

INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS



MAY 2009

5.1—**Flores de Mayo** (Flowers of May); Philippines

A festival of tribute to the Christian Blessed Virgin Mary that lasts the entire month

5.1—**Labor Day**; Haiti

5.1—**Constitution and Independence Day**; Marshall Islands

Anniversary of the proclamation of the republic

5.1—**Constitution Day**; Latvia

5.1—**Dia del Trabajo** (Labor Day); Mexico

5.1—**Fete du Travail** (Labor Day); Djibouti

5.1—**Kazakhstan People's Unity Day**; Kazakhstan

Originally known as International Day of the Workers' Solidarity, this holiday was re-named People's Unity by Kazakh Presidential Decree in 1995

5.2—**Dos de Mayo**; Spain

Marks the day in 1808 when the people of Madrid rebelled against the occupation of the city by French troops, provoking a brutal repression by the French Imperial forces and triggering the Peninsular War

5.2—**National Flag Day**; Poland

5.3—**Kempo Kinen-Bi** (Constitution Memorial Day); Japan

Commemorates the 1947 democratic constitution

5.3—**Swieto Trzeciego Maja** (Constitution Day); Poland

Commemorates ratification of the first constitution in 1791

5.3—**Fiesta de las Cruces**; Peru

A festival which includes a procession of decorative crosses to neighboring churches

5.3—**La Cruz de Mayo** (The cross of May); Venezuela

Originally a celebration of spring, fertility, and nature rites, with the advent of Christianity this holiday became a time of homage to the cross

5.3—**Constitution Day**; Japan

Celebration of the post-war constitution of Japan

5.4—**Cassinga Day**; Namibia

Marks the day in 1978 when hundreds of unarmed Namibian refugees were massacred by South African troops

5.4—Crown Prince’s Birthday; Tonga

Honors King George Tupou V, current king of Tonga, born on this day in 1948

5.4—Kokumin-no-Kyujitsu (National Holiday); Japan

Also known as “People’s Day”, this holiday fills the gap between Constitution Day and Children’s, Day but is not celebrated if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday

5.4—National Youth Day; China

Commemorates the beginning of the May Fourth Movement in 1919

5.4—Proclamation of Independence (Declaration of the Republic); Latvia

Latvia was declared an independent republic on this day in 1990

5.4—Remembrance Day for Martyrs & Disabled; Afghanistan

Commemorates those killed or wounded in the Soviet/Afghani War

5.4—Herdenkings Day (Remembrance Day); Netherlands

Commemorates all the Dutch who have died in conflicts worldwide

5.5—Dutch Liberation Day; Netherlands

Celebrates the day on which Nazi forces were driven out of Holland by the Allies in 1945

5.5—Cinco de Mayo; Mexico

Celebrates the victory over French invaders at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. In the U.S., it has become a day for citizens of Mexican heritage to celebrate their ancestry

5.5—Kodomo-no-Hi (Children’s Day); Japan

A national holiday that was once known as Boys’ Day but since 1948 has been a day to honor both boys and girls. Some still practice the old custom of flying wind socks in the shape of carp (a symbol of strength, courage, and determination shown in its upstream journey)

5.5—May Bank Holiday; Ireland, Republic of U.K.

One of several Mondays during the warm weather months when banks and other businesses throughout Europe are closed to provide workers with a three-day weekend

5.5—Constitution Day; Kyrgyzstan

Commemorates the establishment of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic

5.5—Coronation Day; Thailand

Commemorates the coronation of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 1950

5.5—Indian Heritage Day; Guyana

Marks the date on which the first East Indian immigrant arrived in Guyana

5.5—Kvetnove povstani ceskeho lidu (Prague Uprising-1945); Czech Republic

Commemorates the attempt by the Czech resistance to liberate the city of Prague from German occupation on this day in 1945

5.5—Senior Citizen’s Day; Palau

5.6—Army Day; Bulgaria

Commemorated on the feast day of St. George, the patron saint of the Bulgarian Army

5.6—Martyr’s Day; Lebanon & Syria

Marks the Turkish occupation hanging of Syrian and Lebanese patriots in Beirut and Damascus on this day in 1916

5.6—Samuel K. Doe Day; Liberia

Marks the birth of Samuel Kanyon Doe in 1951, President of Liberia from 1980 to 1990

5.6—St. George’s Day; Bosnia-Herzegovina & Bulgaria

The feast day of St. George which is marked by morning picnics, music, and folk dances, as well as eating a whole lamb, as St. George is the patron saint of shepherds

5.6—Hidirellez Festival; Turkey

A celebration of the first day of spring and the awakening of nature

5.7—Hari Hol Pahang; Malaysia

A day for citizens to remember the past and pay tribute or gratitude to the past Sultans and royalties of the state. Special ceremonies are carried out by palace officials and royalties at the graves or mausoleums of the past Sultans

5.8—Yom ha'Atzma'ut (Independence Day); Israel

Commemorates the formation of the independent state of Israel and its government on May 14, 1948

