

JANUARY 2023

January 1 – New Year’s Day

The beginning of a new year, according to the Gregorian calendar and a federal statutory holiday. Many people start January 1st at parties to welcome the New Year on the evening of December 31st, which sometimes include fireworks upon the countdown toward the coming year.

January 6 – Epiphany

Observed by many Western Christians and also known as the Twelfth Night, Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian feasts which commemorates the arrival of the Three Wise Men’s visit to see infant Jesus in Bethlehem.

January 7 – Orthodox Christmas

Observed by ways of the Julian calendar and Orthodox Christians, this is a time of reflection and healing. Many people attend special church liturgy and gather to share feasts of traditional, usually central or eastern European foods.

January 19 – Orthodox Epiphany

In the Orthodox church, Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, rather than the arrival of the Magi (Three Wise Men) which is the focus of Western Christians.

January 22 – Lunar New Year

Celebrated by nearly 2 billion people worldwide with family reunions, street parades, and fireworks to drive off evil spirits. While based on the Chinese lunar calendar, Lunar New Year is also celebrated in Korea, Singapore, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam and in other Asian communities worldwide.

January 25 – Robert Burns Day

Also called Burns Supper, this marks the celebration of the life and poetry of Robert Burns who was a Scottish poet and lyricist. The first supper was held in memoriam at Burns Cottage in 1801 and has been a regular occurrence ever since. Traditional foods such as haggis, tatties, neeps, and Scotch whisky are consumed.

January 25 – Bell Let’s Talk Day

Beginning in 2010, Bell Let’s Talk started a conversation about Canada’s mental health, catapulting its importance and increasing awareness. It has created positive change across the country!



FEBRUARY 2023

Black History Month:

February of 1996 was the first officially recognized Black History Month in Canada, as declared by the House of Commons. Black History Month honours the many great achievements of Black Canadians. It provides a platform to share and learn about experiences, stories, hardships, achievements, and contributions of Black Canadians. The month's festivities and events honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present.

February 04 – World Cancer Day

Established in 2000, World Cancer Day has grown to be a positive movement with the goal of raising awareness of cancer as well as encouraging its prevention, detection, and treatment. The hope is to create a future without cancer.

February 14 – Valentine's Day

Celebrated annually, Saint Valentine's Day originated as a Western Christian feast day in honour of early Christian martyrs. It's now recognized as a celebration of romance and love.

February 20 – Family Day (AB, BC, ON, SK)

Getting its start in Alberta, Family Day is a day to take a break from our daily lives and spend quality time with loved ones. This holiday is all about the importance of families and friends to people and their communities.

February 20 – Louis Riel Day (MB)

Celebrated in the province of Manitoba, it commemorates the life of Louis Riel, a politician who represented the Metis people. Louis Riel was the driving force behind Manitoba becoming Canada's fifth province.

February 22 – Ash Wednesday

A Christian holy day of reflection, repentance and prayer, marking the first day of Lent – this comes 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent gives Christians a time of observance and preparation for the celebration of the death & resurrection of Jesus Christ.



MARCH 2023



National Nutrition Month:

During the month of March, we are invited to focus on the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy eating habits. Beginning in the late 1970's as Nutrition Week with a small group of community dieticians, it has since become an entire month dedicated to increase public awareness about the importance of healthy eating to our overall wellbeing.

March 08 – International Women's Day

A major global celebration honouring girls and women's economic, cultural, political, and social achievements. This day is also meant to raise awareness against gender biases and encouraging all to fight for equality. This year's theme is #BreakTheBias ...imagine a gender equal world!

March 08 – Holi (aka the Festival of Colours)

A major Hindu festival which signifies the victory of good over evil. People visit family and friends to throw coloured powders on each other, sharing Holi delicacies, food, and drinks. A day before Holi, people gather at sunset to light a large bonfire that helps burn out evil spirits – this is known as Holika Dahan.

