

Interfaith Calendar and Resources

Our community includes members from numerous backgrounds and strives for awareness and understanding of various cultural observances. This calendar is designed for informational purposes and may not include all significant religious/cultural holidays and details. Due to variations in cultural and regional religious practices and different calendars, some dates of holidays may vary from those listed below.

Consideration of major religious holidays when developing events or deadlines will support engagement and attendance. We appreciate your feedback.

If you would like to make suggestions on additions to this calendar, please contact Rhett Burden (Director, DEIB) at rburden@compass-sf.org.

January

Jan. 1, 2023 - Gantan-sai (Shinto)

Gantan-sai is the annual New Year festival of the Shinto religion.

- General Practices: Practitioners pray for inner renewal, prosperity, and health, as well as visiting shrines and visiting friends and family.

Jan. 6, 2023 - Epiphany/Twelfth Night/Three Kings Day (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

This date is also known as Befana Day; commemorates the revelation of God through Jesus Christ and marks the time the three wise men arrived in Bethlehem and presented gifts to the baby Jesus.

- General Practices: Prayer, festive meals, offerings, gifts

Jan. 7, 2023 - Christmas (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

Christmas is an annual celebration commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah whose message and self-sacrifice began the Christian religion. Eastern Orthodox Christmas is determined by the Julian calendar which regulates ceremonial cycle of the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches.

- General Practices: Many celebrate this holiday by attending church services, holding celebratory meals, and visiting family.

Jan. 22, 2023 - Chinese New Year (Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist)

This holiday is the most important of traditional Chinese holidays. Corresponds to the New Moon in Aquarius, which can fall from late January to mid-February

- General Practices: Families gather together to spend the evening preparing boiled dumplings and festive meals and giving of money to children in red envelopes.

February

Feb. 1-2, 2023 - Imbolc/Candlemas (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

Also referred to as the Feast of Pan, Feast of Torches, Feast of Waxing Lights, and Oimele. Celebrates the coming of spring and recovery of the Earth Goddess after giving birth to the Sun God at Yule. For many traditions, a time for initiations, re-dedication and pledges for the coming year. One of the four "greater Sabbats."

- General Practices: Activities might include making candles, reading poetry and telling stories.

Feb. 3, 2023 - Setsubum-sai (Shinto)

Setsubum-sai marks the beginning of spring, and is known as the "bean-throwing festival. The faithful scatter roasted beans to bring good luck to the new season.

Feb. 22, 2023 - Ash Wednesday (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

This is the first day of Lent, the period of forty days before Easter in which many Christians sacrifice ordinary pleasures to reflect on Christ's sacrifice.

- General Practices: On this day, there are special church services, and the faithful wear a cross of ashes marked on foreheads. Most Christians abstain from meat on this day.

March

Mar. 6, 2023 - Magha Puja Day (Buddhist)

Magha Puja Day commemorates an important event in the life of the Buddha, in which the four disciples traveled to join the Buddha.

Mar. 6-7, 2023 - Purim - Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Purim commemorates the time when the Jews were living in Persia and were saved from genocide by the courage of a young Jewish woman called Esther.

- General Practices: Many Jews hold carnival-like celebrations on Purim, dressing in costumes, and read the Book of Esther. Triangular, fruit-filled pastries are eaten in opposition to the villain Haman, who wore a three-cornered hat.

Mar. 7, 2023 -Holi (Hindu)

Also known as the "Festival of Colors," this holiday can be traced to Hindu scriptures commemorating good over evil. This date is also a celebration of the colorful spring and a farewell to the dull winter. Celebrated at the end of the winter season on the last full moon day of the lunar moon in late February or early March.

- General Practices: Hindus often sprinkle colored water and powder on others and celebrate with bonfires and lights, signifying victory of good over evil.

Mar. 20, 2023 - Ostara/Alban Eilir/Spring Equinox (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

Also known as Eostre. Regarded as a time of fertility and conception. In some Wiccan traditions, it is marked as the time when the Goddess conceives the God's child, which will be born at the winter solstice. One of eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: Lighting fires to commemorate the return of light in the spring and to honor the God and Goddess. Coloring eggs as a way of honoring fertility is also practiced.

Mar. 21-22, 2023 - Naw Ruz - Begins at Sundown (Baha'i)

This holiday is the Baha'i New Year, a traditional celebration in Iran adopted as a holy day associated with Baha'i. It is a celebration of spring and new life.

