



A We Care Cultural Awareness Glossary & Cultural Awareness Calendar 2023

Who we are and what makes us who are is important.

We want to celebrate our People and the cultural diversity that makes us a community trust.

The following pages will detail the variety of religions, faiths and beliefs recognised within our community and a comprehensive list of the festivals and celebrations acknowledged.

We hope that this Cultural Awareness Glossary supports in developing a better understanding and growing relationships with the People that make up the NCH&C community.

As the community grows this document will evolve. The information held within has been sourced with reference to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in relation specifically to Norfolk.

To support with the development and evolution of this document, please send additions to: staffdiversityforum@nchc.nhs.uk

* Due to the acknowledgement of the lunar cycles, this document will be updated annually.

BUDDHISM

“Impermanent are all created things. Strive on with awareness.” (Said to be the Buddha’s last words)

The Buddhist faith stems from the teachings of the Buddha, Mahatma Gautam Shakyamuni. Buddha, who lived around 500 BCE in India, and is revered, not as a god but as an example to us as a way of life.

Followers seek to emulate his example of perfect morality, wisdom and compassion culminating in a transformation of consciousness known as enlightenment. The Buddhist way of life involves morality and generosity, the keeping of special festivals, pilgrimage to Buddhist sacred places and social responsibility.

Buddhism is not dogmatic but through its long history has developed into many schools.

Main Festivals

Vesak/Wesak	Full moon, celebrates the enlightenment of Buddha.
Obon/Parinirvana	Celebrates the passing of Buddha.
Buddhist New Year	Varies from country to country follow the lunar cycle



Aum (Om) Symbol
Om, also written as Aum, is a mystical and sacred syllable that originated from Hinduism, but is now common to Buddhism and other religions. In Hinduism, Om is the first sound of creation and symbolizes the three stages of existence: birth, life, and death.

The dharma wheel is one of the oldest and most important symbols in Buddhism. It symbolizes the teachings of the Buddha and explains the process of death and rebirth with the eventual release from this endless cycle. The Buddha is said to have set the dharma wheel in motion when he gave his first teaching on the Four Noble Truths in a deer park near Sarnath to five aesthetes. In Buddhist art, the deer flanking the dharma wheel signify the deer in the park listening to the Buddha teaching. This shows the Buddha's compassion for animals as well as for humans.

Buddhists regard the wheel's three basic parts as symbols of the three kinds of training in Buddhist practice. The hub symbolizes moral discipline to stabilize the mind. The spokes denote the application of wisdom to defeat ignorance. The rim represents concentration, which holds the practice together.

A wheel with four spokes stands for the Four Noble Truths. Eight spokes signify the Eightfold Path. Ten spokes represent ten directions, and twelve spokes signify the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination. Twenty-four spokes signify the twelve links and their reversal--freedom from samsara, the cycle of death and rebirth.



Right view
(know the truth)

Right mindfulness
(control your thoughts)

Right intentions
(free your mind of evil)

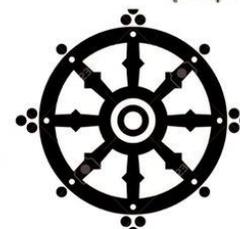
Right concentration
(practice meditation)

Right speech
(say nothing that hurts others)

Right effort
(resist evil)

Right action
(work for the good of others)

Right livelihood
(respect life)



CHRISTIANITY

“I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another.”
(Jesus to his disciples)

Christianity was founded just over 2,000 years ago in the area of modern-day Israel and Palestine. It is based on the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, also known as Christ (the Anointed One). Christianity is a world-wide religion followed by people of many different cultures.

There are many different Christian churches with differing structures, beliefs and rituals, but Christians hold the majority of the same beliefs in common, and the concept of one God who reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is central to all Christian teaching.

Christianity is still the main religion of Britain. The central belief of Christianity is that the nature and purpose of God has been revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. He was crucified, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The Christian holy book is called the Bible, made up of the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament. Key Christian rituals are baptism and Holy Communion (a simple meal of bread and wine). Most Christians are baptised as babies or when they are old enough to profess their own faith in Jesus Christ.

