

# 2019-2020 Holiday Calendar

This calendar of religious, national, and local holidays was prepared by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) as a planning tool for community institutions. The JCRC appreciates our local school districts' continued commitment to respecting and reasonably accommodating the religious observances of students, teachers, and staff, and especially in providing excused absence for individuals who must miss school or work in order to fulfill religious obligations. Please consult your school district's particular policies for further guidance, and feel free to contact the JCRC with any questions. Electronic copies of this calendar can be found at [www.jcouncil.org/HolidayCal](http://www.jcouncil.org/HolidayCal).

## September, 2019

### National Hispanic Heritage Month

**September 2, Labor Day:** National tribute to the contributions of workers. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

**September 29, Navaratri:** The first day of a 10 day Hindu festival celebrating the feminine form of the divine.

◆ **September 30-Oct 1, Rosh Ha'Shanah:** The Jewish New Year, 5779, ushers in a ten day period of reflection and reconciliation. Begins sunset September 29.

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## October, 2019

◆ **October 9, Yom Kippur:** The most solemn day on the Jewish calendar, this Day of Atonement is a time for Jews to repair their relationships with God and their fellow human beings. Begins sunset October 8.

**October 14, Columbus Day:** Remembers Columbus' arrival in the Americas. Legal holiday; some schools closed

◆ **October 14-15, Sukkot:** First two days of a week long festival commemorating the Israelites' 40 year period in the wilderness and the fall harvest. Many Jews today eat and sometimes sleep in temporary dwellings called sukkot in observance of the biblical ordinance. Begins sunset October 13.

◆ **October 21, Shmini Atzeret:** A biblically ordained gathering following and celebrating the end of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. Begins sunset October 20.

◆ **October 22, Simchat Torah:** Marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of reading the Hebrew Bible (or "Torah") and the start of a new cycle. Begins sunset October 21.

**October 27, Diwali:** A festival of lights observed by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains.

◆ **October 29, Birth of the Bab:** Commemorates the 1819 birth of the Bab, the herald of the Baha'i faith; work is suspended.

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## November, 2019

### Native American Heritage Month

**November 1, All Saints' Day:** A solemn Christian holiday honoring all the saints.

**November 10, The Prophet's Birthday:** Muslim holiday marking Muhammed's birthday

**November 11, Veterans Day:** A celebration of America's veterans. Legal holiday, some schools closed.

**November 12, Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Birthday:** Celebrates the birth of the first Sikh teacher in 1469 CE.

**November 24, Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur Sahib:** Martyrdom day of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib, ninth guru of the Sikhs.

**November 28, Thanksgiving Day:** A national day of gratitude. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

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## December, 2019

**December 1, First Sunday of Advent:**

Marked by church services of joyful anticipation, first of four Sundays before Christmas.

**December 23-30, Hanukkah:** Jewish celebration of the rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE. Begins sunset December 22.

**December 25, Christmas:** Christian holy day marking the birth of Jesus. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

**December 26, Kwanzaa:** Marks the beginning of a week long celebration emphasizing basic values of African culture, including family and community.

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## January, 2020

**January 1, New Years Day and Shinto New Year (Gantan-sai):** Celebrates secular and Shinto New Year. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

**January 6, Epiphany:** A Christian commemoration of the day the three wise men visited infant Jesus and Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

**January 7, Nativity of Christ/Feast of Nativity:** Orthodox Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**January 20, Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** A holiday devoted to national and community service, in memory of the African-American civil rights leader. Legal holiday; some schools closed.

**January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust:** Established by the UN in addition to the spring Holocaust Remembrance set by the Jewish calendar.

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## February, 2020

### Black History Month

**February 3, Setsubun:** Shinto celebration of the change of seasons.

**February 8, Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist New Year:** Year of the Rat.

**February 9, Magha Puja Day:** Celebrates a gathering of holy men to hear Buddha's teachings.

**February 10, Tu B'Shvat:** Jewish Arbor Day, New Year for trees. Begins sunset February 9.

**February 14, Valentine's Day:** Created to honor the martyred St. Valentine; evolved into a day to celebrate love and romance.

**February 17, Presidents Day:** A national holiday celebrating the birthdays of Washington and Lincoln. Legal holiday; some schools closed.

**February 26, Ash Wednesday:** First day of Lent on the Christian calendar. Name derives from symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence.

◆ **February 29-March 19, Nineteen Day Fast:** The last month of the Baha'i calendar is recognized with a 19 day fast.

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◆ Denotes a holiday on which there is a traditional obligation to refrain from many activities.

In addition, Jews may be fasting on the following minor holiday dates: Oct. 2, 2019 and Jan., 7, Mar. 9, Apr. 8, Jul 9, 2020.

All Jewish holidays begin shortly BEFORE SUNSET on the eve of the day indicated on this calendar and end approximately one hour after sunset. Baha'i and Islamic festivals are also observed sunset to sunset. Similarly, SHABBAT, the Jewish Sabbath, which commemorates the day God rested after the creation of the universe, begins shortly before sunset on Friday. On Shabbat, Jews have a traditional obligation to refrain from "creating," such as writing, driving, and using electricity. Many Jewish festivals have similar traditional restrictions.

# March, 2020

## Women's History Month

### Irish-American Heritage Month

**March 10, Holi Festival:** Holi is a Hindu festival celebrated in India and Nepal, also known as the "festival of colors" or the "festival of love".

