

INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS



MARCH 2011

- 3.1 Heroes' Day** - marks the end of the War of the Triple Alliance which was fought from 1864 to 1870 and caused more deaths than any other South American war
Paraguay
- Samiljol** (Independence Movement Day) - marks the 1919 independence movement against Japan
South Korea
- Independence Day** - gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992
Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nuclear Survivors' Day** (Memorial Day) - commemorates the day in 1954 when Bikini Atoll became ground zero after the U.S. conducted the largest ever nuclear test. The radioactive fallout spread quickly to Rongelap, an inhabited island nearby
Marshall Islands
- Martenitza/Martisor** - a joyous celebration marking the end of winter and arrival of spring blossoms. Its origins are in a story of Pagan times when an elderly man, named Martisor, helped a woman overcome her struggle with a mean-spirited mother-in-law by giving her a magical red and white flower. Red and white pins are given to loved ones for good health and fortune
Bulgaria, Romania
- St. David's Day** - the feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales; a day of celebration of both St David's life and of the Welsh culture; marks his death in 589
UK
- Yap Day** - a celebration of the culture and customs of the Yapese villages
Micronesia

3.2	Nineteen-Day Fast Begins - the fast has spiritual, administrative and social functions and is the primary locus of fellowship and community decision-making in each Baha'i locality	Baha'i
	National Day - anniversary of the day in 1956 when the Treaty of Fez was terminated and the sovereign nation was established	Morocco
	Jamahiriya Day – day to commemorate the declaration of establishment of authority of the people	Libya
	Victory of Adowa - commemorates the decisive battle fought at Adowa, located in north central Ethiopia, on this date in 1896. The Ethiopian army of Kin Menelik II defeated Italian forces, halting for the time Italy's move toward creating an African colonial empire	Ethiopia
	Peasants' Day - a day to recognize and honor the peasantry	Myanmar, Burma

3.3	National Holiday (Day of Liberation) - commemorates the date in 1878 when the Peace Treaty of San Stefano was signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The treaty marked the revival of the Bulgarian State	Bulgaria
	Maha Shivaratri - the night where Lord Shiva is said to have revealed the dance (Tandava) of primeval conception, preservation and destruction. Maha Shivaratri occurs once in a year and it is the special night for purifying your thoughts and empowering your goals	Hindu*
	Mother's Day	Georgia
	World Book Day – a celebration of books and reading	International
	Hinamatsuri (Doll's Festival) - during this festival for girls, families elaborately display 15 dolls representing the emperor and empress and their court	Japan
	Martyr's Day - a day to remember the forty people who lost their lives during an uprising against the Federation in 1959	Malawi

3.4	Anniversary of Installation of the Sultan of Terengganu	Malaysia
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3.4	Rio Carnival Begins – a pre-lent celebration of spectacular floats surrounded by thousands and thousands of dancers, singers, and drummers who parade through the enormous Sambódromo Stadium dressed in elaborate costumes	Brazil
3.5	Arrival of First Missionaries - commemorates the landing of the first missionaries at Point Venus on Tahiti	French Polynesia
	National Tree Planting Day	Iran
	Custom Chief's Day	Vanuatu
	Losar (New Year) – a day marked by ancient ceremonies that represent the struggle between good and evil, characterized by its music, dance, chanting, and the passing of torches through the crowds	Tibet
3.6	Independence Day - commemorates the date in 1957 when the Gold Coast became an independent member of the British Commonwealth	Ghana
	Foundation Day - commemorates the date in 1788 when Lt Philip Gidley King landed on Norfolk Island to establish the first European settlement there	Norfolk Island
3.7	Clean Monday - the first day of Great Lent, as Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox refer to the Lenten season	Greece*
	Carnival – pre-lent celebration	Haiti, Venezuela, Bonaire*
	Great Lent Begins (Eastern Orthodox) – a period of 40 days leading up to Holy Week during which followers engage in prayer and fasting and money is given to the poor	Christian*
	Casimir Pulaski Day - honors the 1747 birth of the patriot who led an unsuccessful uprising against foreign intervention; observed the first Monday in March	Poland