All Christian churches uphold the sanctity of life, and believe every effort should be made to save life.

Main Festivals

Christmas **25 December**

Easter **March/April**

Pentecost **May/June**



The main symbol of Christianity is **the cross**; a symbol of the crucifixion of Jesus and his passion.



The fish is a very old symbol. In the Greek language the first letters of the words "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour" spell "ichthus", which means fish. Today, Christians may wear a fish badge, or put it on their car.



A dove was seen at Jesus' baptism. It is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who Christians believe lives with them and helps them.

HINDUISM

“Who sees all beings in his own Self, and his own Self in all beings, loses all fear”, (from the Hindu Scripture, Isa Upanishad)

Hinduism is not a religion with formal structure; it is the result of 5,000 years continuous cultural development. It includes a number of extremely diverse traditional and cultural beliefs and practices.

Hindus believe in the theory of re-birth and the principle of action i.e. one has to face the consequences of actions in past lives.

Married women may wear markings in their forehead and also wear a nuptial thread/necklace and male adults a ‘sacred thread’.

Main Festivals

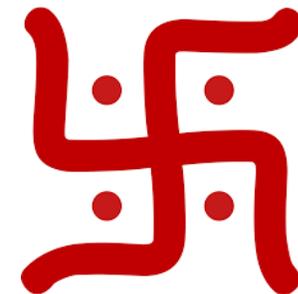
Navaratri **Also called Navratri Durga Puja; usually takes place in October. This festival is in honour of the mother goddess. It consists of nine nights of dancing and commemorates Rama’s victory over Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka who had kidnapped Sita.**

Diwali or Deepavali **An Autumn, usually November, festival, which remembers Rama’s victorious return to his kingdom when his path was lit by thousands of lights. It is the beginning of the financial year so special praise is offered to Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. This is the most popular and widely celebrated Hindu Festival.**

There are two primary symbols associated with Hinduism, the om and the swastika.



The om symbol is composed of three Sanskrit letters and represents three sounds (a, u and m), which when combined are considered a sacred sound. The om symbol is often found at family shrines and in Hindu temples.



The word swastika means "good fortune" or "being happy" in Sanskrit, and the symbol represents good luck. (A diagonal version of the swastika later became associated with Germany's Nazi Party when they made it their symbol in 1920.)

The 12 Principle Deities of Hinduism



Four Main Deities

The Trimurti and Shakti comprise the four main deities. All other deities fall in one of four corresponding categories:

- 1.as a form of Vishnu
- 2.as a form of Shiva
- 3.as a goddess, Shakti
- 4.as a powerful soul, who has taken on a very elevated body, such as that of Brahma.

Divine Couples

Two of the three main focuses of worship, namely Shiva and Shakti, are husband and wife. They are shown here as Shiva and Parvati, together with Ganesh, one of their two sons. Similarly, the other two members of the *trimurti* have their consorts. There are thus three main goddesses, the respective partners of the *trimurti*, as shown below:

- Vishnu + Lakshmi
- Shiva + Shakti
- Brahma + Sarasvati

ISLAM

“Praise be to Allah, the lord of all the worlds! The compassionate, merciful! Guide Thou us on the straight path.” (Sura 1 of the Qur’an’)

Islam is an Arabic word and connotes submission to the will of God. The other literal meaning of Islam is “Peace”. Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

Muslims believe there is no other God except Allah. Mohammed (peace be upon him) is the prophet sent by God for all humanity. Therefore, whoever honestly believes in and professes the Unity of God and the Prophethood of Mohammed joins the fold of Islam and is a Muslim.

The holy book Qur’an is the revered book of Allah. Islam is based on 5 fundamental principles, which should be completely practiced by every Muslim:

- To acknowledge that there is no God except Allah and that Mohammed is his messenger.
- The mandatory 5 daily prayers (facing Mecca).
- Fasting in the month of Ramadan.
- Giving Alms to the poor.
- Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime if one can afford it.

