

APRIL 2025

MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

- **Arab American Heritage Month (USA)**
- **Multicultural Communications Month (International)**
 - Observed to highlight the importance of understanding and embracing diverse cultural perspectives in communication.
 - Encourages individuals, businesses, and organizations to promote inclusivity, improve cross-cultural dialogue, and develop a deeper appreciation for different languages, traditions, and communication styles.



Apr. 1

April Fools' Day (International)

April 1st is a fun, lighthearted observance when people play pranks, tell jokes, and spread harmless hoaxes. Many businesses, media outlets, and individuals participate in pranks, sometimes creating fake news stories or outrageous claims to fool others. The exact origin of April Fools' Day is uncertain, but it has been a global tradition for centuries, bringing humour and pranks to cultures worldwide.



Apr. 2

World Autism Awareness Day (UN)

Established by the United Nations in 2007, this day is observed every year to raise awareness about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and promote inclusion, acceptance, and support for individuals with autism. It aims to highlight the importance of creating a society that embraces neurodiversity. The colour blue symbolizes autism awareness. Many landmarks and buildings around the world are lit up in blue. People organize or attend workshops, webinars, or talks about autism. Some donate or volunteer to help autistic individuals and their families.



Apr. 5

Ching Ming/Qingming Festival (China, Taiwan)

Known as **Tomb-Sweeping Day** in English, it is a day to honour and remember ancestors by visiting their graves, cleaning tombstones, repainting engravings, and making offerings. People burn incense, joss paper, and leave food offerings. Since it is a time of renewal, families enjoy nature, fly kites, and appreciate the outdoors.

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Apr. 6

Ram Navami (Hindu)

Ram Navami celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The festival is particularly significant in North India, especially in Ayodhya (Lord Rama's birthplace) where grand celebrations take place. It is an occasion to reflect on Lord Rama's life as described in the Ramayana. Lord Rama symbolizes virtue, righteousness, and devotion. Devotees are encouraged to follow the path of truth and righteousness. In many places, grand processions of Lord Rama's idol are carried out with chanting and prayers. Temples and houses are decorated with flowers and lights to honour Lord Rama.

Apr. 13

Songkran Festival (Thailand, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka)

In Southeast Asia, Songkran is recognized as the New Year for Buddhists, as it marks the beginning of the solar calendar year. It is celebrated from April 13th to 15th each year and is the most significant and widely celebrated festival in Thailand. Songkran is a time for families to reunite, pay respects to monks and elders, make offerings, and engage in various cultural/religious rituals. One of the most iconic features is the water fights that take place in the streets. People throw water at each other using water guns, buckets, or hoses. This custom symbolizes the washing away of bad luck and sins from the past year, making way for good fortune in the new year.



Apr. 13

Palm Sunday (Christian)

Palm Sunday is a Christian holiday that marks the beginning of Holy Week, which leads up to Easter. It commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where he was cheered by crowds waving and laying palm branches in his path as a sign of honour and reverence. Palms symbolize victory, peace, and triumph. Palm Sunday is observed with church services that often include the blessing of palm branches, which are then distributed to the congregation. Many congregations hold processions, reenacting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. In some traditions, dried palms are kept throughout the year and later burned to make ashes for Ash Wednesday the following year.



Apr. 13 - 20

Pesach/Passover (Jewish)

Pesach is a major Jewish holiday that commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, as described in the Book of Exodus. It begins at sunset the day before and lasts for eight days. Key themes of Pesach include freedom, redemption, and the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Before Pesach begins, Jewish households clean their homes to remove all **chametz** (leavened products such as bread, pasta, and beer) in keeping with the commandment to avoid leavened foods during the holiday. The highlight is the ritual meal, **Seder**, on the first two nights, along with retelling of the Exodus story and special prayers. Pesach is a time for family gatherings, reflection, and the expression of gratitude for God's intervention.



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Apr. 14

Baisakhi/Vaisakhi (Bangladesh, Sikh, Hindu)

Baisakhi is a major Sikh and Hindu festival celebrated mainly in the northern states of India, particularly Punjab, and by Sikh communities worldwide. It marks the beginning of the harvest season and the Punjabi New Year. The day also has religious significance for Sikhs as it commemorates the establishment of the **Khalsa** in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. Baisakhi is a time for reflection, gratitude, and community service. Celebrations include traditional music, dance, and communal feasts. Parades and processions are common, with people often wearing traditional Sikh attire. Many Sikhs choose Baisakhi as a day to be baptized into the Khalsa brotherhood.

Apr. 18

Good Friday (Christian)

Good Friday is a significant religious observance in Christianity. It commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary. Christians believe that on Good Friday, Jesus was crucified and died to atone for the sins of humanity, offering salvation to those who believe in him. The day is observed with church services that include the reading of the Passion of Christ, prayers, and hymns that reflect on Jesus' suffering. Some denominations hold "Stations of the Cross" processions, symbolizing the journey Jesus took to his crucifixion. Some Christians participate in acts of charity or volunteer work as a way to honour Jesus' sacrifice.





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Apr. 20

Easter Sunday (Christian)

Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which occurred on the third day after his crucifixion on Good Friday. The event is seen as the cornerstone of the Christian faith, symbolizing victory over sin and death. Easter is celebrated worldwide, although the customs and traditions vary depending on the denomination and culture. It is a day of joy and celebration, as Christians gather for church services, singing hymns, and participating in communion. It is a time for spiritual renewal and an opportunity for family gatherings and cultural celebrations.



Apr. 24

Yom HaShoah (Israel, Jewish)

Also known as **Holocaust Memorial Day**, Yom HaShoah is a day of remembrance for the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The day was officially established by the Israeli government in 1951 to honour the memory of those who perished during the Holocaust, and to raise awareness about the atrocities committed by the Nazis. The day is marked by various ceremonies including the lighting of memorial candles, moments of silence, and educational programs to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and combat hatred and antisemitism.

OTHER OBSERVANCES

- Apr 1 - Farvardin (Iran)
- Apr 4 - Midori No Hi (Japan)
- Apr 6 - Organization of The Church (Christian - LDS)
- Apr 15 - Adam's Peak Pilgrimage (Sri Lanka)
- Apr 20 - Matsu Festival (China, Taiwan)
- Apr 23 - St. George's Day (Christian)
- Apr 29 - Showa No Hi (Japan)
- Apr 30 - Walpurgis Night (Sweden)

NATIONAL AND INDEPENDENCE DAYS

- Apr 4 - Independence Day (Senegal)
- Apr 6 - Chakri Day (Thailand)
- Apr 9 - Independence Day (Georgia)
- Apr 11 - Juan Santamaria Day (Costa Rica)
- Apr 17 - Independence Day (Syria)
- Apr 18 - Independence Day (Zimbabwe)
- Apr 21 - Kartini Day (Indonesia)
- Apr 23 - Nat'l Sovereignty & Children's Day (Türkiye)
- Apr 24 - Martyrs Day (Armenia)
- Apr 25 - Anzac Day (Australia, New Zealand, Tonga)
- Apr 25 - Liberation Day (Italy)
- Apr 27 - Freedom Day (South Africa)
- Apr 27 - King's Day (Netherlands)
- Apr 27 - Independence Day (Togo)
- Apr 30 - Yom HaZikaron/Memorial Day (Israel)

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.