

# American Conference on Diversity<sup>SM</sup>



VALUING DIVERSITY,  
EDUCATING LEADERS,  
PROMOTING RESPECT

# 2016 Holidays & Festivals

---

109 Church Street • New Brunswick, NJ 08901

732-745-9330 • Fax: 732-745-9419

<http://www.AmericanConferenceOnDiversity.org>

[Facebook.com/AmericanConferenceOnDiversity](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanConferenceOnDiversity)

[Twitter.com/AmConfDiversity](https://twitter.com/AmConfDiversity)

## **Mission**

The American Conference on Diversity is dedicated to building just and inclusive schools, workplaces and communities through awareness, education and advocacy.

The programs, services and initiatives of the American Conference on Diversity are among the most important work focused on creating a more inclusive society. The American Conference on Diversity builds on a historic mission and creates programs and activities relevant and vital to 21st Century life. It is a journey we can all take together.

# 2016 Holidays & Festivals

## JANUARY

1	New Year's Day	F*
5	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	S
6	Epiphany	O,P,RC
7	Feast of Nativity	O
13	Maghi	S
17	World Religion Day	
18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	F*

## FEBRUARY

*Black History Month*

7	Four Chaplains' Sunday	I**
8	Chinese & Vietnamese New Year	
10	Ash Wednesday/Lent Begins	P,RC
14-20	Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week	
15	Nirvana Day	Bu
15	Presidents' Day	F*
26-29	Ayyam-i-Ha (Intercalary Days)	Ba

## MARCH

*Women's History Month*

2-20	Nineteen Day Fast	Ba
14	Lent Begins (Clean Monday)	O
17	Saint Patrick's Day	
20	Spring Equinox	
20	Palm Sunday	C
21	Naw-Ruz (New Year)	Ba
23	Holi	H
23-24	Purim	J
24	Holy Thursday	O
25	Good Friday	P, RC
27	Easter	P, RC

## APRIL

13	Vaisakhi	S
21	First Day of Ridvan	Ba
22-30	Pesach (Passover)	J

## MAY

*Asian American Heritage Month*

3	Lailat al Miraj	M
5	Yom HaShoah	J
5	Cinco de Mayo	
5	Ascension Day	P,RC
8	VE Day	
15	Pentecost	P,RC
20	Wesak (Buddha Day)	Bu
21	Lailat Al Bara'a	M
26	Corpus Christi (Catholic Christian)	
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Ba
30	Memorial Day	F*

## JUNE

*GLBT Pride Month*

6-7 <sup>1/5</sup>	Ramadan	
11-13	Shavuot	J
14	Flag Day	
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib	S
19	Pentecost	O
19	Juneteenth	
20	Summer Solstice	
26	All Saints Day	O
28	Anniversary of Stonewall Incident	

# 2016 Holidays & Festivals

## JULY

2	Lailatal Qadar (Islam)	
4	Independence Day	F*
5-7	'Eid al-Fitr	M
9	Martyrdom of Bab	Ba
24- <sup>8</sup> / <sub>14</sub>	The Three Weeks & Tisha B'av	J
24	Pioneer Day	Mo

## AUGUST

15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	O,P,RC
25	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)	

## SEPTEMBER *Hispanic-American Heritage Month*

1	Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in the Golden Temple	S
5	Labor Day	F*
11	Patriot Day	
12-13	'Eid al-Adha	M
22	Autumnal Equinox	

## OCTOBER *Interfaith Month / Diversity Month*

1-9	Navratri	H
2-4	Rosh Hashanah	J
2-30	Al Hijra (New Year)	M
10	Columbus Day	F*
11	Dusserha	H
11-12	Yom Kippur	J
16-23	Sukkot	J
19-20	Birth of Bab	Ba
20	Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib as Eternal Guru	S
20	Martyrdom of Guru Har Rai	S
23-24	Shemini Atzeret	J
24-25	Simchat Torah	J
24	United Nations Day	
30	Diwali	H
31	All Hallows Eve	

## NOVEMBER *Native American Heritage Month*

1	All Saints Day	O,P,RC
11	Veteran's Day	F*
12	Baha'u'llah's Birthday	Ba
24	Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	S
24	Thanksgiving	F*
27	Advent Begins	P,RC

## DECEMBER

7	Pearl Harbor Day	
8	Bodhi Day	Bu
12	Mawlid al Nabi	M
21	Winter Solstice	
24- <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	Hanukkah	J
25	Christmas Day	Mo,P,RC
26- <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	Kwanzaa	

\* US Federal Holidays marked by an F

\*\* Interfaith Observances marked by an I

\*\*\* Some observers of the holidays in red may observe these or some of the days as non-working holidays.

# Explanatory Notes

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

---

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

**Al-Hijra** Islamic remembrance of the migration of Mohammed and followers to Medina.

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

**Ascension Day** Celebrates Jesus' ascension to heaven.

**Ascension Baha'u'llah** A commemoration of the death of Baha'u'llah

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

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

**Ayyam-I Ha** Days devoted to the spiritual preparation for the Nineteen-Day Fast. Each day of Ayyam-I Ha is marked by a different virtue like hospitality, gift giving or charity.

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

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

**Birth of Guru Gobind Singh** Sikh observation of the 1666 C.E. birthday of the tenth and last human Guru; it is a religious celebration and prayers of prosperity are offered.