Main Festivals

Eid-UI-Fitr **Festival of Fast breaking occurs in the month of ‘Shawwal’ after Ramadan. The end of Ramadan is welcomed with much joy and celebration.**

Eid-UI-Adha **Festival of sacrifice on the tenth day of the twelfth month. Most Muslims make their pilgrimage to Mecca during this festival as part of Hajj.**

Other important events

Ramadan **Ramadan is a holy month, when practicing Muslims fast in the ninth lunar month.**

Muharram **The beginning of the Islamic year.**

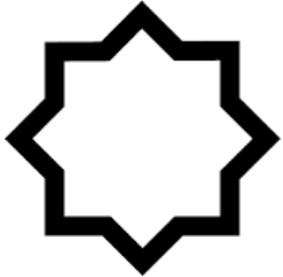


The Star and Crescent is commonly used to represent Islam, Muslims, and Islamic countries.

Symbols of Islam



The Rub El Hizb was used by Muslims of yesteryear for the recitation and memorization of the Quran. The symbol represents **every quarter of a Hizb, which is a section in the holy Quran**. This symbol also marks the end of a chapter in Arabic calligraphy.



Khatim is also known as the seal of the Prophet and holds immense significance in Islam. It is a title used in the Quran in reference to Prophet Muhammad.



The Shahada (shahadah) is the **Arabic term for the declaration of faith in one God (Allah) and His messenger**.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

Jehovah's Witnesses were founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1872. They believe in Almighty God, Creator of the heavens and earth, and accept Jesus as the Son of God, but not as being equal or one with God. They do not, however, use the symbol of the cross because they believe it to be of pagan origin.

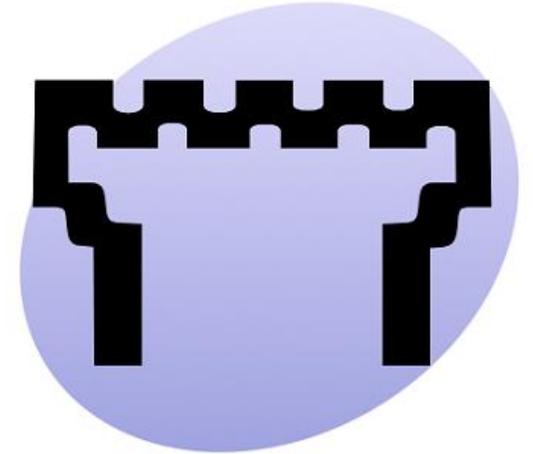
They await the end of the present world system, which they believe will begin with the battle of Armageddon, Jehovah and his true witnesses will be the only survivors. After Armageddon there will be 1000 years of peace and life under favourable conditions.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe it is important to share their faith and are well known for calling on people in their homes, and for their magazine *The Watchtower*.

Jehovah's Witnesses don't celebrate holidays. The taboo surrounding the celebration of holidays can be traced back to how many they believe are derived from pagan or non-religious contexts and the belief that holidays such as Christmas and Easter were created to capitalise on the public's faith in a higher power.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Lent, or Easter. Nor do they celebrate national holidays. In fact, **they have only one holy day, the Memorial of the Lord's Supper or, as they call it, the Lord's Evening Meal**, which they celebrate on *14 Nisan of the Jewish calendar.

*14 Nisan – **Fast of the Firstborn** - When the 14th falls on the Sabbath the day before the Passover meal, sometime after noon but before sunset.



Jehovah's Witnesses do have a symbol identifying their faith, just not one that is worshiped or made into part of religious practices. This symbol is the watchtower, which is the name given to one of their publications and is a small emblem on their literature

JUDAISM

“Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might” (The ‘Shema’ recited by Jews twice daily)

Judaism has been in existence for five and a half thousand years. It is based on the belief in one universal God seen by Jews in a purely personal relationship. They also believe that God is omniscient, and will reward the righteous and punish the wicked at the end of time when there will be a resurrection of all the dead.

The love of God and the wish to carry out the Ten Commandments as given to Moses on Mount Sinai is embodied in the teaching of the Pentateuch (Torah), the first five books of the Old Testament, a portion of which is read out on the Sabbath in synagogues throughout the country. Jews are required to live in accordance with 615 commandments covering all aspects of life. They do not believe non-Jews are required to live by the same rules.

The Jewish Sabbath begins before nightfall on Friday afternoon and ends with the first sighting of three stars on Saturday night. It is a day of rest, and begins and ends with ceremonies in the home.

