Religious Observances Toolkit 2024

This collection of celebratory dates and resources represents five globally practiced religions: Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. Note: Celebratory dates can vary within a given country or culture. Similarly, food and culinary traditions vary among countries, cultures and even individuals. While this list is neither exhaustive nor definitive, it is meant to be a starting point for understanding and celebrating the experiences that shape an individual — including their eating styles and traditions! This toolkit has been edited in part by members of several Academy member interest groups, including the following:

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) MIG empowers members to be the leaders in cultural evidence-based practices in nutrition and dietetics for people of Asian or Pacific Islander origin or those interested in learning more about these cultures.

Indians in Nutrition and Dietetics (IND) MIG brings together practitioners of Asian Indian origin or those interested in learning more about this culture.

Religion (RMIG) MIG offers a community for Academy members from various practice areas with an interest in cross-cultural awareness and reducing health disparities, specifically as they relate to the Jewish, Muslim and Christian populations.

Hinduism

An individual’s country, state and culture influence holidays observed, celebratory dates and even the spelling of a given holiday.

Celebratory Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Celebrations</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Makar Sankranti/Poush Parban/Pongal Celebrates Harvest season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Vasant Panchami Celebrates Goddess Saraswati</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Maha Shivratri Celebrates Shiva</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Holi Arrival of spring; celebrations begin at sundown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9-17</td>
<td>Chaitra or Vasanta Navratri Worship of Goddess Durga</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Raam Navami Birthday of Lord Sri Raam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Akshaya Tritiya Worshipping Lord Vishnu Birthday of Lord Parashuram Ganga Jayanti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

July 7 Rathayatra Chariot Procession of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Goddess Shubhadra

August 19 Raksha Bandhan Celebrates the relationship between brothers and sisters

August 26 Krishna Janmashtami Birth of Lord Sri Krishna

September 6-7 Ganesh Chaturthi Birthday of Lord Ganesha

October 9-13 Durga Puja Celebrates Goddess Durga and the victory of good over evil

October 12 Dussehra Commemorates Rama’s triumph over Ravana

November 1 Diwali Festival of lights

November 7 Chaat Puja Worship of Sun God and Goddess Sashthi

December 11 Geeta Jayanti Advent of the Great Scripture Srimad Bhagawad Geeta
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Judaism

The Religion MIG hosts a guide to traditional and Kosher rules, as well as other resources. For patients and clients interested in learning more, share the article, “6 Healthful Eating Tips to Consider During Passover,” on eatright.org.

The most important day, Shabbat, or the Sabbath, begins every Friday at sundown and ends Saturday at sundown. This is a day of reflection and rest. The concluding days of Passover and the eighth day of Sukkot are especially important. For a more comprehensive list and explanation of Jewish holidays, check out this guide.

All celebratory dates begin at sundown on the foremost date listed.

Celebratory Dates

March 23-24  Purim  *Reading of the book of Esther*

April 22-30  Passover  *Commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and escape from slavery*

May 5-6  Yom HaShoah  *Holocaust remembrance*

June 11-13  Shavuot  *Commemorates the receiving of the Torah from Mt. Sinai*

October 2-4  Rosh Hashanah  *Jewish New Year; beginning of 10 days of atonement*

October 11-12  Yom Kippur  *Day of Atonement and repentance*

October 16-23  Sukkot  *Feast of the Tabernacles*

October 24-25  Simchat Torah  *Rejoicing of the Law*

December 25 - January 2, 2025  Chanukah  *Festival of Lights; also known as Hanukkah*

Christianity

The Religion MIG hosts information related to Lenten fasting as well as other resources.

Celebratory Dates

January 7  Orthodox Christmas Day  *Birth of Jesus*

February 14  Ash Wednesday  *Start of Lent*

March 24-30  Holy Week  *Commemorates the Passion of Jesus*

March 29  Good Friday  *Commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus*

March 31  Easter Sunday  *Commemorates Jesus’ resurrection*

May 5  Orthodox Easter  *Commemorates Jesus’ resurrection*

May 9  Ascension Day  *Commemorates Jesus’ ascension to heaven*

May 19  Pentecost  *Commemorates the Holy Spirit*

December 25  Christmas  *Birth of Jesus*
Celebratory Dates

**February 24**
* Laylatul-bar‘a’ah  
  The night of freedom from fire; occurs between 14 and 15 day of Sha’ban

**March 10 - April 9**
* Ramadan  
  Month of obligatory fasting

**April 10**
* Eid al-Fitr  
  Festival of Breaking Fasts; First day of Shawwal; the first of the three months named as “Ashurul-Hajj,” or the months of Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca

**June 15**
* Day of Arafah  
  Obligatory act of pilgrimage to Mecca; Ninth of Dhul-Hijjah

**June 16-18**
* Eid al-Adha  
  Festival of sacrifice; tenth, eleventh and twelfth of Dhul-Hijjah

**July 7**
* First of Muharram  
  Beginning of the Islamic New Year

**July 17**
* Ashura  
  Tenth of Muharram

**September 4**
* Rabi‘ul-Awwal  
  Birth Month of the Prophet Muhammad. Peace be upon him!

**Buddhism**

The Buddhist New Year is celebrated on different days depending on the Buddhist tradition one follows.

**Celebratory Dates**

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<tr>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>Bodhi Day</td>
<td>Commemorates the day Buddha experienced enlightenment; this celebratory date of Bodhi Day follows a secular, Western tradition that falls on a fixed calendar date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>New Year</td>
<td>Mahayana tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
<td>First day of the Lunar New Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24-26</td>
<td>New Year</td>
<td>Theravada tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 23</td>
<td>Vesak Day</td>
<td>Birth of Buddha; also known as “Wesak Day” or “Buddha Day”</td>
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"Peace be upon him" should follow the name of any prophet as a sign of respect, as dictated by the Qur’an.