March 20 – Vernal Equinox

The astronomical start of the spring season in the Northern hemisphere. The word "equinox" comes from Latin *aequus*, meaning "equal," and *nox*, "night." On the equinox, day and night are roughly equal in length.

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

A holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith. In present day, celebrations include parades, special foods & drinks, and Irish music & dancing.



APRIL 2023



March 23 (until April 20) – Ramadan

A sacred month for Muslims, Ramadan is the month that God revealed the first verses of the Quran (Islam's sacred text) to Mohammed on a night known as "The Night of Power". During Ramadan, Muslims fast every day from dawn to sunset. At the end of Ramadan there's a big three-day celebration called Eid al-Fitr, or the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast.

April 5 to 13 – Passover

The week+ long Jewish holiday of Passover commemorates the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, celebrating freedom. The main event of the Passover holiday is the "seder", a traditional meal in which the Haggadah (the book of exodus) is recited in a set order.

April 7 – Good Friday

Good Friday is the day when Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, an important event in Christianity as it represents the sacrifices and suffering in Jesus' life. Christians may attend special church services, avoid eating meat, and sometimes indulge in "hot cross buns".

April 9 – Easter

Easter Sunday celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his Crucifixion. It marks the end of Holy Week, the end of Lent, and the last day of the Easter Triduum. Today, many people and their children also participate in Easter egg "hunts," in which decorated eggs are hidden and then found.

April 14 – Vaisakhi

A very important day for Sikhs and Hindus, this has become a day to celebrate the year 1699 which was when Sikhism was born as a collective faith. Celebrations always include singing and music, as well as reading aloud scriptures and chanting hymns. For Hindus, it marks the beginning of the Hindu Solar Year. It also celebrates the start of the Puniabi New Year.

April 16 – Orthodox Easter

Also known as Pascha, Orthodox Easter is recognized by Orthodox Christians across Canada and celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion on Orthodox Good Friday. The period before Easter, known as Lent, is also a time of strict fasting. Paschal celebrations including large feasts after church.

April 21 – Eid al-Fitr

Muslims around the world celebrate the end of Ramadan with Eid-al-Fitr, which Muslims observe to acknowledge Allah's revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad. This is a time of celebration, with Muslims gathering with family & friends, reflecting on gratitude for what they have and to show gratitude toward God.

April 22 – Earth Day

Today we mark the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. It has become a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national, and local policy changes in the fight for a clean environment and a sustainable future.



MAY 2023



May 1 to 7 – Mental Health Week (CMHA)

Mental Health Week was established in 1951 by CMHA. The week has focused on reducing the stigma of mental illness, and when all Canadians rally to celebrate, protect and promote mental health. This year's theme is *#GetReal About How to Help* and includes a focus on the importance of empathy and how each of us can help others by being open and empathetic to their struggles.

May 14 – Mother's Day

Many Canadians celebrate Mother's Day by showing their appreciation for mothers or mother figures. It's a time to thank and honour mothers and mother figures who took the time care for them and help them through life's challenges. Mother's Day traditionally involves presenting moms with flowers, cards, and other gifts.

May 21 – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

In 2002, the UN General Assembly declared May 21st to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to advance the four goals of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

May 22 – Victoria Day

Declared a holiday by the Legislature of the Province of Canada in 1845, Victoria Day was named the official birthday in Canada of Queen Elizabeth II. In modern times, many Canadians informally consider this to be the start of the summer season.

JUNE 2023



MONTH OF CONNECTEDNESS:

In 2020 during the beginning of the pandemic, the Inclusion & Diversity Committee designated June to be the month of connectedness. We are inherently social creatures and social connections are an important part of our identity, wellbeing, and mental health. We encourage everyone to take a moment to reach out to a loved one, a friend, a neighbour, or perhaps even someone who you've lost touch with but would like to reconnect with.