Jewish religion and culture are inextricably mixed. After many centuries of dispersal from their land of origin, Israel, Jews have adopted food habits, habits of dress and modes of behaviour of their host countries. It is also customary for Orthodox Jews to wear a small cap called a Kippah.

The family is of great importance to Jewish life. In Britain today there is a wide spectrum of observances amongst Jews from *reform* and *liberal* to *ultra-orthodox*.

Main Festivals

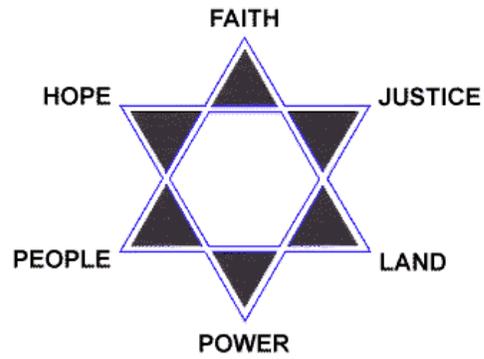
The Jewish year is both lunar and solar, in a 19 year cycle, so timings vary. Each month is the equivalent of 29 or 30 days and a year is 354 days. The Jewish day goes from evening to evening.

Shabbat or Sabbath	Shabbat is the main celebration of each week in a Jewish home. It is a celebration of the Sabbath and the most important festival apart from Yom Kippur.
Day of Atonement	‘Yom Kippur’ a day of repentance, with a fast lasting over 25 hrs. Most of the day is spent in prayer.
Rosh Hashana	Jewish New Year commemorates the creation of the world. New Year traditions in Jewish homes include eating a slice of apple dipped in honey to symbolize a ‘sweet’ new year.

Other Festivals

Purim	Celebrating the story of Esther. This is read in Synagogue accompanied by rowdy cheering and booing. Children act in plays and wear fancy dress.
Pesach – Passover	The Festival of Unleavened Bread, commemorating the liberation of Jews from slavery in Egypt.





The star was almost universally adopted by Jews in the 19th-century as a striking and simple emblem of Judaism in imitation of the cross of Christianity. The yellow badge that Jews were forced to wear in Nazi-occupied Europe invested the Star of David with a symbolism indicating **martyrdom and heroism**.



No.1 Star of David



No.2 Menorah



No.3 Shofar



No.4 Dreidel



No.5 Hamsa



No.6 Four Species



No.7 Chai



No.8 Shin



No.9 Torah



No.10 Mazel Tov



No.11 Bat Mitzvah



No.12 Bar Mitzvah

SIKHISM

“There exists but one God, who is called the True, the Creator, free from fear and hate, immortal, not begotten, self existent great and compassionate.”

(from Guru Nanak’s hymn, recited each morning by Sikhs)

Sikhs believe in one God, and in many cycles of rebirth. They respect equality of all people, regardless of caste, colour, creed or sex. The birthplace of Sikhism was in Punjab, India.

Sikhs believe that God is the only reality and that spiritual release can be obtained by taming the ego through devotional singing, recitation of the divine name, meditation and service. Prayers are read five times daily. Sikhs do not smoke and adultery is forbidden.

To indicate equality all men are given the name Singh (which means lion) and all women receive the name Kaur (Princess).

Sikhs wear five articles of faith:

- **Kesh** – long hair which is kept under a turban.
- **Kangha** – small comb, which is worn in the hair at all times.
- **Kachha** – special shorts – underwear.
- **Kara** – a steel bracelet or ring worn on the right wrist.
- **Kirpaan** – a short sword worn symbolically by baptised Sikhs.

Main Festivals

Baisakhi **The most important festival. It is usually celebrated on the 13th April. It commemorates the day that the Kalsa came into being.**

Diwali **Sikhs celebrate Diwali by lighting candles and exchanging sweets and presents.**

Birthday of Guru Nanak This is celebrated by an “Akhand Path” a complete reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy Book). This is started in the gurdwara two days before the festival and will finish on the morning of the birthday. Sikhs try to attend the gurdwara as often as possible during the reading.



