

**Religious and Spiritual Life and Contemplative Practices**

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## Selected Religious Holidays and Celebrations

2020			
July 25 (Saturday)	<b>Nag Panchami</b>	Hindu	Worship of snake-deities.
July 28 - August 2 (sundown Tuesday - sundown Sunday)	<b>Hajj</b>	Muslim	An obligatory, once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca carried out by all Muslims who have the financial means to go.
July 30 - 31 (sundown Thursday - sundown Friday)	<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	Muslim	One of the two main Islamic festivals (the other is Eid al-Fitr), this festival commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son.
August 3 (Monday)	<b>Raksha Bandhan</b>	Holi	The tying of thread, talisman, or amulet on the wrist as a form of ritual protection. The protection is primarily offered by sisters to brothers, but also by priests to patrons, and sometimes by individuals to real or potential benefactors.
August 11 (Tuesday)	<b>Krishna Janmashtami</b>	Hindu	Annual Hindu festival that demarcates the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar of god Vishnu.
September 10 (Thursday)	<b>Ashura Shi'a</b>	Muslim	A day of great mourning, marking the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, Prophet Muhammad's grandson.
September 18 - 20 (sundown Friday - sundown Sunday)	<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	Jewish	This marks the beginning of the Jewish year and the beginning of the High Holy Days or the Days of Awe. Observance includes refraining from work.
September 22 (Tuesday)	<b>Fall Equinox</b>	Pagan	A celebration of the transition from life to death, the harvest, and the bounty of the earth.
September 27 - 28 (sundown Sunday - sundown Monday)	<b>Yom Kippur</b>	Jewish	The Day of Atonement, at the end of the 10 Days of Awe, is devoted to prayer, repentance and fasting. The Sabbath of Sabbaths in the Jewish calendar, it is the most widely observed Jewish Holiday of the year. Observance includes refraining from work.
October 2 - 9 (sundown Friday - sundown Friday)	<b>Sukkot</b>	Jewish	The Feast of the Tabernacles commemorates the dwelling of the Israelites in the wilderness. Jews build <i>sukkot</i> (booths) and spend time in them over the week. Observance includes refraining from work on the first two days.
October 6 (Wednesday)	<b>Navaratri</b>	Hindu	A festival dedicated to the Hindu God Shakti.
October 9 - 10 (sundown Friday - sundown Saturday)	<b>Shemini Atzeret</b>	Jewish	The eighth day of Sukkot, this holiday coincides with the beginning of the rainy season in Israel, and incorporates prayers for rain and a good harvest. Observance includes refraining from work.
October 10 - 11 (sundown Saturday - sundown Sunday)	<b>Simchat Torah</b>	Jewish	A celebration of the Torah, this festival marks the end of the annual cycle of Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle. Observance includes refraining from work.
October 25 (Sunday)	<b>Vijayadashami</b>	Hindu	Hindu celebration of victory and valor. Lord Rama is remembered as winning a victory over evil.
October 31 (Saturday)	<b>Reformation Day</b>	Protestant Christian	The Protestant Christian anniversary of their tradition and its emphasis on the place of the Bible and religious freedom.
October 31 - November 1 (sundown Saturday - sundown Sunday)	<b>Samhain</b>	Pagan	On this night, nearly halfway between the Fall Equinox and Winter Solstice, Pagans honor a liminal time when the boundary between the physical and the spiritual world is thinnest, and access to the knowledge of the dead is possible.
October 31 - November 2 (Saturday - Monday)	<b>Día de los Muertos</b>	Mesoamerican native and Christian	A festive Mexican holiday when families remember their dead and the continuity of life.
November 1 (Sunday)	<b>All Saint's Day</b>	Catholic	A holy day of obligation (which means Catholics are obliged to go to church) that celebrates the Christian saints.
November 2 (Monday)	<b>All Soul's Day</b>	Catholic	A day commemorating the faithful departed.
November 14 (Saturday)	<b>Diwali (Deepavali)</b>	Hindu, Jain, Sikh	The festival of lights, celebrating the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.
November 20 (Friday)	<b>Chhath</b>	Hindu	Native to the Madhesh and Mithila regions, Chhath is the worship of the Sun and his wife Usha, thanking them for bestowing the bounties of life on earth and to request the granting of certain wishes.
November 26 (Thursday)	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	Interfaith USA	Day celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year.
November 28 - January 6 (Saturday - Wednesday)	<b>Nativity Fast</b>	Orthodox Christian	The Nativity Fast begins forty days before the Nativity Feast (Jesus' birth) and is a time to prepare, through fasting and prayer, for the upcoming feast.
November 29 - December 24 (Sunday - Thursday)	<b>Advent</b>	Christian	The season in which Christians prepare and expectantly wait for the birth of Jesus. In the Western Church, Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas Day.
December 8 (Tuesday)	<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	Catholic	A feast in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary (holy day of obligation).
December 8 (Tuesday)	<b>Bodhi Day</b>	Buddhist	In the Northern or Mahayana tradition, this day celebrates the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment.
December 10 - 18 (sundown Thursday - sundown Friday)	<b>Hanukkah</b>	Jewish	The Festival of Lights marks the victory of the Maccabees and rededication of the Temple. It is a celebration of religious freedom and an affirmation of God's saving power.
December 21 (Monday)	<b>Winter Solstice</b>	Neo-Pagan/Wiccan	The shortest day of the year, Winter Solstice symbolizes the natural cycle of life and death, and the return of light into the world.
December 25 (Friday)	<b>Christmas</b>	Christian	The celebration of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.
December 26 - January 1 (Saturday - Friday)	<b>Kwanzaa</b>	African-American	An African American and Pan-African holiday celebrating family, community and culture, Kwanzaa is a secular observance with some religious participation. Seven life virtues are presented. The dates are always December 26 - January 1.
<b>2021</b>			
January 1 (Friday)	<b>Feast of Mary, Mother of God</b>	Catholic	A holy day of obligation during which Mary, the mother of Jesus, is celebrated.
January 6 (Wednesday)	<b>Holy Epiphany/Día de los Reyes/Feast of the Theophany</b>	Christian	A celebration of the epiphany (or manifestation) of Jesus' divine nature. Eastern or Orthodox Christian churches commemorate the baptism of Jesus; Western churches commemorate the coming of the Magi or "Wise Men".
January 7 (Thursday)	<b>Orthodox Christmas</b>	Orthodox Christian	Celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ.
January 28 (Thursday)	<b>Tu B'shevat</b>	Jewish	The traditional Jewish New Year for trees, this holiday has become a modern celebration of earth and the environment.
January 28 (Thursday)	<b>Mahayana New Year</b>	Buddhist	Begins on the first full moon of January.
February 12 (Friday)	<b>Chinese/Vietnamese/Korean New Year</b>	Buddhist/Daoist/Confucian (secular in origin; observed across religious and secular communities throughout East Asia cultural regions excluding Japan)	Celebrated as the most important holiday of the year in the East Asian Lunar calendar (also known as the Chinese lunar calendar). The holiday is observed primarily in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Vietnam and Korea, and also many Southeast Asian countries with significant population from the above regions. The Year of the Buffalo begins.
February 15 (Monday)	<b>Nirvana Day</b>	Buddhist	This day is the celebration of the day with Buddha is said to have achieved Parinirvana upon the death of his physical body.
February 16 (Tuesday)	<b>Vasant Panchami</b>	Hindu	A spring festival that is treated as the start of spring. This also marks the start of preparation for Honika bonfire and Holi, which occurs forty days later.
February 17 (Wednesday)	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	Christian	The beginning of Lent, the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) of prayer and repentance that precedes Easter.
February 25 - 26 (sundown Thursday - sundown Friday)	<b>Purim</b>	Jewish	This joyous celebration of the story of Esther commemorates the victory of the Jews over a tyrannical enemy.