PRIDE MONTH:

Pride Month is a salute to self-affirmation, dignity, equality, and visibility of the LGBTQ+ community. In June, the world is dedicated to uplifting LGBTQ+ voices, celebration of LGBTQ+ culture, and supporting of LGBTQ+ rights. We celebrate in June to coincide with the catalyst of the Gay Liberation Movement that was the Stonewall Uprising in June of 1969.

June 05 – National Health & Fitness Day

Each year throughout Canada, this first Saturday in June is meant to promote health and fitness and inspire Canadians to focus on their fitness and be more active.

June 14 – World Blood Donour Day

Raising awareness of the need for “safe blood and blood products” and to extend gratitude to those who donate the gift of life.

June 18 – Father’s Day

In recognition of fatherhood, father figures, and paternal bonds, we celebrate the contributions that fathers and father figures make to the lives of their children and beyond.

June 20 – World Refugee Day

An international observance, this day is dedicated to recognizing refugees around the world and applaud their courage and strength.

June 21 – International Day of Yoga

Since 2015, this is a day to focus on the physical, mental, and spiritual self through the practice of yoga, which originated in Northern India over 5,000 years ago.

June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples’ Day

A day for Canadians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, cultures, and contributions of the First Nations., Metis, and Inuit people.

June 24 – Saint Jean Baptiste Day (QC)

An annual Quebec national holiday to celebrate the francophone culture and honour French Canadian heritage. Festivities include concerts, parades, and firework displays.

June 28 at sunset (to July 1) – Eid al Adha

An Islamic festival marking the sacrifice of Abraham, observed first through communal prayer. This day also highlights the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, called Hajj.

JULY 2023

July 1 – Canada Day

Originally referred to as Dominion Day until 1982, July 1st is the National Day of Canada that celebrates the enactment of the Constitution Act in 1867, which confederated Canada. In towns and cities across the country, festivities include parades, ceremonies, concerts, and firework displays.

July 4 – Independence Day (US)

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted on this day by the Second Continental Congress, called for the American colonies to secede from Great Britain, a proclamation now commemorated by this U.S. national holiday. It is celebrated with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades, and concerts to family gatherings and barbecues.

July 18 – Nelson Mandela International Day

A day to reflect on Nelson Mandela's life and legacy, following his call to make the world a better place and celebrate the idea that each individual has the power to transform the world.

July 19 – 1st of Muharram (Islamic New Year)

Muharram is the first month in the Islamic New Year and a holy time of celebration. The 10th of Muharram is also called the Ashura and is a day of mourning, commemorating the death of Prophet Muhammad's son & grandson in the Battle of Karbala.

July 30 – World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

On this day, the UN calls attention to and encourages vigilance & support for the prevention of modern-day people trafficking and slavery that continues to be a global concern.

July 30 – International Friendship Day

Celebrating and appreciating friendships between peoples, countries, and cultures, which is thought to ultimately inspire peace efforts between communities.



AUGUST 2023



August 1 – Swiss National Day

Since 1891, the first of August is celebrated as Switzerland's Confederation Day. This day was chosen, as in 1291 it is said that it was on August 1st that the three forest cantons signed the Federal Charter.

August 6 – Jamaican Independence Day

The National Day of Jamaica celebrates independence from the United Kingdom since 1962, and was the first time the Jamaican flag was flown. Jamaicans celebrate with parades, traditional music, dancing, and social gatherings.

August 7 – Civic Holiday

The first Monday of August is observed across most of Canada, known by a variety of names, as either a stat or non-stat holiday. This August long weekend is usually filled with out-of-town trips, camping, BBQs, and social gatherings.

Civic Day (ON): In Ontario, sometimes a range of local names are used, which often honor significant people in the history of the province.

Heritage Day (AB): In 1974, the Alberta government declared this day as a way to recognize & celebrate the varied cultural heritage of Albertans.

British Columbia Day (BC): Introduced to the Legislative Assembly in 1974, The British Columbia Day Act was introduced to create a holiday in honour of the pioneers in the province.

Terry Fox Day (MB): The August Civic Holiday was renamed Terry Fox Day in Manitoba in honour of Terrance Stanley Fox and his Marathon of Hope, raising millions for cancer research.

Saskatchewan Day (SK): First proposed in 1975 by Gordon Snyder, Saskatchewan's minister of labour was looking to create a formally recognized statutory holiday during which time families can gather together to enjoy the great outdoors.

August 14 – Pakistan Independence Day

On this day is when Pakistan achieved independence and was declared a sovereign state following the end of the British Raj in 1947. "Unity, Faith, and Discipline" is the national motto of Pakistan.

August 15 – Indian Independence Day

In 1947, India was declared independent from British colonialism, and the reins of control were handed over to the leaders of the Country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru reinforces India's liberation with his iconic "Tryst with Destiny" speech.

SEPTEMBER 2023

September 04 – Labour Day

The first Monday in September has been a holiday in Canada since 1894, originally the result of worker groups parading for better working conditions. Today, Labour Day is a day of rest that celebrates the unofficial end to summer and start of a new school year.

September 10 – Grandparents Day

This Sunday celebrates grandparents, reminding us to honour their guidance and strength, being such important figures in the lives of so many across the world.

September 15 to 17 – Rosh Hashanah

Also known as Jewish New Year, this is one of Judaism's holiest days meaning "head of the year". This holiday is a two-day celebration that begins on the first day of Tishrei, the 7th month of the ecclesiastical year or the Hebrew calendar, and the beginning of the civil year. Rosh Hashanah customs include the sounding of shofar, attending synagogue services, and enjoying festive meals.

September 21 – International Day of Peace

Established by the United Nations, World Peace Day is a global day to commit to Peace above all differences and strengthening the ideals of peace across the globe. The theme of 2020 is "Shaping Peace Together".

September 23 – Autumnal Equinox

The astronomical start of the fall season in the Northern hemisphere. The word "equinox" comes from Latin *aequus*, meaning "equal," and *nox*, "night." On the equinox, day and night are roughly equal in length.

September 24 to 25 – Yom Kippur

Another one of Judaism's holiest days, Yom Kippur marks the conclusion of the 10 Days of Awe, a period of repentance that follows Rosh Hashanah. Traditionally, the holiday is observed with a 25-hour fast, prayer, and a special religious service.

September 30 – National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day

Each year on the 30th of September, we spend time remembering the lost children of residential schools and to honour past and present survivors, their families, and their communities. You may also hear of "Orange Shirt Day", first observed in 2013, which is part of an effort to promote awareness of the residential school system and the multi-generational impact it has had on Indigenous communities for over a century.




Important Fact:

As of March 9th, 2023, British Columbia is officially the first province that has passed legislation to make September 30th a statutory holiday for all, making strides towards more awareness and time for commemoration.



OCTOBER 2023



 **Breast Cancer Awareness Month:** Recognized in countries across the world, the month of October is dedicated to increasing attention and support for awareness, early detection, and treatment of breast cancer. The pink ribbon has come to symbolize breast cancer awareness and hope for the future.

October 01 to 07 – Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW)

Established in 1992, MIAW is an annual national campaign designed as a reminder that millions of Canadians live daily with mental illness. The campaign is coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH), whose mandate is to ensure that Canadians suffering through mental illnesses receive appropriate access to care and support.

October 9 – Thanksgiving

On the second Monday in October, Thanksgiving Day was originally a way for Canadians to give thanks for a successful year and harvest. Nowadays, it's celebrated by gathering with loved ones and preparing a meal which usually includes turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and many other dishes.

October 10 – World Mental Health Day

On the last day of MIAW is a global day of recognition of mental health in general. The objective of this day is to raise awareness around the world and mobilize efforts in support of mental health. Set by the World Federation for Mental Health, this year's theme is "mental health for all".