The symbol or emblem of Sikhism is known as the Khanda. It is made up of: The Khanda - a double edged sword. This **represents the belief in one God.**

The circle in the middle is called the Chakkar and represents the eternal love and nature of God.

The middle sword is called a Khanda and is doubled edged. This unites the two other swords and reminds Sikhs that there is one God.

The left hand sword is called Miri and reminds Sikhs that they must fight for what is right in the world.

The right hand sword is called Piri and represents spirituality.



THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

“The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”

(Baha’ullah on the unity of humankind)

The Baha’i faith began in Persia in the middle of the 19th Century. It is based on the teachings of Baha’ullah (1817-1892). He stated that the time had come for the people of the world to put aside their differences and to unite on the basis of the teachings that he had brought.

Baha’is believe in one God who reveals His purpose progressively throughout human history. Baha’ullah taught that humankind must follow the principle of the ‘oneness of mankind’. This recognizes that while people are diverse in their aims, aspirations and cultures, it is imperative that they work co-operatively in a spirit of ‘unity’.

Baha’is have no clergy, instead its affairs are in the hands of elected administrative bodies known as ‘Spiritual Assemblies’; at present there are 200 in the United Kingdom.

They are required to say an obligatory prayer each day, to read from the Holy Scriptures of the faith each morning and evening; during illness they are exempt from obligatory prayer.

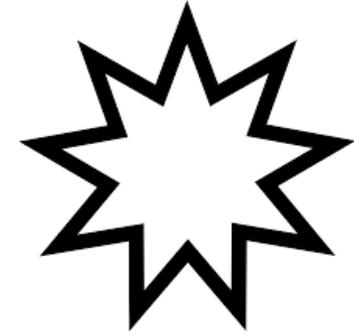
Baha’is have a great respect for life. Each person has a soul that comes into being at conception. During a person’s lifetime, the soul acquires the spiritual attributes required for the next stage of existence, which occurs after death.

Baha’is are found in all continents and they come from many nationalities and cultures.

Main Festivals

NAWRUZ

New Year, celebrated on 21st March each year



The nine pointed star is also called a **Nonagram, Enneagram, or Star of Goliath.**

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS(MORMONS)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) was founded in America in the early 19th century by Joseph Smith. The Bible and Book of Mormon are essential scriptures for Latter-Day Saints. The Church believes in God as Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Members believe in pre-existence: a spirit-life before birth that a person has no memory of. They view life on earth as a period in which to become worthy to return to live in the presence of God and Jesus Christ.

Family unity is of central importance, epitomized by a 'sealing' ceremony at a Temple, when man and wife are sealed together for eternity. Children may be sealed to their parents. Family members, already dead, who were not members of the Church, may be baptized into the faith and sealed to their families. The Church encourages reverence and care for the body, and so counsels against immoral practices and the use of illegal drugs.

The sacrament of bread and water (Latter-Day Saints abstain from alcohol) equates to the Eucharist of other Christians, and is performed each Sunday.

Festivals.

Mormons really only celebrate two religious festivals: Easter and Christmas. An additional festival is Pioneer Day, on 24 July. This celebrates the arrival of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847



Because of his instrumentality in the restoration of the gospel, Moroni is commonly identified by Latter Day Saints as the angel mentioned in Revelation 14:6, "**having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.**"

PAGANISM

Paganism has its roots in the pre-Christian religions of Europe, and has re-emerged in the 20th Century. The social infrastructure of Paganism consists of a network of inter-related traditions and local groups served by larger organizations, and include practices or elements such as ecology, witchcraft, Celtic traditions, Wiccans, Druids, Shamans, Sacred Ecologists, Odinists and Heathens. In the UK, the Pagan Federation acts as an educational and representative body.

Pagans understand deity to be manifested within nature, and taking the forms of gods and goddesses. Pagans believe that nature is sacred and that the natural cycles of birth, growth and death observed in the world around us carry profound spiritual meanings. Human beings are seen as part of nature, along with other animals, trees, stones, plants and everything that is of this earth. Most pagans believe in some form of reincarnation, viewing death as a transition within a continuing path of existence.

