

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES 2017

The increasingly pluralistic population of the United States creates diverse communities, student bodies and employees. To enhance mutual understanding and respect among the various religious, ethnic and cultural groups, the Anti-Defamation League offers this Calendar of Observances as a tool to increase awareness and sensitivity about religious obligations as well as ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS

The multi-faith calendar includes significant religious observances of the major faiths represented in the United States. Thus, it can be used as a resource when planning school exam timetables and school activities, or when scheduling workplace festivities and community events. Note that Bahá'í, Jewish and Islamic holidays begin at sundown the previous day and end at sundown on the date listed.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

The calendar notes U.S. holidays that are either legal holidays or observed in various states and communities throughout the country. Important national and international observances that may be commemorated in the U.S. are also included.

CALENDAR SYSTEM

The dates of secular holidays are based on the Gregorian calendar, which is commonly used for civil dating purposes. Many religions and cultures follow various traditional calendar systems that are often based on the phases of the moon with occasional adjustments for the solar cycle. Therefore, specific Gregorian calendar dates for these observances will differ from year to year. In addition, calculation of specific dates may vary by geographical location and according to different sects within a given religion.

[NOTE: Observances **highlighted in yellow** indicate that the dates are tentative or not yet set by the organizations who coordinate them.]

JANUARY 2017

- January 1** **NEW YEAR'S DAY**
The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, commonly used for civil dating purposes.
- January 1** **TEMPLE DAY • Buddhist**
Many Buddhists of all traditions pay their respects and pray for good fortune for the new year at the temple.
- January 5** **GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S BIRTHDAY • Sikh**
Guru Gobind Singh was 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 6** **EPIPHANY • Christian**
Known as *Theophany* 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 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.
- January 7** **CHRISTMAS • Eastern Christian**
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 12–15** **MAHAYANA NEW YEAR • Buddhist**
In Mahayana countries the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January.
- January 14** **MAKAR SANKRANTI • Hindu**
Seasonal celebration recognizing the increasing length of days.
- January 15** **WORLD RELIGION DAY • Bahá'í**
Observance to proclaim the oneness of religion and the belief that world religion will unify the peoples of the earth.
- January 16** **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY**
The birthday of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is celebrated on the third Monday in January.
- January 27** **UN HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**
Annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945.
- January 28** **LUNAR NEW YEAR**
On this day Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese New Year are celebrated.

NO NAME-CALLING WEEK

Annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling and bullying of all kinds.

Thanks to the International Civil and Human Rights Advocacy (ICHRA) UNITED SIKHS for information on Sikh observances cited herein.

FEBRUARY 2017

February	Full Month	BLACK HISTORY MONTH Celebrates Black History and African American culture in the United States.
February 1		NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.
February 11		TU B'SHVAT • Jewish 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 14		VALENTINE'S DAY Celebrates the idea of romantic love.
February 14		RACE RELATIONS DAY The National Council of Churches in recognition of the importance of interracial relations and learning.
February 15		SUSAN B. ANTHONY DAY Birthday of Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), a pioneer in the Women's Rights Movement.
February 15		NIRVANA DAY • Buddhist Celebrates the day when the historical Buddha achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Sometimes celebrated on February 8.
February 16		PRESIDENTS' DAY Honors all past presidents of the United States of America.
February 25		MAHA SHIVARATRI • Hindu Also called <i>Shiva Ratri</i> , it is the Great Festival of Shiva.
February 26– March 1		AYYÁM-I-HA OR INTERCALARY DAYS • Bahá'í 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.
February 27		CLEAN MONDAY • Eastern Christian The beginning of <i>Great Lent</i> for Eastern Christian churches, which starts 40 days before Orthodox Easter (Pascha), counting Sundays.
February 28		SHROVE TUESDAY • Western Christian A day of penitence as well as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Also known as Mardi Gras.

