



INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 2009

1.1—Independence Day; Haiti

A celebration of independence from France in 1804

1.1—Independence Day; Sudan

Marks independence from Egypt and Britain in 1956

1.1—Liberation Day; Cuba

This day marks two events: the end of Spanish rule in 1899 and the overthrow of the dictator Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar, who fled to Miami on this day in 1959

1.1—Founding of Republic of China; Taiwan

Commemorates the founding of Republic of China on this date in 1912

1.1—Independence Day; Cameroon

On this day in 1960 French Cameroons was granted independence

1.1—Independence Day of the Slovak Republic; Slovakia

Commemorates the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993

1.1—Junkanoo; Bahamas

A street parade with music which occurs in many towns across the Bahamas every Boxing Day and New Year's Day

1.1—St. Basil's Day; Bulgaria

Feast day for St. Basil, one of the greatest pillars of the Church, who died on this date in 379A.D

1.2—Ancestry Day; Haiti

A day to honor Haitian heroes

1.2—Berchtold's Day; Liechtenstein & Switzerland

Honors Duke Berchtold V, who founded Bern, the capital of Switzerland

1.2—Bridge Day; New Caledonia

1.2—Victory of the Armed Forces; Cuba

1.2—Kaapse Klopse; South Africa

A minstrel festival that takes place annually in Cape Town

1.4—Day of Martyrs of the Colonial Repression; Angola

Honors the tens of thousands of Angolans killed on this date in 1961 by troops of the then Portuguese colonial regime following the uprising by peasants against exploitation and bad living conditions

1.4—Martyrs of Independence Day; Zaire (Democratic Congo)

Commemorates the day in 1959 when more than 300 persons lost their lives during a public meeting turned revolt

1.4—Independence Day; Myanmar/Burma

A celebration of independence from Great Britain in 1948

1.5—Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday; Sikh religious holiday

Celebrates the birth of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs

1.5—Dia de la Toma; Spain

The anniversary of the capture or taking possession of Granada by the army of Ferdinand and Isabella

1.6—Carnival Season; Christian, International

An age-old festival observed in parts of Europe and the Americas. The entire period from the Christian observances of Epiphany to Ash Wednesday is called Carnival and culminates in Mardi Gras. It signifies a time of indulgences featuring elaborate costumes, parades, and dancing in city streets

1.6—Epiphany; International

Also called Twelfth Day, celebrated 12 days after Christmas. Epiphany means “dawning of light” and commemorates the visit of three wise men to the baby Jesus, who would later be known as Jesus Christ, the Christians' Savior

1.6—Three Kings Day; International

A day of celebration in many parts of Europe, Latin America, and South America that is the traditional time of gift giving and the culmination of the Christmas season

1.7—Ashoura (Ashura); International

For Sunni Muslims, a commemoration of Noah's leaving the ark on Mount Ararat, but for Shi Muslims, a somber day dedicated to the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, at the Battle of Karbala in AD 680. The schism between Sunni and Shia Muslims dates from this event. Begins at sundown the previous day

1.7—Easrer Day; Sudan

1.7—St. John's Day; Bulgaria

An Eastern Orthodox feast day celebrating John the Baptist

1.7—Tumbes Anniversary; Peru

A celebration in the city of Tumbes including a serenade and an exhibition of fireworks

1.7—Victory Day Over the Genocidal Regime; Cambodia

Commemorates the Vietnamese assault on Cambodia in 1979 which brought an end to the Khmer Rouge's bloody regime

1.8—Commonwealth Day; Northern Marianas

1.8—National Takai Day; Niue

A New Year's celebration which includes villagers decorating their vehicles and traveling around the island to visit one another as well as a feast

1.9—Martyr's Day; Palau**1.9—Day of Mourning;** Panama

Commemorates the 1964 riots over sovereignty of the Panama Canal Zone

1.10—Traditional Day; Benin

Proclaimed in 1996 by the president of Benin to celebrate traditional religious faiths, including Voudon, the 400-year-old belief practiced by the majority of the population

1.11—Constitution Day (Kosrae); Micronesia**1.11—Hostos Day;** Puerto Rico

Honors the life Eugenio Maria de Hostos, born on this day, a writer and statesman who struggled for Puerto Rican independence and the end to slavery in the late 19th century

1.11—Independence Manifesto; Morocco

Marks the day in 1944 when a group of nationalists handed the French colonial authorities a document requesting the independence of Morocco under the leadership of the late King Mohammed V

1.11—National Unity Day; Nepal

Commemorates the birth of King Prithvinarayan Shah and his contributions towards unifying Nepal

1.11—Republic Day; Albania

Anniversary of the establishment of Albania in 1946

1.11—Sir John A Macdonald's Birthday; Canada

Marks the birthday of the first Prime Minister of Canada, considered the Father of the Confederation

1.12—Arbor Day; Jordan

A day set aside to plant trees

1.12—Commemoration or Remembrance Day (Anniversary of the Battle of Geok-Tepe); Turkmenistan

Commemorates the date in 1881 when Russian forces under the command of General Mikhail Skobelev breached the fortress of Geok Tepe after a 21 day siege. Thousands of Turkmen soldiers and civilians were killed

1.12—Youth Day; India

Celebrated on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. The observation includes processions, speeches, recitations, music, youth conventions, seminars, Yogasana presentations, as well as competitions in essay-writing, recitations, speeches, music, and sports.