Most pagans worship the pre-Christian gods and goddesses through seasonal festivals and ceremonies. Observance of these festivals is very important to pagans. As there are many diverse traditions within paganism, the patient should be able to state if they have any special requirements.

Main Festivals

Yule	Mid-winter, usually December.
Imbolc	1st February
Ostara	Vernal Equinox
Beltane	1st May
Litha	Mid-summer, usually June.
Lammas	1st September
Mabon	Autumnal Equinox
Samhain	1st November



In Paganism, the pentagram is used by Wiccans and other Witchcraft religions. Lots of people see the five points of the pentagram as representing Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit.

RASTAFARIANISM

Rastafarians are followers of a growing movement, which began in the 1930's in the West Indies, mainly in Jamaica and Dominica, among the descendants of slave families who had come from Africa.

Identification with Africa, especially Ethiopia, is central to the Rastafarian doctrine and the movement is linked to the roots of resistance to slavery. "The Back To Africa" movement led by Marcus Garvey raised black consciousness and self respect and has inspired faith.

The accession of Ras (Prince) Tafari as the Emperor of Ethiopia (Haile Selassie 1) in 1930 is central to Rastafarian belief. He is considered to be a divine being, an incarnation of God as the second coming of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, the Messiah of the human race who will ultimately lead all black people to freedom. Various groups have contributed to the Rastafarian Movement, which has in many ways rejected both Jamaican-European culture and the Christian Revivalist Religion predominant in Jamaica, and as a result it is a distinct entity.

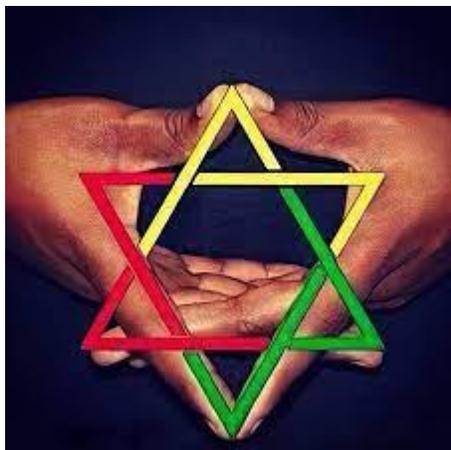
The old and new testaments are still regarded as scriptures, although they have been corrupted by Western civilisation, which they refer to as Babylon. For them Christ's spirit has been reborn in Ras Tafari, the New Messiah. They believe they are the true Jews, descended from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who will eventually be redeemed by repatriation to Ethiopia, their true home and heaven on earth. A personal religion, there are no church buildings, set services or official clergy. All members have an equal status and have a deep love of God.

Main Religious Festivals

Ethiopian Christmas	7th January
Groundation Day	21st April
Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie	23rd July
The coronation of Haile Selassie	2nd November



An important symbol of Rastafarianism is the **lion of Judah**, a mark appearing in references throughout the bible, Jewish and Christian traditions, and ancient history. The lion is featured in profile with one foot raised and sometimes carrying a banner or wearing a crown. The lion of Judah was a symbol of the Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie. It originates from the story that the Queen of Sheba came to Judah to meet King Solomon and made a child together who returned to Sheba and later became significant in the ruling dynasty.



The Rastafari “Diamond” Hand Gesture

This symbol is closely related to the Rasta Star of David and is derived from a **popular hand gesture** that Haile Selassie I used to do. Also known as the **Seal of Solomon** or the Diamond hand gesture, it’s said that Haile made this gesture to indicate that he is in fact a manifestation of the Divinity. Today, many Rastafarians use this gesture while praying while others believe that it should only be used by Haile Selassie and not other people.



Rastafari Flag: Features the colors of the Ethiopian flag and the Lion of Judah.

Star of David: Symbolizes the belief that Rastafarians are descendants of the Hebrew.



Marijuana/Ganja: Believed to help believers get closer to Jah.

Dreadlocks: Considered a sacred hairstyle, as well as a form of rebellion against Western standards.



Reggae: A form of music whereby the Rastafarian tenets have been spread.

Jah Rastafari: The name of God in Rastafarian religion.