MARCH 2017

March	Full Month	NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH Honors women as significant agents of historical change.
March 1		ASH WEDNESDAY • Western Christian The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches, a 40-day period of spiritual preparation for Easter, not counting Sundays.
March 2– March 20		NINETEEN-DAY FAST • Bahá'í 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.
March 8		INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women worldwide.
March 13		HOLLA MOHALLA • Sikh 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.
March 17		ST. PATRICK'S DAY • Christian 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.
March 20		VERNAL EQUINOX The date when night and day are nearly the same length. It marks the first day of the season of spring.
March 21		INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION Call to action to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination worldwide.
March 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).
March 13		HOLI • Hindu Also called <i>Holaka</i> or <i>Phagwa</i> , this festival celebrates spring and commemorates various events in Hindu mythology.
March 12		MAGHA PUJA • Buddhist Also known as <i>Sangha Day</i> , it commemorates the spontaneous assembly of 1,250 arahants, completely enlightened monks, in the historical Buddha's presence.
March 12		PURIM • Jewish The "Feast of Lots" marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from extermination.
March 31		CESAR CHAVEZ DAY Honors Mexican American farm worker, labor leader and activist Cesar Chavez (1927–1993) who was a nationally respected voice for social justice.

APRIL 2017

- April 5** **RAMA NAVAMI • Hindu**
 Celebrates the birthday of Rama, king of ancient India, hero of the epic Ramayana, and seventh incarnation of Vishnu.
- April 9** **PALM SUNDAY • Christian**
 Observed the Sunday before Easter/Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- April 11–14** **THERAVADA NEW YEAR • Buddhist**
 In Theravada countries the New Year is celebrated on the first full moon day in April.
- April 11–18** **PASSOVER/PESACH • Jewish**
 The eight-day “Feast of Unleavened Bread” celebrates Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
- April 13** **HOLY THURSDAY • Christian**
 Also known as *Maundy Thursday*, it is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion.
- April 14** **GOOD FRIDAY • Christian**
 Known as *Holy Friday* in Eastern Christianity, it commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus on the Friday before Easter/Pascha.
- April 14** **VAISAKHI (also spelled Baisakhi) • Sikh**
 The festival which celebrates the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated). On this day, Sikhs gather and celebrate Vaisakhi at their local Gurdwaras (Sikh house of worship) by remembering this day as the birth of the Khalsa.
- April 16** **EASTER • Christian**
 Known as *Pascha* in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.
- April 21–May 2** **FESTIVAL OF RIDVÁN • Bahá’í**
 Annual festival commemorating the 12 days when Bahá’u’lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá’í Faith, resided in a garden called Ridván (Paradise) and publicly proclaimed His mission as God’s messenger for this age. The first (**April 21**), ninth (**April 29**), and twelfth (**May 2**) days are celebrated as holy days when Baha’is suspend work.
- April 23** **YOM HASHOAH • Jewish**
 “Holocaust Remembrance Day” memorializes the heroic martyrdom of six million Jews who perished in the Nazi Holocaust.
- April 24** **ARMENIAN MARTYRS’ DAY**
 Memorializes the genocide of some 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.
- DAY OF SILENCE**
 Students take a day-long 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.

MAY 2017

May	Full Month	<p>ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.</p>
May	Full Month	<p>JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH Recognizes the history of Jewish contributions to American culture, acknowledging the diverse achievement of American Jews.</p>
May 1		<p>INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY Also known as <i>May Day</i>, it celebrates the social and economic achievements of workers worldwide. The day commemorates the Haymarket Riot of 1886 in Chicago, in which police and protesters clashed following a workers' strike for an eight-hour work day.</p>
May 3		<p>WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY Serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.</p>
May 5		<p>CINCO DE MAYO In 1862 Mexican forces defeated French occupational forces in the Battle of Puebla.</p>
May 10		<p>BUDDHA DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Vesak</i> or <i>Visakha Puja</i>, it marks the occasion of the birth, spiritual awakening and death of the historical Buddha.</p>
May 14		<p>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).</p>
May 14		<p>MOTHER'S DAY Children of all ages show appreciation for their mothers.</p>
May 21		<p>WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT Recognizes cultural diversity as a source of innovation, exchange and creativity, as well as the obligation to create a more peaceful and equitable society based on mutual respect.</p>
May 23		<p>DECLARATION OF THE BAB • 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.</p>
May 25		<p>ASCENSION DAY • Christian Celebrated 40 days after Easter/Pascha, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.</p>
May 27–June 25		<p>RAMADAN • Islamic A month of strict fasting from dawn until dusk in honor of the first revelations of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.</p>
May 29		<p>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.</p>
May 29		<p>MEMORIAL DAY Initiated originally to honor the dead of the Civil War, this observance now pays homage to the dead of all U.S. wars.</p>



May 31–June 1

SHAVUOT • Jewish

The "Feast of Weeks" celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel, and the revelation of the Ten Commandments.