5.8—V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day); International

Marks the 1945 unconditional surrender of Germany to Allied forces

5.8—Parent's Day; South Korea

This holiday is usually celebrated by giving a carnation with presents to parents and/or singing the Parents' Day song

5.8—Red Cross Day; International

A day to remember the efforts that all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies do worldwide to advocate for the relief of human suffering

5.9—Victory Day; Russia

Commemorates the 1945 surrender of German forces in Eastern Europe and honors the 20 million Soviet people who died in World War II

5.9—Mother's Day; Belarus

5.9—National Heroes Day; Moldova

5.9—Day of Memory and Honor; Uzbekistan

A day to honor those who gave their lives during World War II

5.10—Constitution Day; Micronesia

Marks the proclamation of the Federated State of Micronesia on this day in 1979

5.10—Dia de la Madre (Mother's Day); Mexico

A day to honor all mothers throughout the country

5.12—Mangers pour divers loas; Haiti

Feeding of a different loa

5.12—Lag B'omer; Israel

Celebrates the anniversary of the passing of the great sage and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai as well as commemorates the weeks between Passover and Shavuot when a plague raged amongst the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva and on this day the dying ceased

5.12—Nurse's Day; Australia

A day to acknowledge the important role nurses play in Australia's health system

5.12—St. Andrew's Day; Georgia

Celebration of the Apostle Andrew, founder of the Georgian Orthodox Church

5.13—Gospel Day; Tuvalu

5.14—Independence Day; Paraguay

A two-day celebration of independence from Spain in 1811

5.14—Unification and Integration Day; Liberia

Dedicated to the National Unification Party

5.15—Independence Day; Paraguay

Marks independence from Spain in 1811

5.15—International Day of Families; International

A day to highlight the importance of family

5.15—Mother's Day; Samoa

5.15—San Isidro; Spain, Chile, Peru

Saint Isidore's feast day. Saint Isidore is the patron saint of peasants, day laborers, and farmers.

5.15—Nabas Bariw Festival; Philippines

Celebrated to commemorate the feast day of St. Isidore, the patron saint of Nabas. The celebration showcases the town's hat, mat and bariw products as well as the town's unique tourism sites and natural attractions

5.15—Teacher's Day; South Korea

Originally it was started by a group of Red Cross youth team members who visited their sick ex-teachers at hospitals. On the celebration day, teachers are usually presented with carnations by their students. Ex-students pay their respects to the former teachers by visiting them and handing a carnation

5.17—Syttende Mai (Constitution Day); Norway

Marks independence from Denmark and the day in 1814 on which the constitution was signed

5.17—Constitution Day; Nauru

Anniversary of the constitution in 1968

5.17—Dia das Letras Galegas (Galician Literature Day); Spain

The first holiday took place in 1963 to commemorate the date in 1863 when Cantares gallegos, the first work written in the Galician language by Rosalia de Castro, who later became one of the most important poets in the history of Galicia, was published. Since 1963, each holiday has been dedicated to a different writer in the Galician language

5.18—Manger pour Gran'n Aloumandia (Feeding of Grande Aloumandia); Haiti

5.18—Battle of Las Piedras; Uruguay

Commemorates the end of the Battle of Las Piedras in 1828. During this battle Uruguay defeated Brazil in the final conflict during their struggle for independence

5.18—Revival & Unity Day; Turkmenistan

Commemorates the day in 1992 when the Constitution of Turkmenistan was accepted as well as a day to honor the classic of Turkmen literature, poet and philosopher Magtymguly Pyragy

5.19—Ataturk Commemoration and Youth and Sports Day; Turkey

Commemorates the landing at Samsun in 1919 of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the beginning of a national movement for independence. On this day, young athletes carry torches to the sites of athletic contests

5.19—Ho Chi Minh's Birthday; Vietnam

Commemorates the birth of Ho Chi Minh in 1890. Ho Chi Minh was a Communist, Marxist-Leninist Vietnamese revolutionary and statesman, who later became prime minister then president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

5.20—National Day; Cameroon

Commemorates the establishment of the Republic of Cameroon on this day in 1972

5.20—Vesak; Buddhist

Theravada Buddhist celebration of the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha

5.20—Independence Day; East Timor

Portugal granted independence to East Timor in 1975, but it was soon after invaded by Indonesia, which only recognized East Timorese independence in 2002

5.20—Party Day (Popular Movement Day); Zaire (Democratic Congo)

Anniversary of the Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution (MPR), the political party of Mobutu. Until 1990 it was the only legal political party

5.20—Simbi Blanc; Haiti

5.21—Independence Day; Montenegro

Marks independence from State union with Serbia in 2006

5.21—Naval Glories Day (Battle of Iquique); Chile

Commemorates the confrontation on this day in 1879 during the naval stage of the War of the Pacific, a conflict between Chile and the alliance between Peru and Bolivia