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

**Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week** originally sponsored by National Conference of Christian & Jews, is a week dedicated for people of all faiths to come together and reaffirm the human brotherhood that underlies the variations

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

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

**Christmas** Celebration of the birth of Christ.

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

**Corpus Christi** This is a feast in honor of the institution of the Eucharist during the last supper.

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

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

**Easter** Celebration of the resurrection of Christ.

**Eid al-Adha** Festival of animal sacrifice; commemorates the faith of Abraham; also a memorial to the dead. Meat is given to the poor.

**Eid al-Fitr** A 3 day Islamic Holiday marking the close of Ramadan

## *Explanatory Notes (continued)*

**Epiphany** End of the 12 days of Christmas; celebrates visit of the Three Kings to baby Jesus; Jan. 6 each year for churches following the Gregorian calendar; Eastern churches following Julian Calendar celebrate the feast on Jan 19. For Roman Catholics, the feast day is sometimes celebrated on the Sunday between Jan 2 and Jan 8

**Feast of the Nativity** is one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. Orthodox Christians annually celebrate Christmas Day on this day, January 7 to remember Jesus Christ's birth. This date is according to the Julian calendar.

**Flag Day** Commemorates acceptance of the stars and stripes as the U.S. flag in 1777.

**Four Chaplains Day** Commemoration of the event in World War II when four Chaplains of Jewish and Christian traditions (Catholic and Protestant) gave their life jackets to others as a troop ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean.

**Good Friday** The Friday of Jesus' crucifixion.

**Hanukah** Festival of lights; eight day commemoration of the rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E. The eight candle menorah is lighted.

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

**Holy Thursday** Commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples on the night before he was crucified.

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

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

**Krishna Janmashtami** Birthday of Lord Krishna falls on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada (August -September). A 24-hour fast is observed on this day which is broken at midnight.

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

**Lailat Al Bara-ah** Night of forgiveness; a night of prayer to Allah for forgiveness of the dead. Preparation of Ramadan through intense prayer.

**Lailat Al Miraj** Observance of Mohammed's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven.

**Lailat Al Qadr** Night of destiny. First revelation of Qu'ran to Prophet Mohammed. Observed during the last ten days of Ramadan

**Night of Destiny.** First revelation to Qur'an to Prophet Mohammed observed during the last ten days of Ramadan.

**Lent** Period of preparation for Easter; usually 40 days.

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

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

## *Explanatory Notes (continued)*

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

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

**Maundy Thursday** Also known as Holy Thursday, this day celebrates the institution of the Eucharist (or the Holy Communion) of Jesus' Last Supper.

**Mawlid Al-Nabi** Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, ca 570 C.E.

**MLK Day** Commemorates the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observed on the third Monday of January each year.

**National Coming Out Day** An international event which gives GLBT people the opportunity to "come out" to others about their sexuality. In the United States, the day is facilitated by the Human Rights Campaign's National Coming Out Project (NCOP).

**Naw Ruz** Baha'i and Iranian New Year.

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

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

**Nineteen Day Fast** A fast to be observed by adult Baha'is in good health from sunrise to sundown

**Palm Sunday** Celebrates the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem during Passover, usually reenacted by the waving of palm branches and singing of songs. This also commemorates the beginning of Holy Week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**St. Patrick's Day** A cultural and religious holiday commemorating the anniversary of Saint Patrick's death (461 C.E.) and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.

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

**Shmini Atzeret** Celebration of the eighth and last day of Sukkot.

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

**Stonewall Rebellion** Commemorates the 1969 rebellion when transgender, gay and lesbian patrons of the Stonewall Inn in NY stood their ground against police harassment and became the catalyst for the modern political movement for GLBT liberation.

**Trinity Sunday** The first Sunday after Pentecost; honors the Most Holy Trinity.

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

**Wesak** In the Northern tradition, this is the anniversary of Buddha's birth. In the Southern tradition, this is celebrated during Visakha.

**World Religion Day** In 1950 this day was founded by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States to address the need for religious unity.

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

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

## Additional Notes

---

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

# RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC OBSERVANCES

The *American Conference on Diversity Calendar* is a resource designed to encourage public awareness of the great diversity of religious and ethnic groups that live in the United States. Holidays and festivals are included for many religious, ethnic and public occasions.

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

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

## KEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS\*

Baha'i	<b>Ba</b>
Buddhist	<b>Bu</b>
Christian	<b>C</b>
Mormon	<b>Mo</b>
Orthodox	<b>O</b>
Protestant	<b>P</b>
Roman Catholic	<b>RC</b>
Hindu	<b>H</b>
Jewish	<b>J</b>
Muslim	<b>M</b>
Sikh	<b>S</b>

## Non-working holidays for Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Judaism)

January 6 Epiphany (O)  
March 25 Good Friday (P)  
March 27 Easter (P, RC)  
April 22 (sundown) Passover (J)  
June 11 (sundown) - 13 (sundown) Shavuot (J)  
July 5 (sundown) - 7 (sundown) Eid al-Fitr (M)  
September 12 (sundown) - 13 (sundown) Eid al-Adha (M)  
October 2 (sundown) - 4 (sundown) Rosh Hashanah (J)  
October 11 (sundown) - 12(sundown) Yom Kippur (J)  
October 16 (sundown) - 23 (sundown) Sukkot (J)  
October 23 (sundown) - 24 (sundown) Shemini Atzeret (J)  
October 24 (sundown) - 25 (sundown) Simchat Torah (J)  
December 25 Christmas (P, RC)

*The printing of this publication made possible by support from*

