

A Brief List of Major Holidays Celebrated by the Tapestry of Ethnic Groups in The Empire State

With a population of almost 20 million residents, New York State is the home of people from across our planet.

With residents from over 170 sovereign nations, New York City alone is one of the most diverse urban centers on Earth. The factors that create this tremendous diversity are based on social, economic and geopolitical forces that shape our world. Our ability to coexist in a peaceful and civil society serves as an example to all nations that tolerance for ethnic and religious diversity can create a progressive and egalitarian-focused society. For a nation in the midst of heated debates over immigration reform, our tapestry of ethnic groups and nationalities can be classified as the “American Empire coming home.”

I hope this overview of major holidays celebrated by millions of our fellow residents will continue to foster the notion that unity is achieved and maintained through mutual respect and understanding.

As always, if I can be of assistance to you with this or any other community issue, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at my office 718-893-0202 or 518-455-5514.

*Assemblyman Marcos A. Crespo
Chair, Assembly Task Force on New Americans*

Chinese

- Chinese New Year (Jan. 31st)
- Spring Festival Golden Week (Jan. 31st – Feb. 6th).
- Lantern Festival (Feb. 14th)
- Qingming Festival (Apr. 5th) celebrated April 5th – 7th, marks the time that temperatures begin to rise and rainfall increases.
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)
- Dragon Boat Festival (June 2nd) a traditional holiday that commemorates the life and death of the famous Chinese scholar Qu Yuan (Chu Yuan).
- Double Seventh Festival (Aug. 2nd). Chinese equivalent to Valentine’s Day.
- Mid-Autumn Festival (Sept. 6th - 8th)
- National Day (Oct. 1st). Celebrations last from (Oct. 1st – 7th)
- Winter Solstice aka Winter Festival (Dec. 22nd)

Japanese

- New Year’s Day (Jan. 1st).
- Coming-of-Age Day (Second Monday of January) a national holiday to encourage those who have newly entered adulthood to become self-reliant members of society.
- Beginning of Spring (Feb. 3rd)
- National Foundation Day (Feb. 11th) celebrates the foundation of Japan and the accession of its first Emperor.
- Vernal Equinox Day (March 21st)
- Showa Day (Apr. 29th) the purpose of the holiday is to encourage public reflection on the turbulent 63 years of Hirohito’s reign.
- Constitution Day (May 3rd)
- Greenery Day (May 4th)
- Children’s Day (May 5th)
- Ocean Day (3rd Monday of July) a day to give thanks for the ocean’s bounty and to consider the importance of the ocean to Japan as an island nation.
- Obon (July/August 13-15)
- Respect for the Aged Day (3rd Monday of September)

- Autumn Equinox Day (Around September 23rd)
- Labor Thanksgiving Day (November 23rd)
- Emperor’s Birthday (December 23rd), current emperor’s birthday is always a national holiday and changes with each new emperor

Korean

- Seollal aka Korean New Year’s Day (Jan. 30th – Feb. 1st)
- Independence Movement Day (March 1st)
- Dano (May 5th), this festival was a shamanistic ritual worshipping the sky deity in celebration of the end of sowing season. According to historical texts, the people of Mahan confederacy celebrated day and night with dancing and singing after the sowing season in May.
- Children’s Day (May 5th)
- Memorial Day (June 5th)
- Liberation Day (August 15th), commemorates victory over Japan day, when Korea was liberated from colonial rule. It’s the only public holiday celebrated by both North and South Korea.
- Chuseok (fifteenth day of the 8th month by the lunar calendar), this major holiday falls on August 15 according to the lunar calendar and is considered the nation’s most important holiday. Although Chuseok itself is a single day, the holiday period includes the day before and after, involving an array of traditional activities. Early on Chuseok morning, the family gathers together to perform traditional ancestral rites. A feast of traditional Korean foods is prepared for the memorial service, after which everyone enjoys the festive meal and exchanges gifts. During Chuseok, people nationwide leave the city in order to return back to their family’s hometown for the holiday.
- National Foundation Day (Oct. 3rd)
- Hangeul Day (October 9th)

Russian

- Christmas Day (January 7th)
- Protector of the Motherland Day (Feb. 23rd),



combines the meanings behind the United States' Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and Father's Day.