5.21—Sheep Festival; Cameroon

Celebrates the descent of the sheep herds from the mountains

5.21—World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development; International

The day provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to “live together” better

5.22—National Day; Yemen

Commemorates the reunification of Yemen in 1990

5.22—National Sovereignty; Haiti

Dedicated to the head of state and to the nation’s culture

5.22—International Day for Biological Diversity; International

Proclaimed by the United Nations as a day to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues

5.23—Declaration of the Bab; Baha’i

Commemorates when the Bab, the prophet-herald of the Baha’i faith, revealed in 1844, in Shiraz, Persia (now Iran), that he was the herald of a greater messenger of God. Begins at sundown the previous day

5.23—Labor Day; Jamaica

Commemorates the day in 1938 when Alexander Bustamante led a labor rebellion leading to Jamaican independence

5.24—Battle of Pichincha; Ecuador

Commemorates the Battle Pichincha which took place on this day in 1822 between a Patriot army under General Antonio Jose de Sucre against a Royalist army commanded by Field Marshall Melchor Aymerich. The defeat of the Royalist forces brought the liberation of Quito and secured the independence of the Spanish colonial administrative jurisdiction from which the Republic of Ecuador would emerge

5.24—Bermuda Day; Bermuda

Traditionally the first day local residents will go into the sea

5.24—Commonwealth Day; Belize

National holiday in honor of the Queen’s birthday

5.24—Sts. Cyrilus and Methodius Day; Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia

Commemorates the creation of the Slavic Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets by the brothers Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as the introduction of literacy and the preaching of the gospels in the Slavonic language

5.24—Liberation Day; Eritrea

Commemorates the day in 1991 when fighters of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front captured Asmara and completed the liberation of the entire country of Eritrea from the Ethiopian colonial occupation army

5.25—Independence Day; Eritrea

Marks independence from Ethiopian rule in 1993 after a 30-year civil war

5.25—Independence Day; Jordan

Commemorates the 1946 treaty that established the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and independence from Great Britain

5.25—Revolution Day; Argentina

Marks declared independence in 1810 from the Spanish viceroy of Lima, Peru

5.25—African Freedom Day; International

Anniversary of the 1963 formation of the Organization of African Unity by 30 African leaders. The day is marked by sports contests, political rallies, and tribal dances

5.25—OAU Day; Equatorial Guinea

Anniversary of the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963

5.25—Youth Day; Bosnia-Herzegovina

5.26—Independence Day; Guyana

Marks independence from British rule in 1966

5.26—Independence Day; Georgia

Marks the day of the First Republic in 1918

5.26—Mother’s Day; Poland

5.26—Prince Frederik’s Birthday; Denmark

Marks the birth of Frederik, heir apparent to the Throne of Denmark

5.26—Sorry Day; Australia

Instituted to acknowledge the wrong that had been done to the indigenous families when Aboriginal children were removed from their families as well as a day in remembrance of the mistreatment of the Aboriginal people

5.27—Abolition of Slavery; Guadeloupe

Commemorates the abolition of slavery in 1848

5.27—Mother’s Day; Bolivia

5.27—Reconciliation Week; Australia

A time to give people across Australia the opportunity to focus on reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians

5.28—National Flag Day; Philippines

Commemorates the day in 1898 when the modern flag of the Philippines was first displayed in battle

5.28—Overthrow of the Dergue Regime; Ethiopia

Marks the overthrow of the Dergue dictatorial regime on this day in 1991

5.28—Republic Day; Azerbaijan

Commemorates the founding of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918

5.28—Restoration of Armenia’s Statehood Day; Armenia

Anniversary of the Declaration of the first Armenian Republic in 1918

5.29—Ascension of Baha’u’lla; Baha’i

Commemorates the 1892 death of the prophet-founder of the Baha’i faith. Begins at sundown the previous day

5.29—Anniversary of the death of President Ali Soilih; Comoros

Marks the Death of Ali Soilih, Comorian socialist and President of the revolutionary council from January 1976 until May 1978

5.29—Shavu’ot (Giving of the Torah); Israel

Commemorates the anniversary of the day God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai

5.30—Harvest Festival; Malaysia

Characterized by cultural performances, music, traditional dances, food, and drink, the Harvest Festival celebrates the bounty of the harvest

5.30—Indian Arrival Day; Trinidad & Tobago

Commemorates the arrival of the first Indian indentured laborers from India to Trinidad in 1845 on the ship Fatel Razack

5.30—Mother’s Day; Nicaragua

5.30—Croatian Parliament Day; Croatia

Commemorates the establishment of the first multiparty Croatian highest law-making body in 1990

5.31—Armed Forces Day; Brunei Darussalam

Commemorates the formation of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces

5.31—Dia de Castilla la Mancha; Spain

5.31—No Tobacco Day; Australia

An opportunity to educate people about tobacco, the largest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia

5.31—Carpet Day; Turkmenistan

Celebrated on the last Sunday in May with a large-scale exposition of handmade carpets