3.8	Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) – the last day of feasting before Lent begins	US*
	Carnival – pre-lent celebration	Angola, Malta, Portugal*
	International Women's Day - marks the 1857 revolt of women in New York City protesting conditions in the U.S. textile and garment industries. It acknowledges the contributions made by working women	International
	Mother's Day	Bulgaria
	Revolution Day - anniversary of the National Council of Revolution's assumption of power in 1963	Syria
	Commonwealth Day – an annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations marked by a multi-faith service in Westminster Abbey; following an address by Queen Elizabeth II to the Commonwealth, the day is filled with games such as lawn bowls, rugby sevens and netball	Commonwealth Nations
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3.9	Lent Begins/Ash Wednesday (Western) – preparation of the believer (prayer, penitence, almsgiving and self-denial) for the annual commemoration during Holy Week of the death and resurrection of Jesus	Christian*
	Decoration Day – a national public holiday when people clean and paint the graves of relatives	Liberia*
	Baron Bliss Day - marks the death of Henry Edward Ernest Victor Bliss, a British-born traveler who willed money to a trust fund for the benefit of the citizens of what was then the colony of British Honduras, now Belize	Belize
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3.10	Dry Season Celebration	Myanmar, Burma
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3.11	Day of Restitution of Independence - commemorates the date in 1990 when Lithuania became the first Soviet Republic to declare independence	Lithuania

<p>3.11 Moshoeshoe Day – commemorates the country’s founder and leader, Chief Moshoeshoe I, who strove to unify the Basotho people in the mid-19th century during wartime in southern Africa</p>	Lesotho
<p>3.12 Youth Day – begins with a street march where the youth participate in socio-civic action and sports activities</p>	Zambia
<p>Crown Princess' Name Day - honors Princess Victoria Ingrid Alice Desiree, heiress apparent to the Swedish throne</p>	Sweden
<p>Renovation Day - anniversary of the foundation of the Parti democratique gabonais</p>	Gabon
<p>National Day - independence from the United Kingdom was gained on this date in 1968</p>	Mauritius
<p>Arbor Day - commemorates the passing of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, China’s democratic revolution forerunner, who died on this date in 1925</p>	China, Taiwan
<p>3.13 Revolutionary Attack on the Presidential Palace - on this date in 1957 a group of revolutionaries made up of university students and workers got ready to carry out actions against Fulgencio Batista</p>	Cuba
<p>3.14 Adelaide Cup - a Group 2 Thoroughbred horse race held in South Australia</p>	Australia*
<p>Constitution Day – signed on this day in 1993</p>	Andorra
<p>White Day - a holiday celebrated in Japan one month after Valentine’s Day in which the men who received “honmei-choco” (chocolate of love) on Valentine’s Day return the favor by giving gifts to the women</p>	Japan
<p>Mothering Sunday - the U.K’s equivalent of Mother’s Day; originally this holiday was a time for churchgoers to return to their home or “mother” church which became an occasion for family reunions</p>	UK*

- 3.15 J.J. Roberts' Birthday** - marks the birthday of Liberia's first and seventh president Liberia
- Revolution Day** (Anniversary of uprising against Austrian rule) - commemorates the bloodless fight for freedom against Habsburg domination which later led to war against Austria and its allies Hungary
- Youth Day** - to honor young people who have made valuable contributions to their immediate community or the entire country as a whole Palau
- Constitution Day** - commemorates the date the constitution of a democratic, independent Belarus was adopted Belarus, UK
- Dita e Veres** (The Summer Day) - celebrated by Orthodox as the first day of spring Albania*
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- 3.16 Loco Davi** (Manger du bois) - eating of the ritual wood and of its guard Vodou*
- St. Urho's Day** - a day to honor St. Urho who chased grasshoppers out of pre-Ice Age Finland (when the climate was warmer) and saved the grape harvest Finland
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- 3.17 St. Patrick's Day** - commemorates the patron saint of Ireland, who converted the island to Christianity in 432 CE. Tradition says that St. Patrick died on this date in 461 CE. The shamrock is worn to remember its use as a symbol of the Trinity International
- Birthday of Bangabnadh** Bangladesh
- Ta'anit Ester** (Fast of Esther) - remembers God's deliverance of the Jewish people from the evil scheming of Haman during the reign of the Persian King Xerxes as described in the Biblical book of Esther Jewish*
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- 3.18 National Anthem & Flag Day** - the flag of Aruba was officially adopted on this day in 1976, along with the national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera"; adopted on this day to commemorate that Holland, in 1948, accepted Aruba's right to choose an autonomous status in the kingdom of the Netherlands Aruba

3.18 Anniversary of the Death of President Said Mohamed Cheikh – to honor the first president of the Territory of the Comoro Islands; held the office from 1961 to 1970	Comoros
Marien Ngouabi Day – to honor the military President of the Republic of Congo; held the office from 1969 to 1977	Congo
Men's Day & Soldier's Day	Mongolia

3.19 Medin Full Moon Poya Day - commemorates the visit of The Buddha to his home to preach to his father King Suddhodana and other relatives and show them the path to enlightenment and final deliverance	Sri Lanka*
Holi (Festival of Color) - celebration of spring throughout Northern India that is a time of fun followed by relaxation. During the morning, brightly colored powder and water are thrown at passerby and the afternoon is spent relaxing in a river or bath	Hindu, Sikh*
St. Joseph's Day - an international festival honoring St. Joseph, in which special foods are prepared and some people reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter when Mary was about to give birth to the baby Jesus. It is a weeklong festival in Valencia, Spain, called Fallas de San Jose	International
Battle of March 19 - commemorates the first major battle of the Dominican War of Independence fought on this date in 1844 at Azua de Compostela. A force of some 2,200 Dominican troops led by General Pedro Santana defeated an outnumbering force of 10,000 troops of the Haitian Army led by General Souffrand	Dominican Republic
Father's Day	Colombia

3.20 Purim - commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in Ancient Persia from Haman's plot "to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day"	Judaism*
Novruz Bairam (Turkmen New Year)	Turkmenistan
Thaipusam - commemorates the day Lord Siva's consort, the powerful goddess Parvathi, gives her son, Murugan, the vel (lance) to vanquish three demons and their large army which were plaguing the world	Hindu*

3.20	Legba Zaou (eating consists mainly of a black goat) - a Vodou celebration that honors Papa Legba with the sacrifice of a black goat	Haiti*
	Spring Equinox - in the Northern Hemisphere, spring begins today with the vernal equinox. In the Southern Hemisphere, today is the beginning of autumn. The daylight length is virtually the same everywhere on earth today – 12 hours and 8 minutes	International
	Ostara/Mabon – Ostara occurs on this day in the Northern Hemisphere and Mabon occurs on this day in the Southern Hemisphere	Pagan, Celtic
	Spring Higan – “higan” means the “other shore”; Buddhists are encouraged to concentrate practicing and to reflect on the Buddha Dharma which leads us from “this shore” to the “other shore” of Buddha’s enlightenment	Buddism
	Independence Day - celebrates the day in 1956 when the country was formally recognized as independent from France	Tunisia
	Nationalization of Oil Industry Day	Iran
	Holi Phagwa (Festival of Colours) – a spring festival during which people spend the day throwing colored powder (medicinal herbs) and water at each other	Hindu*
	Shunbun no Hi (Vernal Equinox) – Japanese visit their family tombs to pay respect to their ancestors; they weed the tomb, leave flowers, incense and sweet rice balls covered with red bean paste (ancestors prefer round food)	Japan
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3.21	Human Rights Day - on this day in 1960 the police killed 69 people at Sharpeville who were participating in a protest against the pass laws	South Africa
	Independence Day - independence from South African mandate in 1990	Namibia
	Mother's Day	Syria, Egypt
	International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - a day to promote efforts to eradicate racial discrimination worldwide and also to remember the killing of 69 protesters against racial injustice in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960	International
	National Tree Planting Day	Lesotho

<p>3.21 Noruz - the New Year festival and celebration of the spring equinox. The awakening of natural life and also the coronation of Jamshid, a mythical king, are celebrated. Observed in many countries and by many religions</p>	International
<p>Youth Day</p>	Tunisia
<p>Birthday of Benito Juárez - commemorates the birth in 1806 of the first Mexican president of Indian descent. He is a symbol of liberation and of Mexican resistance to foreign intervention</p>	Mexico
<p>Chahar Shambeh Suri – people leap over bonfires (symbols of good) lit in public places in hope of receiving enlightenment and happiness throughout the coming year</p>	Iran
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<p>3.22 Emancipation of the Slaves Day - commemorates the abolition of slavery in 1873</p>	Puerto Rico
<p>Arab League Day - marks the date in 1945 when a meeting in Cairo ratified the agreement by Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, and Palestine to form the League of Arab States</p>	Syria
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<p>3.23 Pakistan Day - commemorates the anniversary of Pakistan Resolution passed on this date in 1940</p>	Pakistan
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<p>3.24 Covenant Day - the Covenant is a political document that establishes the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and its unique relationship with the U.S. The importance of this document is acknowledged on this date</p>	Northern Marianas
<p>National Tree Planting Day</p>	Uganda
<p>Truth & Justice Day - commemorates the victims of the National Reorganization Process that started in 1976 with a coup; this military dictatorship, known in Argentina as the Última Dictadura, or Last Dictatorship, lasted until 1983</p>	Argentina
<p>Ramanavami - celebrates the birth of Shri Rama, one of the incarnates of the Hindu god Vishnu; fasting is common on these dates</p>	Hindu

3.25 Independence Day - a celebration of independence from the Ottomans in 1829	Greece
Anniversary of the Aregno - commemorates the date of the country's first democratic elections	San Marino
Commemoration Day of Victims of the Communist Terror - on this day in 1949, a total of 43,000 people were deported from Latvia to Serbia by the Soviet occupation regime	Latvia
Waffle Day - coinciding with the start of spring in Sweden and the feast of Annunciation it is customary on this day for families to make waffles	Sweden
Lady Day - the traditional name of the Feast of Annunciation of the Virgin Mary which falls 9 months before Christmas	United Kingdom

3.26 Day of Democracy (Martyr's Day)	Mali
Youth Day	Vietnam
Swadhinata Dibash (Independence Day) - commemorates the declaration of the state of Bangladesh in 1971 and the start of the Liberation War with Pakistan	Bangladesh

3.27 Armed Forces Day - commemorates the day in 1945 when the Myanmar army rose up against Japanese occupation forces	Myanmar, Burma
Evacuation Day (Victory Day)	Angola

3.28 British Evacuation Day - the anniversary of the evacuation of British military forces in the country in 1970 after the British government agreed to pull its troops out of Tobruk "Al Adam" (present day, Jalal Abdulnasir Base), the air base they established after the Second World War broke out	Libya
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- 3.29 Boganda Day** - marks the anniversary of the 1959 death of Barthelemy Boganda, the country's first president Central African Republic
- Memorial Day** (Commemoration of the 1947 Rebellion) - an occasion dedicated to those who died in the 1947 rebellion by the Malagasy nationalists against French domination Madagascar
- Youth Day** - a time when young people are reminded of the heroic accomplishments and sacrifices of the nation's martyrs Taiwan
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- 3.30 Birthday of the Sultan of Kelantan** Malaysia
- Spiritual Baptist/Shouter Liberation Day** - an annual holiday celebrated to commemorate the repeal in 1951 of the 1917 Shouter Prohibition Ordinance that prohibited the activities of the Shouter or Spiritual Baptist faith Trinidad, Tobago
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- 3.31 Freedom Day/National Day** - commemorates the closure of British military bases in Malta on this date in 1979 Malta
- Culture Day** (Pohnpei) - a day to celebrate the culture of Pohnpei and Pohnpeians Micronesia
- Transfer Day** - commemorates the day in 1917 when the Danish West Indies were formally ceded to the U.S. by Denmark US Virgin Islands

Information from www.earthcalendar.net, Wikipedia, www.worldtravelguide.net, aglobalworld.com/holidays-around-the-world, About.com, and www.hindu-blog.com.
Some information adapted from Honoring Differences 2011 calendar, available at <http://www.diversitycalendar.com/Home.html>.