

Calendar of Religious Festivals 2009

JANUARY

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| 1 | Mary, Mother of God (New Year 2009 AD) | CATHOLIC |
| 6 | Epiphany | CHRISTIAN |

FEBRUARY

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| 15 | Parinirvana
The solemn observance of the death of the Buddha's earthly form and his entrance into nirvana. | BUDDHIST |
| 23 | Maha Shivaratri
Great Shiva Night. a festival honouring the marriage of Lord Shiva to Goddess Parvati. | HINDU |
| 25 | Ash Wednesday
Orthodox Christians begin Lent on the 2 th March – Clean Monday. | CHRISTIAN |

MARCH

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| 9 | Mawlid an-Nabi (Birth of the Prophet Mohamed, 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal) | MUSLIM |
| 10-11 | Purim
A festival commemorating the events recounted in the Book of Esther - how the Jews of the Persian Empire were saved from the designs of the villainous Haman. | JEWISH |
| 11 | Holi
A joyous spring festival including pilgrimage to holy places to offer penance for misdeeds, and to make or renew vows. | HINDU |
| 21 | Naw-Rúz: New Year 166 BE | BAHÁ'Í |

APRIL

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| 3-11 | Ramayan Week & Rama Navami
A 9 day period during which the Ramayana, a Hindu epic, is read. It ends with Rama Navami, a festival celebrating the birth of Lord Rama. | HINDU |
| 5 -10 | Holy Week (Inclusive of Palm Sunday and Good Friday) | CHRISTIAN |
| 7 | St. John Baptist de La Salle
Patron of Teachers. | CATHOLIC |
| 8 | Hanamatsuri
The flower festival celebrating the birth of the Buddha. | BUDDHIST |
| 9-16 | Pesach (Passover)
Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorating the deliverance of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. | JEWISH |
| 12 | Easter Sunday
Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter on the 19 th April. | CHRISTIAN |
| 21 | 1 Ridván
The first day of a twelve day period commemorating the last days of Bahá'u'lláh prior to his exile. It was during this time that Bahá'u'lláh made his first public declaration of his mission. | BAHÁ'Í |

MAY

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| 9 | Vesak
The full-moon feast in May, celebrated by Theravada Buddhists to commemorate the birth, the enlightenment, and the death of the Buddha. These three events are celebrated separately by Mahayana Buddhists in April, December and February. | BUDDHIST |
| 21 | Ascension of Jesus | CHRISTIAN |
| 22-30 | Novena of Prayer for Christian Unity
Other churches within the ecumenical movement have a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity between 18-25 January, i.e. between the Feast of the Chair of Peter and Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. | CATHOLIC |
| 29-30 | Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)
The occasion on which Moses received the Torah from God on Mount Sinai. | JEWISH |
| 31 | Pentecost | CHRISTIAN |

JUNE

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| 7 | Trinity Sunday | CHRISTIAN |
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JULY

AUGUST

6	Transfiguration	CHRISTIAN
8-14	Gita Week The Bhagavad Gita is read over this period leading up to, and including, Krishna Janmashtami.	HINDU
14	Krishna Janmashtami A festival celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna.	HINDU
15	Assumption of Mary The feast is, in South Africa, moved to the following Sunday (16 August).	CATHOLIC
22	Ramadan The first day of the month of fasting.	MUSLIM

SEPTEMBER

16	Lailatul Qadr (26 Ramadan) The Night of Power on which the Qur'an descended from heaven. It marks the beginning of the Prophet Muhammad's ministry.	MUSLIM
19-20	Rosh Hashanah (New Year 5770) Literally 'the head of the year'. Commemorates God's creation of the world.	JEWISH
19-27	Navaratri The festival of 'nine nights' honouring the mother goddess, Durga, wife of Shiva, and seeking her blessings.	HINDU
20	Eid-ul-Fitr (1 Shawwaal) The end of Ramadan, and the breaking of the fast.	MUSLIM
28	Yom Kippur The Day of Atonement, considered the holiest day of the year.	JEWISH

OCTOBER

3-9	Sukkot The Feast of Tabernacles commemorating the 40 years in the desert when the Israelites lived in shelters.	JEWISH
11	Simchat Torah 'Rejoicing over the Torah' - the completion (of Deuteronomy) and beginning (of Genesis) of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah.	JEWISH
17	Diwali (Deepavali) The Festival of Lights: Lakshmi, the Goddess of good fortune visits every house where a lamp is lit.	HINDU

NOVEMBER

1	All Saints' Day This is the traditional date, but it is celebrated in South Africa on the Sunday following the feast.	CATHOLIC
12	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh Founder of the Bahá'í faith in the nineteenth century.	BAHÁ'Í
27	Eid-ul-Adha (10-12 Zul Hijjah) The Festival of Sacrifice commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, at Allah's command and coincides with the end of the Hajj - the pilgrimage to Mecca. The sacrifice, made with either sheep, cow, or camel depending on the portions required, can be carried out on this or on one of the following two days.	MUSLIM
29	First Sunday of Advent	CHRISTIAN

DECEMBER

8	Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) The day on which Gautama Buddha meditated under the bodhi or banyan tree at the hour of dawn and was enlightened with supreme wisdom.	BUDDHIST
12-19	Hanukkah The Festival of Lights celebrating the victory of Judas Maccabeus and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 164 BC.	JEWISH
18	1431 Al Hijrah (New Year, 1 Muharram) Marks the arrival of the Prophet and followers at Medina (Al Hijra) and the establishment of the 1 st Muslim State.	MUSLIM
25	Christmas Orthodox Christians will celebrate Christmas on 7 January, 2010.	CHRISTIAN