- General Practices: Festive music dancing, prayers, meetings, meals

Mar. 22- Apr 21, 2023 - Ramadan - Begins at Sundown (Islamic)

Ramadan is an occasion to focus on faith through fasting and prayer, and is one of the most important Muslim holidays. Ramadan is notable because the Qur'an was first revealed during this month, and Muslims see the Qur'an as the ultimate form of guidance for mankind. The night that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad is called Lailat ul Oadr, and standing in prayer this one night is thought to eclipse months of worship.

- General Practices: Fasting is required during the entire month of Ramadan. Muslims refrain from food and beverages during the daylight hours, and smoking and sexual relations are forbidden. Worshipers break the fasting each night with prayer, reading of the Qur'an, and a meal called the iftar. In addition, many Muslims also attend night prayers at Mosques. Muslims also believe that

their good actions bring a greater reward during this month than any other time of the year, so almost all Muslims try to give up bad habits during Ramadan.

April

Apr. 2, 2023 - Palm Sunday (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant/Eastern Orthodox Christianity)

A commemoration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as crowds lined his path with palm fronds

- General Practices: Prayer, distribution of palm leaves commemorating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion.

Apr. 5 – 13, 2023 - Pesach/Passover – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Pesach is a week-long observance commemorating the freedom and exodus of the Israelites (Jewish slaves) from Egypt during the reign of the Pharaoh Ramses II (one of three pilgrimage festivals).

- General Practices: Family gatherings, ritualized meals called Seders, reading of the Haggadah, lighting of Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on the last night of Passover.

Apr. 6, 2023 - Maundy Thursday (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

Thursday before Easter, commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus with the Apostles.

- General Practices: Prayer, Communion (Eucharist), meals, and foot-washing ceremonies among some Christian denominations

Apr. 7, 2023 - Good Friday (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

Friday before Easter commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; among some sects of Christianity and in many countries marks a day of fasting.

- General Practices: Prayer, fasting, and noon or afternoon services in some Christian denominations.

Apr. 9, 2023 - Easter (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

Annual commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter Sunday is determined by the Gregorian calendar (Gregorian calendar regulates ceremonial cycle of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches).

- General Practices: Celebratory meals, family gatherings, distribution of colored eggs, baskets and chocolate bunnies. It is a celebration of renewal.

Apr. 14, 2023 - Vaisakhi (Sikh)

Vaisakhi is the Sikh new year festival and commemorates 1699, the year Sikhism was born. Vaisakhi is also a long-established harvest festival.

- General Practices: There are often parades, dancing, and singing throughout the day. These celebrations involve music, singing, and chanting of scriptures and hymns.

Apr. 7, 2023 - Holy Friday/Good Friday (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

Friday before Easter, commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; among some sects of Christianity and in many countries marks a day of fasting. Orthodox Good Friday is determined by the Julian calendar which regulates ceremonial cycle of the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches.

- General Practices: Prayer, fasting, confession, and church services as well as the wrapping or dyeing of eggs (often red) in preparation for Easter Sunday.

Apr. 16, 2023 - Pascha/Easter (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

Annual commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter Sunday is determined by the Julian calendar which regulates ceremonial cycle of the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches.

- General Practices: Celebratory meals, family gatherings, distribution of colored eggs and baskets of breads, meats, eggs, cheeses and other foods. It is a celebration of renewal.

Apr. 17 – 18, 2023 - Yom HaSho'ah – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Holocaust Remembrance Day: a day to remember the lives and names of Jewish relatives and friends.

- General Practices: Ceremonies or events to remember Holocaust victims who died during World War II; activities may include lighting memorial candles and reciting the Kaddish, which is a prayer for the deceased.

Apr. 21 – 22, 2023 - Eid al-Fitr – Begins at Sundown (Islamic)

Eid al-Fitr means "break the fast", and is the last day of Ramadan, marking the end of a month of fasting. Dates are determined by the lunar calendar. Lunar calendars can vary based on region and practice. Eid al Fitr is a three-day celebration and begins at sundown.

- General Practices: Muslims often pray, exchange gifts, give money to children, feast, and celebrate with friends and family.

May

May 1, 2023 - Beltane (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

The fire festival that celebrates the coming of summer and the fertility of the coming year. One of the eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: Jumping the balefire, dancing the MayPole.

May 5, 2023 - Buddha Day/Visakha Puja (Buddhist)

This holiday is traditionally known as Buddha's birthday. It is the major Buddhist festival, commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.

- General Practices: Buddhists often decorate their homes and visit their local temples. Observers are encouraged to refrain from slaughtering and to avoid eating meat on this date.

May 29, 2023 - Ascension of the Baha'ullah (Baha'i)

Commemorates the death of the founder of the Baha'i faith; Baha'llah died on May 29, 1892.