- International Women's Day (March 8th)
- Cosmonaut's Day (April 12th)
- Spring and Labor Day (May 1st)
- Victory Day (May 9th), marks the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union in the Second World War
- Russia Day (June 12th)
- Day of National Unity (November 4th), commemorates the popular uprising which expelled Polish occupation forces from Moscow in November 1612

Polish

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Epiphany (Jan. 6th)
- Easter Day (April 20th)
- Easter Monday (April 21st)
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)
- Constitution Day (May 3rd)
- Whit Sunday (June 8th), in many parts of the world, Pentecost has become a traditional day for baptisms to take place. On this day, many people enjoy family gatherings, picnics, or outings to the country. Pentecost is called "the Green Holiday" in Poland. It is a time when people decorate their houses with green branches to bring blessings on the home and the people living in it.
- Corpus Christi (June 19th)
- Assumption of Mary (Aug. 15th)
- All Saints' Day (Nov. 1st)
- Independence Day (Nov. 11th)
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)
- Boxing Day (Dec. 26th)

Italian

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Epiphany (Jan. 6th)
- Easter Sunday (April 20th)
- Easter Monday (April 21st)
- Liberation Day (April 25th), commemorates the end of World War 2 and the end of Nazi occupation of Italy.
- Republic Day (June 2nd), commemorates the referendum of 1946, when the Italian population was called to decide what form of government (monarchy or republic) to give to the country after World War II and the fall of fascism.
- Assumption Day (August 15th)
- All Saints' Day (Nov. 1st)
- Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8th)
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)
- Saint Stephan's Day (Dec. 26th)

German

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Easter Monday (April 21st)
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)
- Ascension Day (May 29th)
- Whit Monday (June 9th)

- Day of German Unity (Oct. 3rd), commemorates the anniversary of German reunification in 1990
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)
- Boxing Day (Dec. 26th), is traditionally the day following Christmas Day, when servants and tradesmen would receive gifts, known as a "Christmas box", from their bosses or employers. Today, Boxing Day is the bank holiday that generally takes place on 26 December.

Irish

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Saint Patrick's Day (March 17th), is a cultural and religious holiday on the death date of the most commonly-recognized patron saint of Ireland. The holiday is observed by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Eastern Orthodox Church and Lutheran Church. The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland as well as the celebrating the heritage and culture.
- Easter Monday (April 21st)
- May Day (May 5th)
- June Bank Holiday (June 2nd)
- August Bank Holiday (Aug. 4th)
- October bank Holiday (Oct. 27th)
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)
- Saint Stephan's Day (Dec. 26th), is a Christian saint's day to commemorate Saint Stephen, celebrated on 26 December in the Western Church and 27 December in the Eastern Church.

Brazilian

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Carnival Tuesday (March 4th)
- Carnival end (March 5th)
- Good Friday (April 18th)
- Easter Sunday (April 20th)
- Tiradentes Day (April 21st) anniversary of the death of Tiradentes (1792), considered a national martyr for being part of the Inconfidencia Mineira, an insurgent movement that aimed to establish an independent Brazilian republic
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)
- Corpus Christi (June 19th)
- Independence Day (Sept. 7th) celebrates the Declaration of Independence from Portugal in 1822.
- Our Lady Aparecida / Children's Day (Oct. 12th)
- All Souls Day (Nov. 2nd)
- Republic Proclamation Day (Nov. 15th) commemorates the end of the Empire of Brazil and the proclamation of the Brazilian Republic in 1889.
- Christmas Eve (Dec. 24th)
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)
- New Year's Eve (Dec. 31st)

Mexican

- New Year's Day (Jan. 1st)
- Constitution Day (Feb. 5th)
- Benito Juarez's Birthday Memorial (March 21st)
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)



- Cinco de Mayo (May 5th), on 9 May 1862, President Juárez declared that the anniversary of the Battle of Puebla would be a national holiday regarded as “Battle of Cinco de Mayo”. Although Mexican citizens feel very proud of the meaning of Cinco de Mayo, it is not a national holiday in Mexico but it is an official holiday in the State of Puebla, where the Battle took place. However, all public schools are closed nation-wide in Mexico on May 5th.
- Independence Day (Sep 15th) commemorates the start of the Independence War by Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla in 1810.
- Revolution Day (Nov. 20th) commemorates the start of the Mexican Revolution by Francisco I. Madero in 1910.
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)

Dominican

- New Year’s Day (Jan. 1st)
- Epiphany (Jan. 6th)
- Our Lady of Altagarcia (Jan. 21st)
- Duarte’s Day (Jan. 26th)
- Independence Day (Feb. 27th) commemorates independence from Haiti in 1844
- Good Friday (Apr. 18th)
- Labor Day (May 5th)
- Corpus Christi (June 19th) is a celebrating of the belief in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and his Real Presence in the Eucharist By tradition. Catholics take part in a procession through the streets of a neighborhood near their parish following mass and pray and sing. The Eucharist, known as the Blessed Sacrament, is placed in a monstrance and is held aloft by a member of the clergy during the procession. After the procession, parishioners return to the church where benediction usually takes place.
- Restoration Day (Aug. 16th)
- Our Lady of Las Mercedes (Sept. 24th)
- Constitution Day (Nov. 10th)
- Christmas (Dec. 25th)