JUNE 2017

June	Full Month	LGBT PRIDE MONTH Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern gay rights movement in the United States. <i>LGBT</i> (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) <i>Pride Day</i> is the last Sunday in June.
June 4		PENTECOST • Christian Also known as <i>Whitsunday</i> , 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 11		ALL SAINTS DAY • Eastern Christian In Orthodox churches observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, it commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints.
June 11		RACE UNITY DAY • Bahá'í Observance promoting racial harmony and understanding and the essential unity of humanity.
June 12		ANNE FRANK DAY Birthday of young Jewish girl whose diary describes her family's experiences hiding from the Nazis through assistance of gentile friends.
June 12		LOVING DAY Observes the anniversary of the 1967 United States Supreme Court decision <i>Loving v. Virginia</i> which struck down the miscegenation laws remaining in 16 states barring interracial marriage.
June 14		FLAG DAY Anniversary of the adoption of the United States flag by Congress in 1777.
June 19		JUNETEENTH Originally commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, it is now celebrated throughout the U.S. to honor African-American freedom and achievement.
June 20		WORLD REFUGEE DAY Raises awareness about the plight of refugees and displaced persons.
June 21		FATHER'S DAY Children of all ages show appreciation for their fathers.
June 21		SUMMER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the longest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of summer.
June 21		LAILA AL-QADR • Islamic "The Night of Power" marks the night in which God first revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Often fixed as the 27th day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, Sunnis may also observe it on the 21st, 23rd, 25th or 29th. Shi'ites observe it on the 19th, 21st or 23rd of Ramadan.
June 26–28		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.

JULY 2017

July 4

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776.

July 9

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 13

ULAMBANA • Buddhist

Buddhist Ghost Festival. The unsettled spirits of dead ancestors are calmed with chanting and offerings to enable them to pass peacefully into the next world.

July 15

DHARMA DAY • Buddhist

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

July 13–15

OBON • Buddhist

Also known as *Bon*, the Japanese Buddhist festival honors the spirits of past ancestors.

July 26

ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) DAY

Commemorates the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

AUGUST 2017

- August 1** **TISHA B'AV • Jewish**
Mourning of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE.
- August 7** **RAKSHA BANDHAN • Hindu**
Also called *Rakhi*, this festival celebrates the protective relationship between brothers and their sisters.
- August 9** **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**
Celebrates the richness of indigenous cultures and recognizes the challenges indigenous peoples face today, ranging from poverty and disease to dispossession, discrimination and denial of basic human rights.
- August 12** **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY**
Celebrates young people and the integral role they play in helping to create a world fit for children.
- August 15** **KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI (Also known as JAYANTI) • Hindu**
Celebrates Krishna's birthday, Vishnu's eighth incarnation on earth.
- August 23** **INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND ITS ABOLITION**
Memorializes the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade, coinciding with the anniversary of the uprising in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) that initiated its abolition.

SEPTEMBER 2017

- September 2** **EID AL-ADHA • Islamic**
The “Feast of Sacrifice” concludes the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), and is a three-day festival recalling Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.
- September 4** **LABOR DAY**
Celebrated the first Monday in September in recognition of U.S. workers.
- September 8** **INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY**
Call to action for universal literacy.
- September 13–15** **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.
- September 15–October 15** Full Month **NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**
Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
- September 17** **GANESH CHATURTHI • Hindu**
Celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, the elephant-deity.
- September 17** **CONSTITUTION DAY AND CITIZENSHIP DAY**
Commemorates the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787. Also honors all who have become U.S. citizens.
- September 21–29** **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 22** **AUTUMNAL EQUINOX**
The date when night and day are nearly of the same length. It marks the first day of fall.
- September 22** **MUHARRAM • Islamic**
The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year. The first day of the month, 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 Shi’ite Remembrance of Muharram, a period of intense grief and mourning of the martyrdom of Hussein, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad.
- September 30** **YOM KIPPUR • Jewish**
The “Day of Atonement” marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah.
- September 30** **DASSERA • Hindu**
Anniversary of the day when Rama killed the evil demon Ravana. Also known as *Durga Puja*, which celebrates the goddess Durga.

OCTOBER 2017

October	Full Month	LGBT HISTORY MONTH Marks and celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people in the United States.
October	Full Month	NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH Recognizes the contributions of workers with disabilities.
October 1		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 in 680 CE.
October 5–11		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 9		INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY (Native American Day) Celebrates and honors Native American history and culture. [The second Monday of October is also marked as a U.S. federal holiday, Columbus Day. Many people are opposed to the celebration of a man who led and committed atrocities against Indigenous people. Some states and cities in the U.S. have officially changed the day to Indigenous People's Day. Similarly, it is celebrated as <i>Día de la Raza</i> , "Day of the Race", in Spanish-speaking countries and communities.]
October 12		SHEMINI ATZERET • Jewish "The Eighth (Day) of Assembly" is observed on the day immediately following Sukkot.
October 13		SIMCHAT TORAH • Jewish "Rejoicing in the Torah" celebrates the conclusion of the public reading of the Pentateuch and its beginning anew.
October 17		INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY Call to action for the eradication of poverty and destitution worldwide.
October 19		DIWALI • Hindu Also called <i>Deepavali</i> , "Festival of Lights", it celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.
October 19		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 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 Shiráz, 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 24

UNITED NATIONS DAY

Commemorates the founding of the world organization in 1945.

October 29

REFORMATION DAY • Christian

Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.

October 31

HALLOWEEN

The eve of All Saints' Day.

NOVEMBER 2017

November	Full Month	NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH Celebrates and honors the history and culture of Native Americans in the United States.
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 <i>Día de los Muertos</i> between October 31 and November 2, and is an occasion to remember dead ancestors and celebrate the continuity of life.
November 4		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 7		ELECTION DAY A day set by U.S. law for the election of public officials.
November 9		KRISTALLNACHT Commemorates the 1938 pogrom against Jews throughout Germany and Vienna.
November 11		VETERANS' DAY Honors the U. S. Armed Services and commemorates the war dead.
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 12–18		AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK Celebrates public education and honors individuals who are making a difference in ensuring every child in the U. S. receives a quality education.
November 16		INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE Emphasizes the dangers of intolerance and is a call to action for the advancement of human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, as well as a day to encourage tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures and peoples.
November 20		TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE Memorializes those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice.
November 23		THANKSGIVING DAY Following a 19th century tradition, it commemorates the Pilgrims' harvest feast in the autumn of 1621.
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 2017

- December 1** **WORLD AIDS DAY**
International day of action on HIV and AIDS.
- December 1** **MAWLID AL-NABI (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic (Sunni)**
The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
- December 3** **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS**
Raises awareness about persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
- December 3–24** **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 before Christmas. In Eastern Christianity, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November.
- December 6** **MAWLID AL-NABI (Also known as MILAD AL-NABI) • Islamic (Shi'a)**
The observance of the birthday of Islam founder Prophet Muhammad which occurs in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar. Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
- December 8** **BODHI DAY • Buddhist**
Also known as *Rohatsu*, it observes the spiritual awakening (bodhi) of founder Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, ca. 596 BCE. Celebrated on the eighth day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
- December 10** **HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**
On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 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 13–20** **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 15** **BILL OF RIGHTS DAY**
Commemorates the signing into law of the ten original amendments of the United States Constitution in 1791.
- December 21** **WINTER SOLSTICE**
In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter.
- December 25** **CHRISTMAS • Western Christian**
Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
- December 26–January 1, 2018** **KWANZAA**
A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" means "first fruits (of the harvest)" in Swahili.



December 29

WOUNDED KNEE DAY

On December 29, 1890 more than 200 Lakota Sioux were massacred by U.S. troops at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.