- General Practices: Devotional programs and reading from the scriptures

May 25 – 27, 2023 - Shavuot – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Commemorates receipt of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Begins at sundown the first date listed.

- General Practices: Evening of devotional programs and studying the Torah, lighting of Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on the second night of Shavuot.

June

Jun. 24, 2023 - Litha/Midsomer/Alban Hefin/Summer Solstice (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

A celebration of the longest day of the year and the beginning of summer. Celebration of the Goddess manifesting as Mother Earth and the God as the Sun King. For some Pagans the Summer Solstice marks the marriage of the God and Goddess and see their union as the force that creates the harvest's fruits. One of the eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: Lighting to bonfires and watching the sun rise

Jun. 28 – 29, 2023 - Eid al-Adha – Begins at Sundown (Islamic)

Eid al-Adha is a major festival that celebrates the willingness to make sacrifices in the name of one's faith. According to legend, the prophet Ibrahim was ordered to sacrifice his son in God's name. When Ibrahim was prepared to kill his son, God stepped in and gave him a sheep to sacrifice instead. This holiday celebrates Ibrahim's total faith in God, and Muslims view this holiday as an important annual reminder.

- General Practices: Prayers, gift giving, prayers, and sometimes slaughtering of sheep, with a portion of the meat gifted to the poor.

July

Jul. 26 – 27, 2023 – Tisha B'Av – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Commemorates a series of Jewish tragedies including the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem. Begins at sundown on first day, fast deferred because of the Sabbath.

- General practices: Fasting and mourning.

August

Aug. 1, 2023 – Lammas /Lughnasadh (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

A celebration of the beginning of the harvest. One of the eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: Making and consuming dishes with the first fruits of the harvest.

Aug. 30, 2023 – Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)

The Rakhi festivity falls in the holy month of Shravan; The origin and history of Rakhi can be dated back to the mythological Pauranic times.

- General Practices: A day to acknowledge siblings and their relationships.

September

Sep. 6-7, 2023 – Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)

This festival celebrates the birth of Krishna, a widely-worshiped Hindu god. Krishna is considered to be a warrior, hero, teacher, and philosopher. The first day is called Krishan ashtami or Gokul ashtami. The second day is known as Kaal ashtami or more popularly Janam ashtami.

- General Practices: During this festival, Hindus are likely to forgo sleep in order to sing bhajans, traditional Hindu songs. Many Hindus also fast during the first day of the festival. Dances, songs, and plays depicting the life of Krishna are common.

Sep. 15 – 17, 2023 – Rosh Hashanah – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

This is the Jewish New Year. It is the first of the High Holidays or Yamim Noraim ("Days of Awe"), celebrated ten days before Yom Kippur. Rosh Hashanah is observed on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. It is described in the Torah.

- General Practices: There are many wonderful customs, symbols, and traditions associated with Rosh HaShanah, the Jewish New Year, a time of prayer, self-reflection and repentance.

Sep. 22, 2023 – Mabon /Alban Elfed /Autumnal Equinox (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

Also referred to as Harvest Home, the Feast of the Ingathering, and Meán Fómhair. Mabon is the second celebration of the harvest, a ritual of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth, and a recognition of the need to share them to secure the blessings of the Goddess and the God during the coming winter months. One of the eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: At Mabon, day and night are in equal balance. It is a time to offer gratitude for the blessings of the harvest and also to begin to prepare for turning inward. Making dishes with apples, squash and pumpkins as part of ritual celebration is customary.

Sep. 24 – 25, 2023 - Yom Kippur – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Yom Kippur is often considered the holiest day of the year for Jews, and the day is dedicated to atonement and abstinence.

- General Practices: During Yom Kippur, Jews fast from before sundown until after sunset, and light a Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on the night of Yom Kippur.

Sep. 29 – Oct. 6, 2023 - Sukkot – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

An eight-day or week-long celebration which begins with the building of Sukkah for sleep and meals; Sukkot is named for the huts Moses and the Israelites lived in as they wandered the desert before reaching the promised land.

- General Practices: Families in the United States commonly decorate the sukkah with produce and artwork.

October

Oct. 6 – 8, 2023 - Shemini Atzeret – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Also known as Atzereth, this is a fall festival, which includes a memorial service for the dead and features prayers for rain in Israel.

- General Practices: Jews light a Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on Shemini Atzereth (the 8th night of Sukkot).

Oct. 7 – 8, 2023 - Simchat Torah – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Simchat Torah marks the completion of the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah in the synagogue and the beginning of the new cycle.