Pakistani

- Eid Milad un-Nabi (Jan. 14th)
- Kashmir Day (Feb. 5th) a day dedicated to show support and unity with the people of Indian-administered Kashmir.
- Pakistan Day (May 23rd)
- Labor Day (May 1st)
- Eid-ul-Fitr, Days 1, 2, & 3 (July 29th, 30th, & 31st)
- Independence Day (Aug. 14th)
- Eid-ul-Azha, Days 1 & 2 (Oct. 5th & 6th)
- Iqbal Day (Nov. 9th) celebrates Muhammad Iqbal, Muslim philosopher and great poet, considered the most important figure in the Urdu literature.
- Quaid-e-Azam Day (Dec. 25th)

Indian

- New Year’s Day (Jan. 1st)
- Guru Govind Singh Jayanti (Jan. 7th) Sikh

festival that commemorates the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. It is a religious celebration in which prayers for prosperity are offered.

- Pongal (Jan. 14th)
- Makar Sankranti (Jan. 14th)
- Milad un-Nabi / Id-e-Milad (Jan. 14th)
- Republic Day (Jan. 26th) a day to remember when India’s constitution came into force on January 26, 1950, completing the country’s transition toward becoming an independent republic.
- Vasant Panchami (Feb. 4th)
- Guru Ravidas Jayanti (Feb. 14th)
- Shivaji Jayanti (Feb. 19th)
- Vaisakhi (April 14th) a harvest celebration which is an occasion of dancing, singing, music, wearing of festive garments and religious praise. The festival marks the start of the New Year in the Nanakshahi solar calendar and recognizes the Sikh religious faith.
- Labor Day / May Day (May 1st)
- Buddha Purnima / Buddha Jayanti (May 14th) a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and death.
- Independence Day (August 15th)
- Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti / Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday (Oct. 2nd)
- Dussehra (Oct. 3rd) a Hindu festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil.
- Diwali (Oct. 23rd) a festival of lights observed by followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism.

Judaism

- Tu Bishvat (Jan. 16th) marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees.
- Ta’anit Esther / Father of Esther (March 13th)
- Purim / Deliverance of the Jews (March 16th) celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the wicked Haman in the days of Queen Esther of Persia.
- Shusan Purim (March 17th)
- Pesach / Passover (April 15th – 21st) celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.
- Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Memorial Day (April 27th)
- Lag B’Omer (May 18th)
- Yom Yerushalayim / Jerusalem Day (May 28th)
- Shavuot / Pentecost (June 4th) marks the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai
- Rosh Hashana (Sept. 25th) Jewish New Year
- Yom Kippur (Oct. 4th) a day to atone for the sins committed in the past year between man and Yahweh.
- Sukkot (Oct. 9th – 14th) commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, and is also a harvest festival.
- Hanukkah (Dec. 17th – 24th) commemorates the



rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after a group of Jewish warriors defeated the occupying Seleucid armies.

Islam

- Milad un Nabi / Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. In the Muslim world, the majority of Islamic scholars are in favor of Mawlid. They consider observing Mawlid necessary or permissible in Islam, and see it as a praiseworthy event. (Sunni Muslims celebrate on January 13th, Shia Muslims on January 18th).
- Ramadan (June 28 – July 28) a month of fasting, regarded as one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, improvement and increased devotion and worship. Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam.
- Eid-UL-Fitr (July 28th) celebration that marks the end of Ramadan.
- Eid-UL-Adha (Oct. 4th)
- Al-Hijira / Islamic New Year (Oct. 15th)
- Ashura (Nov. 3rd) this day is well-known because of mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad the third Shia Imam, along with members of his family and close friends at the Battle of Karbala in the year 680 AD.

Buddhism

- Parinirvana or Nirvana Day (Mahyanna) (February 8, or 15th), Buddhists commemorate the death of Buddha and his entrance into Nirvana and reflect

on all Buddhist teachings. Practices of this holiday include exchanging gifts of money and household goods as well as meditation retreats.

- Magha Paja (February 14th Magha Paja), an Uposatha Observance Day and also known as “Makha Bucha” is a day commemorating when 1,250 monks from all different places came to pay homage to the historical Buddha.
- Losar (March 2nd) celebratory holiday in which monks take part in deity rituals to clean and decorate monasteries, ceremonies, dances, and recitations of Buddhist teachings.
- Monlam Chenmo (Gelugpa Tibetan) (March 5-12), the Great Prayer Festival.
- Chunga Choepa (March 16th), a Butter Lamp Festival.
- Hanamatsuri (April 8), celebration of Buddha’s Birthday, Japan.
- Bun Pi Mai, Sonkran; April 13-16), celebrated in Southeast Asia.
- Seokga Tansinil (May 6th), celebration of Buddha’s Birthday, South Korea
- Saga Dawa (May 29 - June 27), is the entire fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar. The seventh day of Saga Dawa is the day of the historical Buddha’s birth for Tibetans. Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and entry into Nirvana at his death are observed together on the 15th day.



*Task Force on **New Americans***



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