

Cultural and Religious Calendar 2010 - 2011

Ramadan

August 11

The holy month of Ramadan begins at sundown for all Muslims. The next thirty days commemorate the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. It is a month of fasting during daylight hours, a time to tend to the needs of the poor, and an opportunity for intense study of the Holy Qur'an.

Rosh HaShana

September 8

Rosh HaShana, the Jewish New Year, begins at sundown. This is the start of a ten-day celebration of renewal and repentance for Jews around the world.

Eid-ul-Fitr

September 9

Eid-ul-Fitr begins at sundown and ends the holy month of Ramadan. For three days Muslim families enjoy gift giving, games, and family fun.

Yom Kippur

September 17

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, begins at sundown with a twenty-four hour fast, and prayers for forgiveness. Jews spend the eve of Yom Kippur and most of the next day in synagogue.

Sukkot

September 22

Sukkot is a nine-day festival commemorating the Jewish people's forty years of wandering in the desert. It has come to include a celebration of the harvest, as well. The holiday is traditionally celebrated in a temporary trellis-roofed hut called a sukkah.

Mehregan

September 23

Mehregan is the Persian holiday celebrating the harvest. Families around the world celebrate this holiday dedicated to love and commitment.

Navratri and Dussehra

October 8

Navratir can be “translated” as nine nights. After a period of ritual fasting there are great celebrations involving dances called garbas. Participants often dress in bright colors and eat sweets.

Diwali

November 5

Diwali, is the Hindu and Sikh five-day feast of lights. It celebrates, with fireworks, light displays and much rejoicing, the return of the Lord Rama after a fourteen year exile.

Hanukah

December 1

Hanukah begins at sundown. It commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians in 165 BC, and the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem. It is celebrated with gift giving and by lighting the menorah for eight nights.

Christmas

December 25

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth on

this day. It is a holy day on the Christian calendar and a time of prayer for peace on earth. In the United States it is celebrated with much music, elaborate decorations, and Santa Claus bringing gifts to children.

Kwanzaa

December 26

Kwanzaa is an African American holiday founded in 1966 in recognition of traditional African harvest festivals. For seven days the Kwanzaa candles are lit, each candle representing an important concept for family.

Tu B'Shevat

January 19

Tu B'Shevat is a Jewish Arbor Day, also called The New Year for the Trees, and coincides with the blooming of the Almond Trees in Israel.

Chinese New Year

February 3

In most Asian countries Chinese New Year begins at sunset on the day of the second new moon following the

winter solstice. It is a time to celebrate new beginnings. Centuries of ritual enhance its importance. This colorful holiday ends with the Lantern Festival procession on February 17.

Mawlid al-Nabi

February 14

Mawlid al-Nabi is a Muslim holiday commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

Purim

February 20

Purim marks Queen Esther's intervention to save the Jews of ancient Persia.

Nowruz

March 21

Nowruz can be translated "New Light" or "New Day". Persian families around the world celebrate this holiday marking the coming of the new light and warmth in spring. The celebrations involve gift giving and rejoicing in the rejuvenation of the world.

Holi

March 20

Holi is a festival, celebrated by Hindus around the world, rejoicing at the arrival of spring.

Baisaki

April 14

Baisakhi is one of the most significant Sikh holidays, commemorating the establishment of the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib in 1699, by the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Baisakhi day is also observed as the beginning of the Hindu Solar New Year, celebrated by people across India and Nepal, and around the world.

Passover

April 18

Passover begins at sundown and lasts for eight days. Passover marks the departure of the Jews from ancient Egypt to begin their journey back to the land of Israel.

Easter

April 24

Easter is observed by Christians throughout the world

as the holiest day of the year. It marks, with elaborate ritual and rejoicing, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead after his crucifixion and death on Good Friday three days earlier.