**March 10, Purim:** The day the Jewish people were saved from a massacre in ancient Persia; traditionally celebrated with giving money to the poor, gifts to friends, and reading the book of Esther. Begins sunset March 9.

**March 17, St. Patrick's Day:** Feast day for the saint who brought Christianity to Ireland.

◆ **March 20, Naw Ruz/Norouz:** New Year on the Baha'i, Zoroastrian, and Persian calendars.

**March 22, Isra and Mi'raj:** Commemorates Muhammed's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem.

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# April, 2020

## Arab-American History Month

**April 5, Palm Sunday:** Commemorates Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and ushers in Holy Week.

◆ **April 6, Maharir Jayanti:** Celebrates the birth of the last Jain Tirthankara (or most holy), may fall on different days in different Jain traditions.

**April 8, Vesak/Visakha Puja:** Commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. Also known as "Buddha Day," may fall on different days in different Buddhist traditions.

**April 9, Maundy Thursday:** The day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist.

◆ **April 9-16, Passover:** An eight day celebration of the Jews' Exodus from Egypt. Many Jews adhere to strict dietary guidelines and refrain from work on the first two and last two days. Begins sunset April 8.

**April 10, Good Friday:** A solemn observance of the crucifixion of Jesus.

**April 12, Easter Sunday:** Christian holy day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus.

**April 13, Baisakhi:** Hindu/Sikh New Year for North India.

**April 19, Orthodox Easter Sunday:** Christian holy day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus.

◆ **April 20-May 1 Festival of Ridvan: Marks the 12 days Baha'i founder Baha'u'llah resided** in the garden "Ridvan" and declared his mission for God. Work is suspended on April 21, April 29 and May 2.

**April 21, Yom Ha'Shoah:** A day of Holocaust remembrance. Begins sunset April 20.

◆ **April 24-May 23, Ramadan:** A month long commemoration of Muhammed's divine revelation, observed with fasting during daylight hours. Begins sundown April 23.

**April 28, Yom Ha'Zikaron:** A memorial day for those who lost their lives fighting for Israel. Begins sunset April 27.

**April 29, Yom Ha'Atzmaut:** A celebration of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Begins sunset April 28.

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# May, 2020

## Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

### Jewish American Heritage Month

**May 5, Cinco de Mayo:** Celebrates the victory of Mexican forces over a much larger French army at the Battle of Puebla.

**May 10, Mother's Day:** A celebration of motherhood, maternal bonds and the influence of mothers in society.

**May 12, Lag B'Omer:** On this day, practices traditionally banned between Passover and Shavuot are permitted.

**May 19, Lailat al-Qadr:** Commemorates when the Qu'ran was revealed to Muhammed.

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**May 21, Ascension Day:** A Christian holiday marking Jesus' ascent to heaven 40 days after his Easter resurrection. In the U.S. it is often recognized on the Sunday following its Thursday date.

**May 22, Yom Yerushalayim:** Israeli commemoration of the 1967 reunification of Jerusalem. Begins sunset May 21.

◆ **May 23, Declaration of the Bab:** Commemorates the date in 1844 when the Bab announced his role as messenger of God. Work is suspended.

**May 24, Eid al Fitr:** A three day Islamic celebration marking the end of Ramadan.

**May 25, Memorial Day:** Day of remembrance for those who died in service to the United States. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

◆ **May 29-30, Shavuot:** Celebration of the spring harvest and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. Begins sunset May 28.

**May 31, Pentecost:** Christian holiday commemorating the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles 50 days after Easter.

# June, 2020

## LGBTQIA+ Pride Month

**June 14, Flag Day:** Celebrates adoption of the U.S. national flag.

**June 19, Juneteenth:** A celebration of African-American contributions and the end of slavery in the United States.

**June 21, Father's Day:** A celebration of fatherhood, paternal bonds and the influence of fathers in society.

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# July, 2020

**July 4, Independence Day:** Celebrates the adoption in 1776 of the United States' Declaration of Independence. Legal holiday; all schools closed.

◆ **July 9, Martyrdom of the Bab:** A Baha'i remembrance of the execution of Savvid Ali Muhammed in 1850; work is suspended.

**July 24, Pioneer Day:** Celebrates the arrival of the first Mormon pioneer settlers into the Salt Lake Valley.

◆ **July 30, Tisha B'Av:** A twenty-five hour Jewish fast day marking the date on which both the First and Second Temples were destroyed. Begins sunset July 29.

**July 31-August 2, Eid al-Adha:** A four day Muslim commemoration of Ibrahim's willingness to offer up his son as an act of obedience to Allah. Begins sunset July 30.

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# August, 2020

**August 13-15, Obon:** A three day Japanese Buddhist festival to honor deceased ancestors.

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### Two-Year Calendar of Major Jewish Holidays

	2020-2021	2021-2022
Rosh Hashanah	Sept. 19-20	Sept. 7-8
Yom Kippur	Sept. 28	Sept. 16
Sukkot	Oct. 3-9	Sept. 21-27
Shemini Atzeret	Oct. 10	Sept. 28
Simchat Torah	Oct. 11	Sept. 29
Passover	Mar. 28-29	Apr. 16-17
Passover (final days)	Apr. 3-4	Apr. 22-23
Shavuot	May. 17-18	Jun. 5-6

For a more extensive list of other religious holidays, please consult [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/commemorations.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/commemorations.html) or [www.fcps.edu/events](http://www.fcps.edu/events).