January 2023

6th – Feast of the Epiphany: On this feast day, Christians celebrate the first manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles. It always falls 12 days after Christmas to mark when the three kings arrived in Bethlehem. Thus it's celebrated on January 6

7th – Coptic Orthodox Christmas: Using the Julian calendar, Orthodox Christians celebrate Jesus' birth

14th – Orthodox New Year: this date marks the start of the Julian calendar

15th – World Religion Day: this date is celebrated in the Baha'i faith and highlights the common themes across various faiths and religions worldwide.

20th – Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday: Guru Gobind Singh is the tenth Sikh Guru and spiritual master. This date commemorates the day he was born.

February 2023

1st – Imbolc: This Pagan and Wiccan festival serves as the halfway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox, celebrating fire, light, and the return of life.

2nd – Candlemas: This celebration occurs 40 days after Christmas and celebrates the birth of light. On this day, all candles that the church will use in the coming year are blessed.

5th – Tu Bishvat: In Judaism, this holiday is an ancient and authentic “Earth Day.”

15th – Parinirvana: In Mahāyāna Buddhism, this date is also known as Nirvana Day. It commemorates Buddha’s death and attainment of final nirvana.

18th – Lailat al Miraj: This Muslim holy day celebrates Muhammad’s pilgrimage from Mecca to Jerusalem. When Muhammad arrived, he ascended into Heaven.

22nd – Ash Wednesday: The start of Lent in the Christian Church. Lent is the 40-day period of prayer and fasting before Easter.

24th – Festival of Ayyam-i-Ha: This multi-day Baha’i festival highlights charity, hospitality, gift-giving, and preparation of fasting before the New Year.

March 2023

6th to 7th – Purim: Also known as the “Feast of Lots,” this festival celebrates the survival of Jews who were marked for death by Persian rulers.

8th – Holi: This Hindu Festival celebrates spring, love, and new life.

8th to 10th – Hola Mohalla: This is a 3-day festival in which Sikhs enjoy communal meals, religious song and prayer, and martial arts performances.

19th – St Joseph’s Feast Day: This day celebrates Jesus’ surrogate father and Mary’s husband.

21st – Ostara: This Wiccan holiday is one of their eight Sabbats. It celebrates the spring equinox.

21st – Naw Ruz: This day marks the Persian and Baha’i New Year, which also occurs on the vernal equinox.

22nd to 31st – Navaratri: A festival in the Hindu faith that celebrates the Goddess Durga.

March 22nd to April 21st – Ramadan: During this time, Muslims observe a holy month of fasting.

25th – The Annunciation: On this day, Christians believe the Angel Gabriel announced that Mary would give birth to Jesus.

April 2023

4th – Mahavir Jayanti: This holiday celebrates the birthday of Jainism founder Lord Mahavira.

5th to 13th – Passover: This holiday spans 7-days and commemorates the Israelites being freed from slavery in Egypt.

9th – Easter: Easter is the most important holiday in Christianity. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ — Lord and Saviour of Christians.

14th – Vaisakhi: This ancient festival celebrates both the Solar New Year and springtime harvest.

16th – Feast of the Divine Mercy: This day, celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter, is based on the private revelations of St. Faustina Kowalska. St. John Paul II declared that it would be celebrated when he canonized her in 2000.

21st to 22nd* – Eid al-Fitr: The holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. To end the fast, a big meal is its primary event.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

May 2023

1st – Beltane: A festival honouring life in the Pagan and Wiccan religions. It represents the peak of Spring and the beginning of Summer.

5th – Buddha's Birthday: A celebration of the Buddha's birthday, and for some Buddhists, a day that also marks his enlightenment.

5th* – Vesak: A Theravada Buddhist festival that observes the birth, death, and enlightenment of the Buddha.

18th – Ascension Day: This day is 40 days following Easter when Christians believe that Jesus ascended to Heaven.

22nd – Declaration of the Bab: A significant day in the Baha'i faith that observes the Bab as the messenger of God.

23rd – Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib: A day observed by Sikhs to celebrate the first martyr in their faith.