March 11 (Thursday)	<b>Maha Shivaratri</b>	Hindu	A Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva and his marriage to Goddess Parvati.
March 15 (Monday)	<b>Clean Monday</b>	Orthodox Christian	Eastern Orthodox churches begin the season of Lent, marked by fasting, prayer, and charity.
March 17 (Wednesday)	<b>St. Patrick's Day</b>	Christian	Christian celebration of Patrick who brought Christianity to Ireland in early days of the faith.
March 20 (Saturday)	<b>Spring Equinox</b>	Neo-Pagan/Wiccan	A day that marks the rebirth of the year, and celebrates the change of seasons and the rebirth of the spirit after death.
March 27 - April 4 (sundown Saturday - sundown Sunday) *Seder Nights: March 27 and 28	<b>Passover</b>	Jewish	Passover commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. "Seders," ritual feasts at which the story of the Exodus is recounted, are conducted on the first and second nights", followed by six more days of observance during which dietary restrictions apply.
March 28 - April 4 (Sunday - Sunday) March 28 Palm Sunday April 1 Holy Thursday April 2 Good Friday April 3 Holy Saturday April 4 Easter	<b>Holy Week and Easter</b>	Christian	The most important Christian holidays, marking the Last Supper, Passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, with a day of holy observance on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday.
March 29 (Monday)	<b>Holi</b>	Hindu	A widely-celebrated festival during which participants throw colored water or powder at one another to celebrate episodes in the life of Krishna.
April 8 - 9 (sundown Thursday to sundown Friday)	<b>Yom HaShoah</b>	Jewish	Holocaust Memorial Day.
April 12 - May 11 (sundown Monday - sundown Tuesday)	<b>Ramadan</b>	Muslim	The (lunar) month of fasting. Adult Muslims abstain from eating from dawn until sunset.
April 12 (Monday)	<b>New Year</b>	Hindu	The new year is celebrated at various times of the year, usually during spring harvest time, based on the solar or lunar calendars.
April 14 - 16 (Wednesday - Friday)	<b>Songkran/Thingyan/Pi Mai Lao</b>	Buddhist	These days mark the New Year for many countries in Southeast Asia. Cleansing rituals are performed, which represent a cleansing of the soul and a washing away of the old year.
April 21 (Wednesday)	<b>Rama Navami</b>	Hindu	The first day of a nine-day festival in honor of the birth of Rama. The Ramayana, an Indian Epic, is performed.
April 25 (Sunday)	<b>Mahavir Jayant</b>	Jain	Jain festival honoring Lord Mahavira on the founder's birthday.
April 25 - May 3 (Sunday - Monday) April 25 Palm Sunday April 29 Holy Thursday April 30 Great Friday May 1 Holy Saturday May 2 Pascha May 3 Easter Monday	<b>Orthodox Holy Week and Pascha (Easter)</b>	Orthodox Christian	Eastern Orthodox churches observe Holy Week, including Holy Thursday and Great Friday and Easter or Pascha. On Holy Friday, adults abstain from food and drink as their health allows.
May 12 - 13 (sundown Wednesday - sundown Thursday)	<b>Eid al Fitr</b>	Muslim	This three-day celebration marks the end of the month-long Ramadan fasting and is known as the "Festival of the Breaking of the Fast".
May 16 - 18 (sundown Sunday - sundown Tuesday)	<b>Shavuot</b>	Jewish	A harvest festival celebrating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Observance includes refraining from work.
May 23 (Sunday)	<b>Pentecost</b>	Christian	Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Holy Spirit and the founding events of the Christian church.
June 20 (Sunday)	<b>Orthodox Pentecost</b>	Orthodox Christian	Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Holy Spirit and the founding events of the Christian church.
June 20 (Sunday)	<b>Summer Solstice</b>	Pagan	Midsummer, or the day of "solstinium" ("standing still of the sun") is associated with symbols of fertility, rebirth, the harvest and the bounty of nature.
June 29 (Tuesday)	<b>The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul</b>	Christian	A liturgical feast in honor of the martyrdom in Rome of the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul.