



# RE – Interfaith Guide – Key Dates, Feasts and Religious Festivals 2025

## Buddhism

### **12 May – Vesakha Puja / Buddha Day**

On Wesak Theravadin, Buddhists celebrate the birth, the enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya in North India, and the final passing away of Gautama Buddha.

### **12 October – Kathina**

The Kathina robe offering ceremony marks the end of vassa or the Buddhist Lent, the three months rainy season retreat observed by the Sangha or Buddhist monks. It originated 2,500 years ago and is celebrated by the giving of alms and offering of robes to the monks who observed the retreat, who in turn deliver sermons to the lay supporters.

## Christianity

### **13 - 19 April – Holy Week**

The most solemn week of the Christian year, Holy Week is the week during which Christians remember the last week of Jesus's life.

### **13 April – Palm Sunday**

A Christian holy day that falls on the Sunday before Easter, to commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

### **18 April – Good Friday**

The holy day commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus. It is observed during Holy Week on the Friday preceding Easter Sunday, and may coincide with the Jewish observance of Passover.

### **20 April – Easter Day**

Easter is the most important festival of the Christian year since this is when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus three days after his death by crucifixion. This is a public holiday in the UK.

### **20 April – Pascha/Orthodox Easter Sunday**

Easter is calculated on a lunar calendar, and thus moves each year in relation to the solar calendar. Orthodox and Western churches calculate differently when the necessary intercalary adjustments should be made; consequently, there is no consistent relationship between the dates of Orthodox and Western timings of Easter.

### **8 June – Pentecost**

The Christian holy day commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the 50th day after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A feast is observed exactly seven weeks after Easter Day.

### **25 December – Christmas Day**

The Christian holy day that marks the birth of Jesus, the son of God, in Bethlehem.

### **6-7 January – Orthodox Christmas Eve/Day**

Several Eastern Orthodox churches (such as Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, and others) as well as others (including Egyptian Coptic, Ethiopian, and Rastafarian communities) use the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian calendar to mark their holidays. Accordingly, they celebrate Christmas and certain other festivals 13 days after the Western churches.



## Islam

### **28 February – Beginning of Ramadan**

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community. Fasting is obligatory for all adult Muslims from sunrise to sunset (apart from those who are unwell, pregnant, breastfeeding or travelling).

### **30 March – Al Eid al Fitr**

Eid ul Fitr is the religious holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the 30-day period of fasting. The day begins with special Eid prayers to commemorate the festival and the day often involves visiting family and friends, sharing gifts and enjoying a large meal.

### **6 - 10 June – Al Eid Ul Adha**

Eid ul Adha is a time of family and religious devotion, commemorating the Quranic account of Ibrahim unquestioningly offering up Ishmael on Mount Moriah in obedience to Allah's command. It consists of morning prayers at the mosque, listening to a sermon on the importance of sacrifice, wearing new clothes and sacrificing an animal, constituting a major part of how it is observed.

### **4-9 June – Hajj (Pilgrimage)**

Hajj is the obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, that all Muslims must perform once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially capable. It involves performing a series of rituals by millions of Muslims simultaneously, symbolising solidarity and equality between all people. The complete submission to Allah brings a renewal and strength of one's faith and spirituality.

### **27 June – Muharram (Islamic New Year)**

The first month in the Islamic lunar calendar is Muharram, one of the 4 sacred months. Muharram is a month dedicated to lessons of generosity, sacrifice and mourning dedicated to the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's family and companions during the battle of Karbala. Muharram also marks the month in which the Prophet Nuh (Noah) left the ark and the month Prophet Musa (Moses) was saved from the Pharaoh of Egypt.

### **24 August – Beginning of Rabi-ul-Awwal**

Rabi-ul-Awwal is commonly regarded as the month in which Prophet Muhammad was born. Muslims commemorate his life during this month by organising gatherings, festivals, events and lectures.

## Sikhism

### **6 January – Birth of Guru Gobind Singh**

A Sikh festival that commemorates the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. It is a religious celebration in which prayers for prosperity are offered.

### **14 - 16 March – Hola Mohalla**

A Sikh festival following the Hindu festival Holi. Guru Gobind Singh started this festival as a day for Sikhs to practise their military exercises and hold mock battles, today celebrated by watching and partaking in martial arts parades.

### **14 April – Vaisakhi**

A religious ceremony that marks the beginning of the new year in Sikhism.

### **16 June – Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev**

Guru Arjan was the first of the two gurus martyred in the Sikh faith and the fifth of the 10 total Sikh gurus. He was arrested under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir and asked to convert to Islam. He refused and was tortured and executed in 1606 CE. His martyrdom is considered a watershed event in the history of Sikhism.

### **20 October – Bandi Chhor Diwas**

Commemorates the release of the sixth Sikh guru, Sri Guru Hargobind Ji, from prison. Sikhs continue this annual celebration with lamps being lit outside gurdwaras and sweets distributed to all. This coincides with Diwali.

### **24 November – Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur**

Commemorates the death of the ninth Sikh Guru, who was beheaded for refusing the conversion to Islam.

### **5 November – Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti**

Celebrates the birth of Guru Nanak, who was one of the greatest religious innovators of all time and the founder of the Sikh religion.

## Hinduism

### **26 February – Maha Shivratri**

A festival dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva, Hindu God, on the 13th or 14th day of the Hindu month of Maagha or Phalgun.

### **14 March – Holi**

"Festival of Colours" marks the end of winter in India and welcomes the spring season.

### **6 April – Rama Navami**

'A festival that celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of the deity Vishnu.'

### **9 August – Rakhi/Raksha Bandhan**

A day of celebration to mark the relationship between brothers and sisters. Traditionally, sisters tie a bracelet onto their brothers' wrist in return for the promise of protection and gifts.

### **16 August – Krishna Janmashtami**

A Hindu religious festival celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna. The date falls in the month of Bhadon, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the Hindu calendar.

### **22 September -1 October – Navratri**

The celebration of Hindu Goddess Durga and victory of good over evil.

### **20 October – Diwali**

Diwali is the biggest festival in the Hindu calendar, signifying triumph of light over darkness. For some Hindus it also coincides with New Year celebrations.

## Judaism

### **13-14 March – Purim**

Purim commemorates the date when Esther, Queen of Persia, saved the Jews from a plot by Haman, adviser to the Persian king, to kill them all.

### **12-20 April – Passover (Pesach)**

Passover celebrates the exodus of the Jews from the land of Egypt, where they had been enslaved by Pharaoh. During Passover, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened food (e.g. bread and pasta) and instead eat matzah (unleavened bread).

### **1-3 June – Shavuot**

A Jewish holiday that marks the all-important wheat harvest in Israel and the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah (the bible) to the Jews at Mount Sinai.

### **22 -24 September – Rosh Hashanah**

A two-day festival that celebrates the beginning of the new Jewish calendar year and the start of the 10 days of repentance that precede Yom Kippur.

### **1-2 October – Yom Kippur**

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is the holiest day of the Jewish year. Its central themes are atonement and repentance, and it is traditionally observed with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services.

### **6-13 October – Sukkot**

A weeklong Jewish holiday that comes five days after Yom Kippur, celebrating the gathering of the harvest and commemorating the miraculous protection that G-d provided for the Jews when they left Egypt.

### **14-15 October – Simchat Torah**

Celebrates the conclusion of the annual cycle of reading the Torah and the beginning of the new cycle.

### **14 - 22 December – Hanukkah**

Meaning "dedication" in Hebrew, Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights, remembering the rededication of the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem after the Jews took the temple back from the occupying Greeks.