



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

## 2021 RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

As an organization dedicated to diversity, inclusion and global strategies, it is important for Y staff to consider religious holidays and observances when planning meetings and special events. Below is a non-comprehensive chart of observances<sup>i</sup> from the largest U.S. religious groups (by population<sup>ii</sup>) to keep in mind as you plan for 2021.

**Contact:**

For more information or support, please email Y-USA's DIG team at [DIG@ymca.net](mailto:DIG@ymca.net) or connect with us in the [DIG Link community](#).

<b>BA'HA'I</b>		
Naw-Ruz	Friday, March 19 through Saturday, March 20, 2021	Work-Restricted
Ridván	Tuesday, April 20, 2021 through Friday, May 1, 2021	Work-Restricted*
Declaration of the Báb	Saturday, May 22 through Sunday, May 23, 2021	Work-Restricted
Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	Thursday, May 27 through Friday, May 28, 2021	Work-Restricted
Martyrdom of the Báb	Thursday, July 9 – Friday, July 10, 2021	Work-Restricted
Birth of the Báb	Saturday, November 6 through Sunday, November 7, 2021	Work-Restricted
Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	Sunday, November 7	Work-Restricted
<b>BUDDHISM</b>		
Lunar New Year	Friday, February 12, 2021	Special Worship**
Vesak	Thursday, April 8, 2021	Work-Restricted
Bohdi Day	Wednesday, December 8, 2021	Special Worship
<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>		
Epiphany/ Three Kings Day	Wednesday, January 6, 2021	Special Worship
Ash Wednesday	Wednesday, February 17, 2021	Special Worship
Good Friday	Friday, April 2, 2021	Special Worship
Easter	Sunday, April 4, 2021	Special Worship (Federal Holiday)
Orthodox Easter	Sunday, May 2, 2021	Special Worship
Christmas	Saturday, December 25, 2021	Special Worship (Federal Holiday)
<b>HINDUISM</b>		
Maha Shivarati	Thursday, March 11, 2021	Work-Restricted
Rama Navami	Wednesday, April 21, 2021	Work-Restricted
Holi	Sunday, March 28 – Monday, March 29, 2021	Special Worship
Krishna Janmashtami	Sunday, August 29, 2021	Work-Restricted
Diwali	Thursday, November 4, 2021	Work-Restricted
<b>ISLAM</b> (Islamic holidays begin at sundown the previous day.)		

Ramadan	Monday, April 12 through Tuesday, May 11, 2021	Work-Restricted
Eid al-Fitr	Wednesday, May 12 through Thursday, May 13, 2021	Work-Restricted
Eid al-Adha	Friday, July 20, 2021	Work-Restricted
Ashura	Saturday, August 19, 2021	Special Worship
Mawlid-al-Nabi	Wednesday, October 18 through Thursday, October 19, 2021	Work-Restricted
<b>JUDAISM</b> (Jewish holidays begin at sundown.)		
Purim	Thursday, February 25 through Friday, February 26, 2021	Special Worship
Passover	Saturday, March 27, 2021	Work-Restricted
Shavuot	Sunday, May 16 through Tuesday, May 16, 2021	Work-Restricted
Rosh Hashanah	Monday, September 6 through Wednesday, September 8, 2021	Work-Restricted
Yom Kippur	Wednesday, September 15, 2021	Work-Restricted
Sukkot	Monday, September 20, 2021	Work-Restricted
Simchat Torah	Tuesday, September 28 through Wednesday, September 29, 2021	Work-Restricted
Chanuka (Hanukka)	Sunday, November 28 through Monday, December 6, 2021	Special Worship
<b>SIKHISM</b>		
Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib	Wednesday, January 20, 2021	Special Worship
Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib	Wednesday, June 16, 2021	Work-Restricted
Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib	Wednesday, November 24, 2021	Work-Restricted
Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib	Friday, November 19, 2021	Work-Restricted

Please note some of these religion's dates are based on different calendars than the US calendar – these are the best estimation of when they will be celebrated in the US but best to consult with local community members to confirm.

**Work-Restricted:** A religious observance that restricts or limits work and/or physical or mental activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something; toil; labor.

**Special Worship:** Such religious observances listed above are NOT strictly work-restricted but may involve a special worship or observance.

