



Yale University Chaplain's Office Multi-Religious Calendar Academic Year 2020-2021

Below are many of the religious holidays observed by members of the Yale community.
Please note that individual practices may vary.

“*” denotes holidays that start sundown the day before

Fall 2020

August 3: Raksha Bandhan (Hindu) – Celebration of harmony. The tying of the rakhi (woven bracelet) signifies a special bond of unity and affection between two individuals

August 11: Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu) – Birthday of Lord Krishna. An incarnation of the God Vishnu, Krishna represents love and bravery. Krishna reveals His true Self while counseling Prince Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita

August 15: Paryushana Parva (Jain) – Eight-day festival of forgiveness and self-discipline

August 21: Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu) – Birthday of Lord Ganesha, god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune and the remover of obstacles

August 29*: Ashura (Islam) – For Shias, a commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at Karbala

September 2: Ghost Festival (Buddhist) – A day when the living can perform rituals to relieve the suffering of the ghosts of those who've died, as well as to honor parents and ancestors

September 22: Mabon (Wiccan) – Celebrates the autumnal equinox through a ritual of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth

September 19-20*: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish) – Beginning of the Jewish Year and High Holy Days.
(*work is prohibited*)

September 28*: Yom Kippur (Jewish) – Day of Atonement (*fasting and work prohibited*)

October 3-9*: Sukkot (Jewish) – The Feast of the Tabernacles and Harvest festival (*work is prohibited the first two days*)

October 10*: Shemini Atzeret (Jewish) – marks the end of Sukkot (*work prohibited*)

October 11*: Simchat Torah (Jewish) – Celebrates the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings and the beginning of a new cycle (*work is prohibited*)

October 17-25: Navratri (Hindu) – Festival of 9 nights celebrating the Goddess in her various forms, most typically as Ma Durga

October 18*: Birth of the Báb (Bahá'í) – Celebrates the birth of the Báb, one of the founders of the Bahá'í Faith

October 19*: Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'í) – Celebrates the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith

October 26: Dussehra (Hindu) – Celebrates Lord Rama's triumph over the evil King Ravana, also celebrates the conquest by the Goddess Chamundeshwari over demon King Mahishasura, a battle which took 10 days

October 29*: Mawlid al-Nabi (Islam) – Commemorates birthday of prophet Muhammad

October 31: Samhain (Wiccan) – Festival honoring endings, beginnings and the dead

October 31: Reformation Day (Protestant Christianity) – Celebration in remembrance of the onset of the Reformation

November 1: All Saint's Day (Christianity) – Honors all of the saints known and unknown

November 2: All Soul's Day (Christianity) – Day of prayer for the dead, particularly but not exclusively one's relatives

November 7: Buddha's Descent (Buddhism) – Lhabab Duchen is a festival observing the descent of Buddha from heaven to earth (may also be celebrated 11/19)

November 11-16: Diwali (Hindu, Jain, Sikh) – Festival of Lights. Amavasya is 11/14 – when puja is offered to Maha Lakshmi

November 15: Shichogsan (Shinto) – Celebrates the growth and well-being of young children

November 23: Niinamesai (Shinto) – Harvest festival that gives thanks for a good crop yield

November 25*: Day of the Covenant (Bahá'í) – Celebrates the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant

November 27*: Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í) – Commemorates death of Abbas Effendi, known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921

November 29: First Sunday of Advent (Christianity) – Season of expectant waiting and preparation of the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas

November 30: Birth of Guru Nanak (Sikh) – Celebrates the birth of the founder of Sikhism and the first of the Sikh Gurus

December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic) – Celebrates the solemn belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 8: Bodhi Day (Buddhist) Commemorates the day that the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (Shakyamuni), experienced enlightenment

December 11-18*: Hanukkah (Jewish) – Festival of Lights commemorating rededication of Second Holy Temple in Jerusalem at time of Maccabean Revolt

December 21: Yule (Wiccan) – Winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, time to meditate on cycle of life, death and rebirth

December 25: Christmas (Christian) – Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ

December 25: Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā Jayantī (Hindu) - Lord Krishna revealed the Bhagavad Gītā to Prince Arjuna while on the Kurukshetra battlefield.

December 26: Zarathosht Diso (Zoroastrian) – Commemorates death of Zarathustra

Spring 2021

January 1: Oshogatsu (Shinto) – Celebration of New Year, commemorated by going to shrine, thanking the kami (spirits), asking for good fortune and letting resolutions known in presence of kami

January 6: Epiphany (Christian) – Feast day that celebrates the revelation of God the Son as a human being in Jesus Christ

January 7: Christmas (Orthodox Christian) – Celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in Orthodox Churches

January 14: Makara Sankranti (Hindu) – Celebration of the Sun God

January 20: Birth of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh) – Birthday of tenth and last Guru

January 28: Tu B'shevat* (Jewish) – New Year of the Trees

February 2: Imbolc (Wiccan)- Marks the beginning of Spring

February 8: Sangha Day (Buddhist)- Celebration in honor of Buddhist community

February 15: Buddha's Passing (Buddhist) – Mahayana festival remembers death of the Buddha when he reached Nirvana at age of 80

February 16: Vasant Panchami (Hindu) – Holy day dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, patron Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, science and technology

February 17: Ash Wednesday (Christian) – Day of fasting that commemorates first day of Lent

February 25-28*: Ayyám-i-Há (Bahá'í) – Days of preparation for the Fast, marked by hospitality and charity to poor and sick

February 26*: Purim (Jewish) – Commemorates the story of Esther

March 1-19*: Nineteen Day Fast (Bahá'í) – Sunrise to sunset fast also marked with prayer to reinvigorate soul and bring closer to God (*fasting*)

March 11: Maha Shivaratri (Hindu) – Celebration of the wedding night of Lord Shiva and his Consort Goddess Parvati

March 11*: Lailat al Miraj (Islam) – Commemorates Prophet Muhammad's nighttime journey from Mecca to Jerusalem where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily

March 20*: Nowruz (Bahá'í, Zoroastrian) - Marks the first day of spring

March 21*: Ostara (Wiccan) – Celebrates Spring, also known as the vernal equinox

March 27-28: Holi (Hindu) – Holiday associated with exuberant flinging of colored powders, celebrates the advent of spring and the enduring message that good will always be victorious over evil; light will always overcome darkness

March 28-4*: Passover (Jewish) – Commemorates liberation of Israelites by God from slavery in Egypt and their freedom as a nation under leadership of Moses (*work is prohibited on first and last two days*)

March 28: Palm Sunday (Christian) – Feast commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem

April 1: Holy Thursday (Christian) – Commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. Washing of feet is a traditional component

April 2: Good Friday (Christian) – Commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary

April 4: Easter (Christianity) – Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

April 8: Yom Ha'shoah (Jewish) – Holocaust Memorial Day

April 13-May 11*: Ramadan (Islam) – Month of fasting to commemorate first revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad

April 14: Vaisakhi (Sikh) – Marks the establishment of the Khalsa (religious community of Sikhs) by Guru Gobind Singh

April 20-May 1*: Ridván (Bahá'í) – Twelve-day festival when founder Bahá'u'lláh declared his mission

April 21: Rama Navami (Hindu) – A celebration of birth of Rama (incarnation of the God Vishnu) to King Dasharatha and Queen Kausalya in Ayodhya

April 25: Mahavir Jayanthi (Jain) – Celebrates birth of Mahavira, the founder of Jainism

April 26: Hanuman Jayantī (Hindu) – Celebration of birthday of Hanuman, foremost devotee of Sri Rama and Sita

April 30: Beltane (Wiccan) – Honors life and fertility

April 30: Lag B'Omer (Jewish) – Celebrates anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar (text of Jewish mysticism)

May 2: Pascha (Orthodox Christianity) – Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

May 13*: Eid al-Fitr (Islam) – Marks the end of Ramadan, holy month of fasting

May 13: Ascension Day (Christianity) – Celebrates the departure of Christ from Earth into the presence of God

May 17-18*: Shavuot (Jewish) – Festival commemorating giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai
(*work restrictions*)

May 18: Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist) – Holiday in Mahayana Buddhist tradition that commemorates birth of the Buddha

May 23: Pentecost (Christian) – Celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension

May 23: Declaration of the Báb (Bahá'í) – Commemorates declaration of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh the founder of the Bahá'í Faith

May 28: Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'í) – Anniversary of death of founder

July 9: Martyrdom of the Báb (Bahá'í) – date the Báb was executed

July 20*: Eid al-Adha (Islam) – Commemorates Ibrahim's sacrifice of his son to God

July 24*: Tisha B'Av (Jewish) – Day of mourning to commemorate many tragedies that have befallen Jewish people, many occurring on the ninth of Av (*fasting and some work restrictions*)