October 15 – Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day

An annual campaign in honour of babies who passed away due to stillbirth, miscarriage, neo-natal death, and other post-birth infant deaths. The campaign also serves as a tribute to the uniqueness of each death and offers support to affected families through various resources.


October 31 – Halloween

The tradition of Halloween originated with the Celtic festival of Samhain when folks would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts & spirits, which could visit the living world that one night. Today, on Halloween night children go out trick-or-treating on carved pumpkin lined streets and often there are themed parties for adults to attend.



NOVEMBER 2023



 **November:** An annual event that encourages men to “get growing” (grow their moustaches) during the month of November in order to raise awareness and funds for three specific men’s health issues – prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and suicide. Movember is now recognized across the globe and has a participant base from over 20 countries worldwide.

November 2 – Día de los Muertos

Also known as “Day of the Dead” or “El Día de Todos los Santos”, it is commemorated across Latin America and Spain with skulls, skeletons, and graveside visits. It’s a holiday where families welcome back the souls of their deceased relatives for a brief reunion that includes food, drink, and celebration.

November 14 – World Diabetes Day

WDD is the world’s largest diabetes awareness campaign that was first introduced in 1991 to raise awareness about diabetes, its causes, its preventions, and the effects it has on lives across the globe as well as on the healthcare system.

November 11 – Remembrance Day

A day that honours the courage, valour, and sacrifice of the men & women who have served and continue to serve Canada during times of war and conflict. Canadians pay tribute by wearing a poppy and observing a moment of silence at 11:00am on this day.

November 23 – Thanksgiving (US)

Thanksgiving Day was originally a way to give thanks for a successful year and harvest. Nowadays, it’s celebrated by gathering with loved ones and preparing a meal which usually includes turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and many other dishes.

November 12 – Diwali

This “Indian Festival of Lights” is a major holiday celebrating new beginnings, the victory of good over evil, and lightness over darkness. A few common themes of celebration include the lighting of candles & lamps and the gathering of families for feasts of sweets and other special traditional food.

November 25 – 16 Days of Activism Against Gender- Based Violence

In 1991, this international campaign was initiated to challenge the violence faced by women and girls and promote gender equality & non-violence. This campaign runs from November 25th (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10th (Human Rights Day).

DECEMBER 2023

December 7 – Hanukkah (until December 15)

This eight-day Jewish celebration (also called the Festival of Lights) commemorates the rededication of the temple as described in the books of the Maccabees. The holiday is celebrated with the lighting of the menorah – one candle per day, feasting on traditional foods, and gifting.

December 10 – Human Rights Day

Celebrated each year on the day that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This Declaration proclaims that each person is entitled to fundamental rights as human beings regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, and language among others.

December 21 – Winter Solstice

Occurs when one of the Earth's poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun and for our hemisphere, the winter solstice is the day with the shortest period of daylight and longest night of the year. This day represents the first official day of the winter season in the Northern Hemisphere.

December 24 – Christmas Eve

The day before Christmas is widely recognized as the day of last-minute shopping after working a half-day and preparing for the festivities of Christmas Day. A lot of people gather with family & friends to share a meal and in some Catholic families, exchange gifts after midnight mass.

December 25 – Christmas

The day Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, Christmas Day's customs include gathering around decorated Christmas trees, carolling, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive with gifts!

December 26 – Boxing Day

The day after Christmas is an officially recognized holiday in the UK, Australia, and of course Canada to name a few countries. To some extent, Boxing Day is considered a shopping holiday, with stores offering reduced prices for Boxing Day sales. The term "Boxing Day" was first recorded in 1833, but the official origin of the name has never been determined.

December 26 – Kwanzaa (until January 1)

An African-American celebration of life with customs including storytelling, sharing traditional meals, and song & dance. On each of the seven nights, one candle is lit and one of the seven principles is discussed per night. The seven principles are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.