- General Practices: Practitioners dance in synagogues as all the Torah scrolls are carried around in seven circuits.

Oct. 15 – 23, 2023 - Navaratri (Hindu)

Navarati is one of the greatest Hindu festivals, and celebrates the triumph of good over evil. During this time, Hindus worship Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati.

- General Practices: Durga is the mother goddess, and so Hindus try to visit their mothers and other relatives during this time. Some Hindus will pray and fast, and there are often feasts and dances.

Oct. 27, 2023 - Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (Baha'í)

This holiday celebrates the birthday of Bahá'u'lláh, one of the Baha'í faith's most important figures. For Bahá'ís, the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh is a Holy Day celebrating the rebirth of the world through the love of God, just as Christmas is for Christians.

Oct. 31 – Nov. 1, 2023 - Samhain (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

One of the four "greater Sabbats" and considered by some to be the Wiccan New Year. A time to celebrate the lives of those who have passed on, welcome those born during the past year into the community, and reflecting on past relationships, events and other significant changes in life.

- General Practices: Paying respect to ancestors, family members, elders of the faith, friends, pets and other loved ones who have died.

November

Nov. 12, 2023 - Diwali (Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain)

Diwali—the Hindu "festival of lights"—is an extremely popular holiday for multiple religions throughout Southern Asia. Diwali extends over five days, and celebrates the victory of good over evil. The Times of

India described Diwali as “a reaffirmation of hope, a renewed commitment to friendship and goodwill, and a religiously sanctioned celebration of the simple.” Fireworks, oil lamps, and sweets are common, making this a favorite holiday for children. The lamps are lit to help the goddess Lakshmi find her way into people’s homes.

- General Practices: Lighting oil lamps and candles, setting off fireworks, and prayer.

December

Dec. 7 – 15, 2023 - Hanukkah / Chanukah – Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights and lasts for eight days. Hanukkah commemorates the Jewish struggle for religious freedom. The history of the holiday involves a historic military victory in which a Jewish sect called the Maccabees defeated the Syrian Greeks. The celebration commemorates a miracle in which a sacred temple flame burned for eight days on only one day’s worth of oil.

- General Practices: On each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, Jewish families light an additional candle of the menorah candelabrum until all eight candles are lit. Jews celebrate with food and song, as well as exchanging gifts for eight days.

Dec. 21 – Jan. 1, 2023 - Yule/Midwinter/Alban Arthan/Winter Solstice (Pagan, Wiccan, Druid)

The longest night of the year followed by the sun’s “rebirth” and lengthening of days. In most traditions, Yule is celebrated as the rebirth of the Great God, who is viewed as the newborn solstice sun. Some pagans consider Yule to be the beginning of the new year. One of the eight major annual sabbats or festivals.

- General Practices: Burning the yule log (which was traditionally part of last year’s yule tree) is an act of faith and renewal that, indeed, the light, and the warmth will return.

Dec. 24-25, 2023 - Christmas – Begins at Sundown (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

Christmas is an annual celebration commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah whose message and self-sacrifice began the Christian religion.

- General Practices: Many celebrate this holiday by giving gifts, attending church services, decorating Christmas trees, and visiting family.

Resources and Education

[What’s up with not talking about religion?](#) (YouTube)

[What’s up with the Bah’ai Tradition?](#) (YouTube)

[Learning about a Hijab](#) (YouTube)

[Sami People: religion, Beliefs and Deities](#) (Website)

[The Story of Siddhartha Guauama](#) (YouTube)

[Who are Unitarian Universalists?](#) (Video)

[Coming to terms with Essential Terms](#) (Website)

[Introduction to Hindusim](#) (YouTube)

[Introduction to Judaism](#) (YouTube)

[A different approach to Deity/Indigenous, Neopagan and Earth-based Spiritual practices](#) (Website)

[Who is God? A pastor, A rabbi and an Imam? The Story of God](#) (YouTube)

[What do Mormons Believe](#) (YouTube)

[Discovering Sacred Text: Buddhism](#) (YouTube)

[The Prayer Life of Martin Luther King Jr.](#) (Audio)

[15 facts on African Religions](#) (Website)

[Christianity: Sacred Harp](#) (Audio)

[Four things to learn about Quakers](#) (Website)

[Lao Tzu & Taoist Spirituality](#) (Website)

[What is Vaisahki & What does it mean to be Sikh](#) (YouTube)

[Interfaith on the Menu: The Scared Value of Food](#) (Audio)

[Interfaith Youth Core Podcasts](#) (Audio)

[Interfaith Youth Core Videos](#) (YouTube)