

RECOGNITION MONTHS

February

Black History Month

February is Black History Month in the United States and Canada. Carter G. Woodson started the tradition with the creation of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In 1926, Negro History Week was established. Since 1976, the month has been federally designated to remember the contributions of people of the African diaspora. February was chosen to celebrate African American History because it holds the birthdays of two men who helped eliminate slavery: Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln

March

Developmental Disability Awareness Month

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month was established to increase awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Women's History Month

Honors the role of women in American history

April

National Volunteer Month

Celebrate Diversity Month

A celebration initiated in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will gain a deeper understanding of each other.

May

Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage Month

Commemorates people with Asian and Pacific Island ancestry and their contribution to the United States

Mental Health Awareness Month

Raises awareness for those living with mental and behavioral issues. This month also seeks to support families or communities who are impacted by mental illness.

Older Americans Month

Established in 1963 to honor the legacies and contributions of older Americans and support them as they enter their next stage of life.

June

LGBT Pride Month

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Pride Month was established to recognize the impact that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals have had on the world. LGBTQ+ groups note this

time with Pride parades, picnics, parties, memorials for those lost to hate crimes and HIV/AIDS, and other group gatherings. The last Sunday in June is LGBTQ+ Pride which commemorates the Stonewall Riots that occurred on June 28th, 1969.

Immigrant Heritage Month

Established in June 2014 and gives people across the United States an opportunity to explore their heritages and celebrate the shared diversity that forms the unique story of the United States. The month celebrates immigrants across the United States and their contributions to their local communities and economy.

July

Disability Pride Month

Celebrates the nearly 1 billion disabled people worldwide. In the United States, nearly 15% of the population identifies as disabled. It aims to end the stigma of disability and to promote the idea that it is a normal part of human diversity.

September - October

National Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is observed from September 15th to October 15th. This month corresponds with Mexican Independence Day, which is celebrated on September 16th and recognizes the revolution in 1810 that ended the Spanish dictatorship.

October

LGBTQ History Month

LGBT History Month is an annual month-long observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. It was founded in 1994 by Missouri high-school history teacher Rodney Wilson. October was chosen for the celebration because the first and second LGBT Marches on Washington, in 1979 and 1987, were in October.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

This awareness month advocates for those with disabilities and for inclusion in the workforce.

Global Diversity Awareness Month,

A month to celebrate and increase awareness about the diversity of cultures and ethnicities as well as the positive impact diversity can have on society.

November

National Native American Heritage Month

This month celebrates the contributions — cultures, traditions, histories — of Native people to the United States

OTHERS:

Irish American Heritage Month – March
Arab American Heritage Month – April
Haitian Heritage Month - May
Jewish American Heritage Month – May
Caribbean American Heritage Month – June
French American Heritage Month – July
Filipino American History Month - October
German American Heritage Month - October
Italian American Heritage Month - October
Polish American Heritage Month - October

CELEBRATIONS/OBSERVANCES/HOLIDAYS

(Dates for some holidays change annually)

January

January 14, 2024 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day commemorates the birth of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and an activist for nonviolent social change until his assassination in 1968.

February

Feb. 10, 2024 - Chinese New Year (Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist)

This is the most important of traditional Chinese holidays. Families gather together to spend the evening preparing boiled dumplings and festive meals and the giving of money to children in red envelopes. Corresponds to the New Moon in Aquarius, which can fall from late January to mid-February.

March

March 8, 2024 – International Women’s Day

International Women’s Day, first observed in 1911 in Germany, has now become a major global celebration honoring women’s economic, political, and social achievements.

March 12-April 9, 2024 - 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.

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 Qu'ran, 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.

March 31, 2024 - Easter (Christian/Roman Catholic and Protestant)

Annual commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

General Practices: Celebratory meals, family gatherings, distribution of colored eggs, baskets and chocolate bunnies. It is a celebration of renewal. Easter Sunday is determined by the Gregorian calendar. The Gregorian calendar regulates the ceremonial cycle of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

April

April 9-10, 2024 - 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.

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

April 22, 2024 – Earth Day

Earth Day promotes world peace and sustainability of the planet. Events are held globally in support of the environmental protection of the Earth. Earth Day is observed by more than 192 nations.

April 22-30, 2024 - 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 and is 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. Begins at sundown the first evening listed.

May

May 5, 2024 – Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican Army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861 - 1867). This day celebrates Mexican culture and heritage with a variety of festivities, including parades and mariachi music performances.

June

June 19, 2024 – Juneteenth

Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day, was established as a federal holiday in 2022. This celebration honors the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas and Louisiana finally heard they were free, two months after the end of the Civil War.

July

July 30, 2024 - International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures, and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

August

August 26, 2024 - Women's Equality Day commemorates the August 26th, 1920 certification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution that gave women the right to vote. Congresswoman Bella Abzug first introduced a proclamation for Women's Equality Day in 1971. Since that time, every US president has published a proclamation recognizing the 26th as Women's Equality Day.

September

September 21, 2024 – International Day of Peace

This UN day encourages all nations to observe a ceasefire. Each year the UN bell is rung in New York City to inaugurate this nonviolence day.

Sept 24-25, 2024 - 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. 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.

October

October 2-4, 2024 - Rosh Hashanah, 2024 - Begins at Sundown (Jewish)

Start of the Jewish New Year, day of judgment and remembrance; the Jewish calendar celebrates the New Year in the seventh month (Tishrei) as a day of rest and celebration ten days before Yom Kippur.

October 9, 2024 - Indigenous Peoples Day

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday in the United States that celebrates and honors indigenous American peoples and commemorates their histories and cultures. It is celebrated across the United States on the second Monday in October and is an official city and state holiday in various localities including Minnesota.

November

October 31-Nov. 4 - Diwali (Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain)

Holiday with significant work restriction

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.

November 24, 2024 – Native American Heritage Day

Take time to pay respects to Native Americans who have contributed so much to American history. This day also encourages schools to increase their understanding of Native American history.

December

Dec. 7-15, 2024 - 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. 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. Date details: Hanukkah begins at sundown on the first day.

December 10, 2024 – International Humans Rights Day

A holiday adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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

Holiday with significant work restriction

Christmas is an annual celebration commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah whose message and self-sacrifice began the Christian religion. Many celebrate this holiday by giving gifts, attending church services, decorating Christmas trees, and visiting family.

Dec. 26-January 1, 2024 - Kwanzaa

As an African American and Pan-African holiday celebrated by millions throughout the world African community, Kwanzaa brings a cultural message which speaks to the best of what it means to be African and human in the fullest sense. During the holiday, families and communities organize activities around the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles): Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith).