

### MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

- Poverty in America Awareness Month (USA)
- Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Month (USA)

#### JAN. 1

##### *New Year's Day (International)*

This is the first day of the Gregorian calendar year. With most countries now using the Gregorian calendar as their civil calendar, Jan. 1 is among the most celebrated of public holidays in the world. The first country to celebrate the New Year is the Republic of Kiribati, and the last inhabited place to greet the New Year is American Samoa. New Year's Day traditions include fireworks, making New Year's resolutions, the polar bear plunge, calling one's friends and family, exchanging gifts, and eating special foods. **HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!**



#### JAN. 4

##### *World Braille Day (UN)*

January 4th is the anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of a reading and writing system named after him. This day celebrates the importance of Braille for the visually impaired. Themes for this day include focusing on Braille as a tool for equality, enabling blind individuals to communicate, learn and engage fully, and supporting the right to accessible information.

#### JAN. 7

##### *Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian Christmas*

This day marks the birth of Jesus Christ according to the Julian calendar. The Julian calendar is older than the Gregorian calendar. The two calendars are currently 13 days apart, and that is why Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas in January.





**JAN. 13**

### **Lohri (India)**

A popular Punjabi festival celebrated primarily in Northern India. The festival marks the end of the winter solstice and is associated with the harvest season. Farmers express gratitude to nature for a bountiful harvest. Bonfires are lit in open spaces and people gather around them to perform rituals and sing traditional folk songs.

**JAN. 14**

### **Makar/Maghe Sankranti (India, Nepal)**

A significant Hindu festival observed on the first of Magh marking the end of the winter solstice and the beginning of longer days. It marks the transition of the sun from the zodiac of Sagittarius (dhanu) to Capricorn (makara). The festival holds agricultural, spiritual, and cultural significance. People take holy dips in rivers, make offerings to deities, perform folk dances, fly kites, and enjoy traditional foods.



**JAN. 20**

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Day (USA)**

This day honours the civil rights leader and his contributions to social justice, equality and nonviolent resistance. It is a federal holiday observed on the third Monday of January. The day serves as a time for reflection, community service, and discussions about civil rights and societal progress.



### JAN. 27

#### *International Holocaust Remembrance Day (UN)*

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp by Soviet forces in 1945. This day honours the memory of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, as well as the millions of other victims persecuted and murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Events include speeches, survivor testimonies, candle-lighting ceremonies, and exhibitions.



### JAN. 29

#### *National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia (Canada)*

The Quebec City Mosque shooting was an act of violence that occurred on Jan 29, 2017, at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City in Sainte-Foy, Quebec, Canada. A gunman opened fire during evening prayers, killing 6 worshippers and injuring 19 others. The massacre was one of the worst mass shootings in Canadian history. Jan. 29 was declared a National Day of Remembrance in 2021. It encourages reflection on promoting understanding and respect among all Canadians.

### JAN. 29

#### *Chinese New Year*

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is widely celebrated in countries with significant Chinese populations and cultural influence. The festival date changes each year as it follows the lunar calendar. It falls on Jan. 29 this year, and marks the year of the snake in Chinese zodiac. Celebrations typically last for 15 days, from Lunar New Year's Eve and culminate in the Lantern Festival. Homes are thoroughly cleaned before the new year to sweep away bad luck and make space for good fortune. Houses are adorned with red decorations, lanterns, couplets, and symbols of prosperity. Families gather for a lavish meal on Lunar New Year's Eve.



# MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

## OTHER HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

- Jan. 1 - Gantan-Sai (Japan, Shinto)
- Jan. 2 - Last Day of Hanukkah (Jewish)
- Jan. 5 - Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday (Sikh)
- Jan. 6 - Epiphany (Christian)
- Jan. 6 - Seijin No Hi (Japan)
- Jan. 10 - Fast of Tevet 10 (Jewish)
- Jan. 14 - Pongol (India)
- Jan. 29 - Seollal (Korea)
- Jan. 30 - Sadeh (Iran)
- Jan. 30 - Education Day (Greece)

## INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS

- Jan. 1 - Independence Day (Haiti, Sudan)
- Jan. 1 - Establishment Day (Czech Republic and Slovakia)
- Jan. 4 - Independence Day (Myanmar)
- Jan. 24 - Day of Unification (Romania)
- Jan. 26 - Australia Day
- Jan. 26 - Republic Day (India)

### **DISCLAIMER:**

*In creating this newsletter, we aim to honour and celebrate the diversity of our community. While we strive to acknowledge a wide range of cultural and religious holidays and observances, we recognize that we may not be able to include every holiday or tradition. This is not a reflection of the value or importance of any holiday or tradition. We deeply respect all cultural, religious, and personal celebrations and appreciate your understanding.*

### Reference

Multicultural Calendar 2025  
Sheena Singh, Creative Cultural Communications,  
Toronto, ON.