25th to 27th – Shavuot: This holiday celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and a grain harvest.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

June 2023

4th – Trinity Sunday: A Sunday that centres on the doctrine in the Christian church that God is three in one — the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

8th – Feast of Corpus Christi: A Roman Catholic feast day marking the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

11th – Race Unity Day: A holiday in the Baha'i faith that promotes racial harmony and understanding.

16th – Feast of the Sacred Heart: A Roman Catholic feast day commemorating Jesus' heart and his love for all of humanity.

18th to 29th – Eid al-Adha: A holiday in the Islamic faith that ends the Hajj pilgrimage.

24th – Litha: A Pagan and Wiccan festival that starts on the summer solstice and celebrates midsummer.

June 26th to July 1st – The Hajj: The annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca that's required for all Muslims during their lifetime.

July 2023

9th – Martyrdom of the Bab: A day remembering the execution of one of the founders of the Baha'i faith.

26th to 27th – Tisha B'Av: A holiday in the Jewish faith that commemorates the destruction of the Jewish temple that occurred once in 586 BCE and once in 70 CE in Jerusalem.

23rd – Haile Selassie's Birthday: The birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie, which is celebrated in Rastafarianism.

24th – Pioneer Day: A holiday celebrated in the state of Utah that marks the settling of LDS pioneers in the Great Salt Lake area.

August 2023

1st – Lughnasadh: This Pagan and Wiccan festival designates the start of the harvest season.

15th – Feast of the Assumption: This is a holy day in the Catholic faith when Mary, the mother of Jesus, was assumed (body and soul) into Heaven.

8th to 29th* – Hirjiri: This holiday begins the Islamic lunar calendar. You may also hear it called Islamic New Year. It begins when the crescent moon is spotted.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

September 2023

5th to 6th – Arbaeen: The day marking the end of the 40-day mourning period after the Day of Ashura for Muslims.

11th – Coptic New Year: A feast day (also called Nayrouz) that commemorates martyrs and confessors in Coptic Orthodox Christianity.

21st to 29th – Mabon: Pagan and Wiccan religions use this day to mark the autumnal equinox.

15th to 17th – Rosh Hashanah: The two-day Jewish New Year that highlights rest and reflection.

24th to 25th – Yom Kippur: This is the holiest day of the year in the Jewish faith. The central themes of Yom Kippur are atonement and repentance.

27th * – Mawlid: The celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in the Islamic faith.

September 29th* to October 6th – Sukkot: A day commemorating when Jews journeyed to the desert on the way to the promised land.

September 29th to October 14th – Pitru Paksha: A period when members of the Hindu faith pay homage to their ancestors.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

October 2023

16th* – **Birth of the Bab:** A day honouring the birthday of a co-founder of the Baha'i faith.

17th – **Birth of Baha'u'llah:** One of the nine holy days in the Baha'i faith that honours the birthday of one of the co-founders.

24th – **Dussehra:** The final day of a 10-day Hindu festival that honours Asuj Navratras.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

November 2023

1^{st*} – Samhain: A Pagan and Wiccan festival marking the end of the harvest season.

1st – All Saints Day: A day to honour all holy men and women who have been canonized in the Catholic Church.

2nd – Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie: The day when Haile Selassie ascended the Ethiopian throne. This is one of the holiest days in the Rastafarian year.

12th – Diwali: A 5-day festival celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains. It honors gods, goddesses, harvests, New Years, etc.

27^{th*} – Guru Nanak Ji's Birthday: A day commemorating the birth of Guru Nanak Ji who founded Sikhism.

27th – Jain New Year: A day celebrated on the first day after the month of Kartika.

30th – St. Andrew's Feast Day: St. Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece, Russia, Ukraine, Barbados, and Romania. This day honours him, his good works, and his canonization in the Catholic Church.

*Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening*

December 2023

8th – Feast of the Immaculate Conception: The day that Roman Catholics celebrate Mary's conception without original sin.

7th to 15th – Hanukkah: An 8-day celebration in the Jewish faith that honours the victory of Jews over Syrian Greeks.

21st – Yule: A Pagan and Wiccan holiday that celebrates the winter solstice.

25th – Christmas: An important Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

26th – St. Stephen's Feast Day: The day commemorating St. Stephen's life and service as he became the first Christian to die for the faith.

Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening.