



INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

APRIL 2009

4.1—All Fool's Day; International

A day of practical jokes and high humor. Its origins are probably in France in 1582 when the change to the Gregorian calendar moved New Year from March 25 to January 1. Those who forgot were April fools

4.1—Captain Regents Day; San Marino

Every six months the Great and General Council of San Marino elect two Captain Regents to be the heads of the state and serve a 6-month term. The investiture of the Captain Regents takes place on April 1 and again on October 1

4.1—Greek Cypriot National Day; Cyprus

Commemorates the start of the guerrilla campaign on this day in 1955 when EOKA targeted British military and civilian installations on the island

4.1—Republic Day; Iran

Commemorates the day the country became a theocratic Islamic Republic state in 1979 following the triumph of the Islamic Revolution led by the Ayatollah Khomeini

4.2—Sizdebedar (Nature Day); Iran

In Persian, sizdevedar means “getting rid of 13th.” On the thirteenth day after Noruz, people spend the day outdoors, close to nature. It is believed that by going outdoors, in the protection of Mother Nature, misfortunes are avoided

4.2—International Children's Book Day; International

Celebrated on the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children's books

4.3—Declaration of the Second Republic “Power Taken by the Military”; Guinea

Marks the day in 1984 when CMRN troops lead by then-Lt Col Lansans Conte seized power and announced the establishment of the Second Republic

4.4—Women's & Children's Day; Taiwan

4.4—Independence Day; Senegal

Anniversary of achieving sovereignty in 1960

4.4—Memorial Day of Chiang Kai-shek; Taiwan

Marks the death in 1975 of Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissimo of the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China from 1928 to 1948

4.4—Hansik (Cold Food Festival) & Arbor Day; South Korea

A traditional Chinese holiday celebrated for three consecutive days starting the day before the Qingming Festival when no one is allowed to start the fire and people eat cold congee and steamed date cakes baked a day before the holiday. On non-leap years the holiday coincides with Arbor Day

4.5—Qingming Festival; Taiwan, South Korea, China, & Hong Kong

On this day the families clean the graves of their ancestors or relatives

4.5—Palm Sunday; Christian

Commemorates the day Jesus Christ was given a king's entry into Jerusalem, marked by the strewing of palm leaves before him. Marks the beginning of Holy Week

4.6—Chakri Day; Thailand

A national holiday honoring King Rama I, who in 1782 founded the Chakri dynasty (which still rules the country) and established Bangkok as the country's capital

4.6—Drop of Water is a Grain of Gold Day; Turkmenistan

A day to remember the priceless gift of water and to encourage the development of water economy

4.6—Uprising Day; Sudan

Anniversary of the 1985 coup

4.7—Day of Beauty & Mothers; Armenia

An official holiday dedicated to women in which each woman is celebrated as beautiful in her own way

4.7—National Mourning Day (Genocide Remembrance Day); Rwanda

Anniversary of the 100-day Rwandan genocide which took place in 1994. During the 100 days up to 800,000 Tutsis were killed by Hutu militia

4.7—Toussaint L'Ouverture Day; Haiti

Commemorates the death in 1803 of Toussaint L'Ouverture, an important leader of the Haitian Revolution

4.7—Women's Day; Mozambique

Celebrated on the anniversary of the death of Josina Machel, a gallant fighter who died in armed combat against Portuguese oppression. Women's Day is a day to celebrate women's achievements and reflect on their fight for equal rights

4.7—World Health Day; International

On this day events are held around the globe to mark the importance of health for productive and happy lives

4.8—Buddha's Birthday; Buddhist

Celebrates the founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama. He is thought to have lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE

4.8—Birthday of Sultan of Johor; Malaysia

4.8—Flower Festival; Japan

A festival to celebrate the birth of Buddha

4.9—Araw Ng Kagitingan (Valour Day); Philippines

Commemorates the battle of "Sardar Post" on the Gujarat border in 1965 when two companies of CRPF repulsed a brigade level attack by Pakistan

4.9—Martyr's Day; Tunisia

Honors and commemorates those who fought for freedom against French rule, which resulted in independence in 1956

4.9—Maundy Thursday; International

A feast day falling on the Thursday before Easter that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles

4.9—Memorial Day; Georgia

4.9—Mikael Agricola Day (Finnish Language Day); Finland

Honors the death on this date in 1557 of Mikael Agricola, a Finnish clergyman who became founder of written Finnish and one of the prominent proponents of the Protestant Reformation in Sweden-Finland

4.9—Independence Day (from Soviet Union); Georgia

Commemorates independence from Russia in 1991

4.9—Passover; Jewish

An eight-day festival marking the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Traditionally, the first and last two days are viewed as holy, while dietary restrictions last the entire week. Begins at sundown the previous day

4.10—Good Friday; Christian

Culminates the Lenten season and commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

4.11—Battle of Rivas; Costa Rica

Anniversary of the battle between Costa Rican militia under General Mora and the Nicaraguan forces of William Walker in 1856

4.12—Cosmonaut's Day; Russia

Commemorates the first manned earth orbit on this date in 1961 by Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin aboard the spacecraft Vostok 1

4.12—National Redemption Day; Liberia

Anniversary of the coup in 1980

4.12—Yuri's Night; International

An international celebration to commemorate two separate space exploration milestones—the launch of the first human into space, Yuri Gagarin, on this date in 1961, and the launch of the first Space Shuttle, STS-1, on this date in 1981

4.13—Buddhist New Year; Buddhism

Celebrated in many countries under many names

4.13—Vaisakhi; Hindu, Jain, Sikh

Marks the first day of the Hindu New Year. It is widely celebrated by Sikhs as the day when Guru Gobind Singh chose five leaders, known as the Panch Payare, and declared this day as the birthday of the Sikh nation

4.13—Cambodian New Year (Chaul Chnam Thmey); Cambodia

A celebration of the new year

4.13—Songkran Days (Thai New Year); Thailand

A celebration of the new year which coincides with the new year of the Dai calendar

4.13—Recollection of the Deceased; Georgia

4.14—Pan American Day; Latin America

A celebration in the 21 North, Central, and South American countries making up the Organization of American States, established in 1890

4.14—National Fast and Prayer Day; Liberia

A day set aside to mobilize national prayer for the spiritual cleansing and healing of the nation which came out of the political crisis between Liberia and Sierra Leone in the mid 1800s

4.14—Youth Day; Angola

4.14—Orange Day; Japan

A day for couples to confirm their love by exchanging oranges or orange-colored gifts

4.14—Ramanavami; Hindu

Celebrates the birth of Shri Rama, one of the incarnates of the Hindu god Vishnu. Fasting is common on these dates

4.15—Kim Il-sung's Birthday; North Korea

Commemorates the birth on this day in 1912 of Kim Il-Sung, leader of North Korea from its founding in 1948 until his death in 1994

4.16—De Diego's Birthday; Puerto Rico

Commemorates the birth on this day in 1866 of Dr. Jose de Diego y Benitez, statesman, journalist, poet, and advocate for Puerto Rico's independence from Spain and from the USA

4.16—Qana Memorial Day; Lebanon

Honors those who died during the Israeli massacre at Qana in 1996

4.16—Queen Margrethe’s Birthday; Denmark

Commemorates the birth of Queen Margrethe on this day in 1940, a week after German totalitarian lead Adolf Hitler invaded Denmark

4.17—Independence Day; Syria

Honors independence from France on this date in 1946

4.17—FAO Day; Iraq

4.17—Independence Day; Cambodia

Commemorates the day in 1975 when the Lon Nol dictatorship fell

4.18—Independence Day; Zimbabwe

A celebration of the end of white minority rule in 1980 and the formation of the republic. The country was formerly known as Rhodesia

4.19—Birthday of Sultan of Perak; Malaysia

4.19—Landing of the 33 Patriots; Uruguay

Anniversary of the landing of 33 exiles in 1825, who then began a campaign leading to Uruguay’s independence

4.19—Mov. Precursor de la Independencia; Venezuela

Commemorates the 1810 coup and start of the Venezuelan Independence

4.19—Republic Day; Sierra Leone

Commemorates the formation of the republic in 1971

4.19—Dia do Indio (Day of the Indian); Brazil

A celebration of the rich cultural heritage that stems from the indigenous peoples of Brazil

4.21—Tiradentes Day; Brazil

Honors Joaquim Jose da Silva Cavier, who lead a revolt against the Portuguese in 1789. He was a dentist and nicknamed Tiradentes, which means “tooth-puller”

4.21—Festival of Ridvan; Baha’i

A 12-day celebration commemorating Baha’u’llah’s stay in the Garden of Ridvan. During this time, he made his declaration of his mission as God’s messenger. Begins at sundown the previous day

4.21—Kartini Day; Indonesia

Marks the birthday of Raden Ayu Kartini, a pioneer in the area of women’s rights for native Indonesians

4.21—Kindergarten Day; Germany

Celebrated on the birthday of Friedrich Froebel who started the first Kindergarten in Germany in 1837

4.21—National Tree Planting Day; Kenya

On this day people often plant palm trees and coconut trees along the Pacific Coast that borders the East coast of Kenya

4.21—Queen’s Birthday; Falkland Islands

Marks the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II

4.21—Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day); Israel

Observed as a day of commemoration for the approximately 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust

4.21—International Creativity and Innovation Day; International

4.21—National Health Day; Kiribati

A day for people to participate in sport competitions coordinated by the Health Department

4.22—Earth Day; International

First observed in 1970 to call attention to pollution in the environment and the need to conserve natural resources

4.23—National Sovereignty Day and Children’s Day; Turkey

Commemorates the first Grand National Assembly in 1923, and also honors youth as the symbol of modern Turkey

4.23—Aragon Day; Spain

Celebrates the residency of Katherine of Aragon at Ampthill Castle, while her marriage to Henry VIII was annulled

4.23—Peppercorn Day; Bermuda

A holiday dating back to 1797, when officials use to collect one peppercorn as rent for the Old State House in Saint George

4.23—St. George's Day; International

The feast day of St. George celebrated on the traditionally accepted date of his death in 303 A.D.

4.23—Castilla y Leon Day; Spain

The anniversary of the Battle of Billalar, in which Castillian rebels were dealt a crushing defeat by the forces of King Charles I in the Revolt of the Comuneros on this day in 1521

4.24—Armenian Martyrs' Day; Armenia

Commemorates the 1915 Turkish massacre of 1 million Armenians

4.24—National Concord Day; Niger

Marks the 1995 agreement between the government and Tuareg groups

4.25—Liberation Day; Italy

Commemorates liberation from German troops in 1945

4.25—Sinai Day; Egypt

Commemorates the return of Sinai to Egypt in 1982 as part of the 1978 Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt

4.25—Anzac Day; Australia, New Zealand, Samoa

Honors those who died in both World Wars as well as in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Anzac stands for "Australia and New Zealand Army Corps"

4.25—Flag Day; Faroe Islands

Commemorates the day in 1940 when there was an announcement on the BBC calling on all Faroese to fly the Faroese national flag instead of the Danish flag

4.25—Fundacion Espanola; Peru

4.25—Liberty Day; Portugal

Celebrates the Carnation Revolution which brought an almost bloodless end to 48 years of Fascist rule under Antonio de Oliveira Salazar

4.25—National Flag Day; Swaziland

4.25—Horse Day; Turkmenistan

Celebrated the last Sunday in April in honor of the Akhalteke horse

4.26—Union Day; Tanzania

Marks when mainland Tanganyika and the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba joined in 1964

4.26—Red hill holiday; Russia

Celebrated the first Sunday after Easter, it is a day to welcome spring. The day is also considered the best for wedding ceremonies

4.27—Freedom Day; South Africa

Commemorates the day in 1994 when all people were allowed to vote regardless of race of heritage

4.27—Danbala Wedo; Haiti

A voodoo celebration

4.27—Independence Day; Sierra Leone

Marks independence from the United Kingdom in 1961

4.27—Independence Day; Togo

Marks independence from the Republic of Togo, a former French colony, in 1960

4.27—Day of Resistance; Slovenia

On this day the Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation was established in 1941

4.28—Sham el-Nessim; Egypt

A day to celebrate spring. *Sham* means “to breathe in” and *nessim* means “zephyr,” the spring breeze

4.28—Formation of the Islamic State’s Victory; Afghanistan

Commemorates the day when the Afghan mujahideen overthrew the Russian-backed regime in Afghanistan in 1992

4.28—Hero’s Day; Barbados

Celebrates the life and achievements of 10 of the most notable citizens—Grantely Adams, Errol Walton Barrow, Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir Frank Leslie Walcott, Sir Hugh Springer, Clement Osbourne Payne, Charles Duncan O’Neal, Samuel Jackman Prescod, Sarah Ann Gill, and Bussa

4.29—Showa-no-Hi (Showa Day); Japan

A day to commemorate the birth of Emperor Hirohito Michi-no-Miya (1901-1989)

4.29—Birthday of Sultan of Terengganu; Malaysia

4.29—Ming Loyalist Koxinga’s landing in Taiwan; Taiwan

Founder of the Kingdom of Tungning, the first Han Chinese government to rule Taiwan

4.30—Koninginendag; Netherlands

Celebrates former Queen Juliana’s 1909 birthday and Dutch National Day

4.30—Beltane; Celtic, Pagan

Beltane divided the ancient Celtic year in half. Fires were often lit to symbolize contact with the life-giving sun. The holiday is one of the “Great Sabbats” during the Wiccan year and celebrates the union of the Goddess and God

4.30—Children’s Day; Mexico

A day for the Mexican people to honor their children

4.30—King’s Birthday; Sweden

Marks the birth of Carl XVI Gustaf, king of Sweden since 1973

4.30—Liberation Day; Vietnam

Commemorates the fall of Saigon on this date in 1975, which marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period leading to the formal reunification of Vietnam under communist rule

4.30—Mange les Mort; Haiti

The day for feeding the dead in Voodoo tradition

4.30—Queen Beatrix’s Birthday; Curacao

4.30—Rincon’s Day; Bonaire

A celebration to reintroduce Bonaire’s youth to its rich history

4.30—Walpurgis Night; International

A celebration named after Saint Walpurga