

Inclusive Holiday/Interfaith Observation Calendar • 2024

Our HGAR community represents a wide range of ethnic, cultural, faith, and religious communities. To assist us in promoting an inclusive community and help enhance the understanding among groups, we are presenting this interfaith/cultural calendar of observances to help increase awareness of and respect for religious obligations, and ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect members of our community.

Note that this calendar provides a broad outline of significant days within major faith traditions, as well as ethnic and cultural celebrations. We encourage you to use this calendar and add to it as you wish. We hope this helps you become more aware, recognize our colleagues' days of observances/holidays, and avoid the unintentional exclusion of those whose faith/religious traditions are not currently observed nationally.

January

- 01** **New Year's Day**
The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar is commonly used for civil dating purposes.
- 15** **DR. Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
The birthday of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is on January 15th, but it is observed on the third Monday in January.

February

Black History Month

Celebrates Black History and African American culture in the United States.

- 01** **National Freedom Day**
Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.
- 10** **Lunar New Year** • Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist
Also known as the Spring Festival, an important festival celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar.
- 14** **Ash Wednesday** • Christian
The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches, a 40-day period of spiritual preparation for Easter, not counting Sundays.
- 14** **Valentine's Day**
Celebrates the idea of romantic love.
- 19** **President's Day**
Honors all past presidents of the United States of America.

March

Women's History Month

Commemorating and encouraging the study, observance, and celebration of the vital role of women in American history.

- 08** **International Women's Day**
Celebration of the economic, political, and social achievements of women worldwide.

March continued...

- 10** **Ramadan** • Islamic *[starting sundown]*
Observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

- 17** **St. Patrick's Day** • Christian
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.

- 24** **Palm Sunday** • Christian
Observed the Sunday before Easter/Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

- 29** **Good Friday** • Christian
Known as Holy Friday in Eastern Christianity, it commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus on the Friday before Easter/Pascha.

- 31** **Easter** • Christian
Known as Pascha in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

April

- 09** **Eid al-Fitr** • Islamic *[starting sundown]*
The "Feast of the Breaking of the Fast" marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting from dawn until dusk.

- 22** **Earth Day**: Invest in our planet.
A day held to demonstrate and promote environmental awareness and calls for the protection of our planet.

- 22** **Passover/Pesach** • Jewish *[starting sundown]*
The eight-day "Feast of Unleavened Bread" celebrates Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

May

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

(aka. Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month) Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

- 05** **Cinco de Mayo**
In 1862 Mexican forces defeated French occupational forces in the Battle of Puebla.

- 12** **Mother's Day**
Children of all ages show appreciation for their mothers and mother figures.

- 21** **World Day for Cultural Diversity**
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.

- 27** **Memorial Day**
A federal holiday in the United States to remember the people who died while serving in the country's armed forces.

June

LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969, Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement in the United States.

- 11** **Shavuot** • Jewish [starting sundown]
The “Feast of Weeks” celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel, and the revelation of the Ten Commandments.
- 16** **Father’s Day**
Children of all ages show appreciation for their fathers and father figures.
- 16** **Eid al-Adha** • Islamic [starting sundown]
Commemoration of Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to a command from God. Marks the end of the annual Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).
- 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.

July

- 04** **Independence Day**
Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776.
- 26** **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Day**
Commemorates the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

August

- 12** **Tisha B’Av** • Jewish [starting sundown]
Mourning of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE.
- 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.
- 26** **Women’s Equality Day**
Commemorates the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote

September

- 02** **Labor Day**
Celebrated the first Monday in September in recognition of U.S. workers.
- 15–Oct. 15** **Hispanic Heritage Month**
Celebrates the contributions, heritage, and culture of Hispanic and Latinx Americans.

October

Italian American Heritage Month

Celebration of the culture, history, and achievements of Italian Americans who trace their heritage to Italy.

- 02** **Rosh Hashanah** • Jewish [starting sundown 09.15 through sundown 09.17]
The beginning of the Jewish New Year and the first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.
- 11** **Coming Out Day**
Encourages honesty and openness about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Commemorates October 11, 1987, when 500,000 people marched on Washington, DC, for gay and lesbian equality.
- 11** **Yom Kippur** • Jewish [starting sundown]
The “Day of Atonement” marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah.
- 14** **Indigenous People’s 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.]
- 16** **Sukkot** • Jewish [starting sundown 10/16 through sundown 10/23]
The week-long “Feast of Booths” commemorates the 40-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert on the way to the Promised Land.
- 31** **Halloween**
The eve of All Saints’ Day. A celebration observed on the eve of the Catholic holiday All Saint’s Day, which has also evolved into a secular celebration of the dead, scary stories, costumes, and “trick or treating” for candy.

November

Native American Heritage Month

Celebrates and honors the history and culture of Native Americans and indigenous people in the United States.

- 01** **All Saints’ Day** • Christian
Commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints. Eastern Christianity observes it on the first Sunday after Pentecost.
- 01** **Diwali** • Hindu
Also called Deepavali, the “Festival of Lights”. It celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.
- 05** **Election Day**
A day set by U.S. law for the election of public officials.
- 11** **Veterans Day**
Honors military veterans and the U.S. Armed Services.
- 28** **Thanksgiving Day**
Following a 19th century tradition, it commemorates the Pilgrims’ harvest feast in the autumn of 1621. It is considered by some to be a “national day of mourning,” in recognition of the conquest of Native Americans by colonists.

December

- 10** **Human Rights Day**
On this day in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 25** **Christmas** • Christian
Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
- 25** **Hanukkah** • Jewish [starting sundown 12/25 through sundown 1/3/2025]
Also known as the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish holiday celebrating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the second century A.D. It is often celebrated with the lighting of menorah candles, as well as traditional foods, games, and gifts.
- 26** **Kwanzaa**
A seven-day celebration honoring African American heritage and its continued vitality. “Kwanzaa” means “first fruits (of the harvest)” in Swahili.
- 31** **New Year's Eve**
In the Gregorian calendar, New Year's Eve, the last day of the year, is on December 31. In many countries, New Year's Eve is celebrated at evening social gatherings, where many people dance, eat, and drink. etc.