular holiday celebrated in the U.K., Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Africa.

December 26-January 1: Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate universal African-American heritage.

December 26: Zartosht No-Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra), a day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion. It is a commemoration of the death anniversary of the prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathushtra.

December 26: St. Stephen's Day, a day to commemorate St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, or protomartyr.

December 27: St. John's Day, Apostle and Evangelist, feast day for St. John celebrated by Christian denominations.

December 27: Feast of the Holy Family, a liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church in honor of Jesus, his mother and his foster father, St. Joseph as a family. The primary purpose of this feast is to present the Holy Family as a model for Christian families.

December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents, a Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus.

December 31: Watch Night, a day for Christians to review the year that has passed, make confessions, and then prepare for the year ahead by praying and resolving.