1.12—Zanzibar Revolution Day; Tanzania

Commemorates the 1964 revolution which resulted in Zanzibar becoming part of Tanzania

1.13—St. Knut's Day; Norway, Sweden

The traditional end of the Christmas season, when the tree is dismantled at a final holiday party. In Norway know as Tyvendedagen (20th day) and in Sweden as Tjugondag Knut (the 20th day of Knut)

1.13—Defenders of Freedom Day; Lithuania

Commemorates the date in 1991 when Lithuanians gathered to protect strategic locations against Soviet invasion

1.13—Liberation Day; Togo

Commemorates the anniversary of the 1967 military takeover which brought Gnassingbe Eyadema into power

1.13—St. Melania's Day (Malanka); Ukraine

Celebrates the feast day of St. Melania. Marks the end of the Christmas holidays and includes carolers led by a bachelor dressed in women's clothing playing pranks and acting out small plays

1.14—Seijin-no-Hi (Coming of Age Day); Japan

Honors the coming of age of those persons who have turned 20 in the preceding year

1.14—Makar Sankranti; Hindu

A Hindu and South Indian winter solstice observation marking the beginning of the Pongal festival

1.15—Fiesta del Nino Perdido en Huancavelica; Peru

A festival held in honor of the Christ Child, include bands and traditional dancers

1.15—John Chilembwe Day; Malawi

Celebrated as a hero for independence, John Chilembwe was an educator and early figure in resistance to colonialism

1.16—National Day of Peace; El Salvador

Marks the day in 1992 when a peace treaty was signed in Mexico City, officially ending the 12-year civil war that claimed 75,000 lives

1.16—Martyr's Day; Benin

Anniversary of the mercenary attack on Cotonou

1.16—Russian Winter Festival; Russia

1.17—Antonovden (St. Anthony's Day); Bulgaria

Marks the feast day of St. Anthony who is appealed to against infectious diseases as such the day is devoted to protection from diseases. Women usually bake ritual bread, spread with honey, to give to neighbors and friends for health

1.18—Lima Foundation Week; Peru

Official celebration of the founding of Lima by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535

1.18—Revolution Day; Tunisia

Commemorates the nationalist movements in the 1930's and 1940's that led to independence in 1956 and the abolishment of the monarchy in 1957

1.20- World Religion Day; Baha'i

A Baha'i-sponsored observance started in 1590 to emphasize that the goals of religion are to create unity among people, ease suffering, and bring about peace

1.20—Chiaraque en Canas; Peru

1.20—Day of Martyrs (Day of Sorrow); Azerbaijan

Commemorates Black January in 1990 when Soviet troops entered Baku and killed more than 180 civilians. Victims of the Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988) are also remembered on this date

1.20—Death of Amilcar Cabral; Guinea Bissau

Honors the death of Amilcar Lopes Cabral, an African agronomic engineer, writer, Marxist, and nationalist politician who led independence movements. He was assassinated in 1973 just months before Guinea-Bissau declared unilateral independence

1.20—Festival of Sao Sebastiao (Rio de Janeiro); Brazil

Honors the patron saint of Rio with an evening procession

1.21—Altagracia Day; Dominican Republic

Also known as Our Lady of High Grace Day, celebrated with pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady Peace

1.21—Errol Barrow Day; Barbados

Honors the 1920 birth of the leader who led Barbados to freedom from Britain

1.21—St. Sarkis's Day; Armenia

Honors the saint who fought against the Georgians. St. Sarkis gradually came to symbolize love and romance

1.21—Saint Jovan; Serbia

1.22—Tu B'Shevat; Jewish

Israel's New Year celebration for trees, similar to National Arbor Day in the U.S. Jews around the world also observe this holiday. Begins at sundown the previous day

1.23—St. Vincent Day; Spain, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Celebrated on the birthday of St. Vincent Ferrer of Valencia Spain

1.24—Economic Liberation Day; Togo

1.25—Commemoration Birthday of G.F. Croes; Aruba

Marks the birthday of G.F. Croes, Aruban political activist who was a proponent of Aruba's separation from the rest of the Netherlands Antilles. He is called the father of the Aruban nation

1.25—Foundation Day (Sao Paulo); Brazil

Commemorates the founding of the largest city in Brazil by Jesuit missionaries on this date in 1554

1.25—St. Tatiana Day (beginning of Winter Holiday); Russia

Honors the life of Saint Tatiana, patron saint of students, a Christian martyr in the 3rd century Rome during the reign of Emperor Alexander Severus

1.25—Burn's Night; Scotland

Celebration of the life and poetry of poet Robert Burns. Suppers of haggis and Scotch whisky are held

1.25—Kirmeline; Lithuania

Celebrates the symbolic return of the snake deities from the forests to the villages

1.26—Republic Day; India

Marks India's severed ties from Great Britain in 1950

1.26—Australia Day; Australia

Commemorates the anniversary of the first British settlement in 1788, which was a penal colony established to help relieve overcrowding in British prisons

1.26—Duarte Day; Dominican Republic
Celebrates the 1814 birth of Juan Pablo Duarte, one of the fathers of the country

1.26—Foundation Day (Santos); Brazil
Marks the founding of Santos, a municipality in Sao Paulo, in 1546 by the Portuguese nobleman Bras Cubas

1.27—Feast of St. Sava; Serbia
Honors the first Archbishop of Serbia

1.27—Sainte Devote; Monaco
Honors the patron saint of the Grimaldi family. On the Eve of the holiday a boat is burnt on the square at nightfall in the presence of the royal family to symbolize the boat carrying St. Devote's body which drifted off course and ran aground on the coast of Monaco

1.28—Democracy Day; Rwanda

1.29—Martyrs Memorial Day; Nepal
Commemorate the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom and democracy

1.31—Independence Day; Naurau (one of the Gilbert Islands)
Marks independence in 1968 from a U.N. trusteeship administered by Australia, New Zealand, and Britain

1.31—Sadeh (Midwinter Festival); Iran
Sadeh, meaning "hundred," is the festival honoring fire, an element of nature and source of warmth and light. In Persian mythology, Hooshang, a mythical king, discovered fire