## BA'HAI

**Naw-Ruz:** New Year's Day

**Ridván:** 12-day festival, work is prohibited on 1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> days. Celebrates time that Bahá'u'lláh spent in the Garden of Ridván and proclamation of mission.

**Declaration of the Báb:** celebrates the beginning of the Bahá'í faith.

**Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh:** commemorates the death of Bahá'u'lláh.

**Martyrdom of the Báb:** commemorates the death of the Báb.

**Birth of the Báb:** celebrates the birth of the Báb.

**Birth of Bahá'u'lláh:** celebrates the birth of Bahá'u'lláh.

## BUDDHISM

**Bodhi Day:** Also called Rohatsu or Bodhi Day. The day many Buddhist traditions celebrate the enlightenment of the Buddha.

**Vesak:** Traditionally known as Visakha Puja, is an extremely important day in the Buddhist tradition. This commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.<sup>iii</sup>

**Buddha's Birthday:** The birthday of the Buddha.

## CHRISTIANITY

**Ash Wednesday:** This day marks the beginning of Lent, a six-week period of prayer and fasting in anticipation of Easter.

**Good Friday:** The day Jesus was crucified.

**Easter Sunday:** The celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead.

**Christmas:** The day Jesus was born.

**Epiphany/ Three Kings Day:** Orthodox Christians – the day Jesus was born.

## HINDUISM

**Maha Shivaratr:** Hindu celebration of the birth of Lord Shiva.

**Ramanavani:** A festival celebrating the birth of the most supreme God in Hinduism, Lord Rama.

**Holi:** Festival of Spring or Festival of Colors. This day is typically celebrated by families in India, Nepal, and other parts of Asia by partaking in various regional traditions.

**Krishna Janmashtami:** A two-day festival celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna.

**Diwali:** Festival of Lights. This holiday is typically celebrated by families sharing various traditional rituals in their homes. Although a 5 day festival, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the festival is the actual day of Diwali, commonly known as the Hindu New Year.

## ISLAM

**Eid al-Fitr:** Marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and the holiest month in Islamic tradition. It literally means "breaking the fast."

**Eid al-Adha:** Festival of Sacrifice. Commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael. God provided a sheep to sacrifice in Ishmael's place.

**Ashura:** Shi'a Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, Muhammad's grandson. According to Sunni Muslims, Muhammad fasted and asked others to do so on this day as well.

**Ramadan:** The ninth month of the Islamic lunar year and is the time in which Muslims observe fast from sunrise to sunset.

## JUDAISM

**Rosh Hashanah:** Jewish New Year. It is the beginning of a ten-day period of introspection and reflection.

**Yom Kippur:** Day of Atonement. It is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar marked with fasting, worship, and repentance.

**Sukkot:** Festival of Booths. Commemorates the wandering in the desert of the Israelites as well as the fall harvest. While the festival of Sukkot lasts for 8 days, the first day is considered a day of rest.

**Passover:** Festival of Passover. It commemorates the Exodus of Jews from slavery in Egypt. While the Passover lasts for 8 days, the first night is the most significant and the first day is considered a day of rest.

**Chanukah:** Also known as Hanukah and the festival of lights, is the Jewish eight-day festival of rededication beginning on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev.

## SIKHISM

**Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib:** The tenth and last living prophet of the Sikhs, he passed the guruship onto the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, and the Sikh community, Guru Panth.

**Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib:** The 5th Guru and first martyr of the Sikhs. He compiled the the religious text of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib.

**Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib:** The 9th Guru of the Sikhs, who was killed by Mughal rulers in 1675 for defending Hindus facing forcible conversion to Islam.

**Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib:** Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Sikh faith.

**Mawlid-al-Nabi:** The observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. It is celebrated with carnivals, large street processions, and the decorating of homes and mosques.

---

<sup>i</sup> Calendar of Religious Holy Days and Observances. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/calendar-religious-holidays-and-observances/index.php>

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Membership Report. (2010). Retrieved from: [http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/u/rcms2010\\_99\\_us\\_adh\\_2010.asp](http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/u/rcms2010_99_us_adh_2010.asp)

<sup>iii</sup> Dhammadharo, A. L. & Bhikkhu, T. (1998). Visakha Puja. Retrieved from: <https://www.accesstosight.org/lib/thai/lee/visakha.html>