

<b>January</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh)</b>
	Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and last human guru. He chose the Sikh holy book to be his successor. His birthday is celebrated by a 48 hour non-stop reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (holy book), plus prayers, songs and stories about his life.
<b>6</b>	<b>Epiphany</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Orthodox Christmas Day</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Orthodox New Year</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>World Religion Day</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Saraswati Puja/Vasant Panchami</b>
	Vasant Panchami is the Hindu Spring Festival. It is also the birthday of Saraswati – the goddess of wisdom and learning. On this day many Hindus wear yellow, eat yellow sweets or saffron rice. It is considered a good day to initiate learning.

<b>February</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Candlemas/Imbolc</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Maha Shivaratri</b>
	This is the day Hindus celebrate the god Shiva. It is said to be the day he married the goddess Parvati. Many Hindus go to the temple to worship Shiva on this day.
<b>13</b>	<b>Shrove Tuesday/Carnival</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday/Carnival</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Valentine's Day</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Chinese New Year</b>
	This year is the Year of the Dog
<b>16</b>	<b>Losar (Tibetan New Year)</b>
	Tibetan Buddhists celebrate the New Year by cleaning their homes. They bake dough balls with coloured filling – the colour of the filling you receive is a reflection of your character.

<b>March</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>St David's Day</b>
	Saint David is the patron saint of Wales. The first day of March was chosen in remembrance of his death. Tradition holds that he died on that day in 569. The date was declared a national day of celebration within Wales in the 18th century.
<b>1</b>	<b>Magha Puja</b>
	Marks four auspicious events occurring at the Veluvana bamboo grove. It is now a day to give thanks to the Buddhist monks. Food is given to the temple in the morning. In the evening a procession three times around the shrine or statue of Buddha.
<b>1</b>	<b>Purim</b>
	Commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, who was planning to kill all the Jews. Today traditions include reading the book of Esther which tells the story of Haman; dressing up, watching a play of it, eating "haman's pockets" - a type of biscuit.
<b>2</b>	<b>Chinese Lantern Festival</b>
	On this day, as you can imagine many Chinese people light lanterns. There is also a tradition of writing a riddle on the lanterns for other people to guess. Try our paper lantern craft activity: <a href="http://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/downloads/Chinese-lanterns.pdf">www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/downloads/Chinese-lanterns.pdf</a>
<b>2</b>	<b>Holi</b>
	Commemorates the legend of Prahlada and King Hiranyakashipu - the victory of good over evil. Now it is a festival of colour or love. Throwing coloured water or powder. It is the origin of Colour Runs that many non-Hindus take part in today.
<b>3-5</b>	<b>Hola Mohalla</b>
	On Feb 22, 1701, Guru Gobind Singh started a new tradition by overseeing a day of mock battles and poetry contests at Holgarh Fort. The tradition has since spread to Gurdwaras around the world. These days martial arts parades are common in Sikh communities.
<b>11</b>	<b>Mothers' Day</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>St Patrick's Day</b>
	Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish in general.
<b>25</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Maundy Thursday</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>
<b>31 – 7 April</b>	<b>Passover</b>
	This celebrates how the Jews were led out of Egypt, and slavery, by Moses. They left in a hurry and their bread didn't have time to rise, so today many eat unleavened bread called Matzah. Jewish families eat a special meal during Passover.

<b>April</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Easter Sunday</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Easter Monday</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Orthodox Good Friday</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Orthodox Easter</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Orthodox Easter Monday</b>
<b>13-15</b>	<b>Songkran</b>
	Originally only a Thai festival it is now associated with Buddhists in other countries too. It is a time for young people to remember and show respect to their elders by sprinkling their hands with scented water. Later bathing a statue of Buddha (symbolizing purification, washing away sins and bad luck) was added to the festival. Today it is a huge water festival, famous around the world.
<b>14</b>	<b>Vaisakhi</b>
	This is a festival to celebrate the founding of Sikhism, it coincides with the New Year festival in the Punjab. It is usually celebrated with parades and dancing. Many dress up as the PanjPiare (the original "Beloved Five" who were baptised into the Sikh faith) in blue tunics.
<b>23</b>	<b>St George's Day</b>
	St George is the Patron Saint of England. This date is widely accepted as the day he died in 303AD. He is commemorated by the flying of the St George's cross.

<b>May</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Lailat ul Bara'ah</b>
	The Night of Forgiveness. Many Muslims pray for forgiveness from their sins on this night. It is also a time for giving to charity and giving out sweets to local children and to families who have lost someone. In some areas it is celebrated with fireworks too.
<b>10</b>	<b>Ascension Day</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Start of Ramadan</b>
	Ramadan is a month-long festival during which Muslims fast every day during daylight hours. It is a period to re-read the Quran and to give up bad habits.
<b>20</b>	<b>Shavuot</b>
	Commemorates the day God gave the Torah to the Jewish people. It is celebrated seven weeks after Passover.
<b>20</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Whit Monday</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Vesakha Puja/Buddha Day</b>
	This day celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha – which all happened on the same date (in different years). On this day Buddhists often worship all day at the temple, and in the evening they form a candle-lit procession in which they walk three times around the temple.
<b>31</b>	<b>Corpus Christi</b>

<b>June</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Laylat al-Qadr</b>
	The Night of Power – commemorates when God first revealed the Quran to Mohammed. For Muslims it is a time to pray for mercy, forgiveness and salvation.
<b>15</b>	<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>
	This celebrates the end of Ramadan, breaking the fast. Muslims give thanks to Allah for giving them self-restraint (fasting during Ramadan). They celebrate with processions, wearing their best clothes and giving gifts to children. They also give to charity to help the poor.
<b>16</b>	<b>Martyrdom of Guru Arjan</b>
	Guru Arjan was the fifth Sikh guru. He started the Sikh holy book by collecting together the writings of previous gurus. He was martyred in 1606 because he had gathered too large a following and refused to convert to Islam.
<b>17</b>	<b>Fathers' Day</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Dragon Boat Festival</b>
	This festival has evolved from a legend about the death of a famous poet Qu Yuan. He drowned himself in a lake, the local people rushed out in their boats to try to save him. Many also threw food into the water to distract the fish from destroying his body. Today, on the anniversary of his death, many Dragon Boat races are held all over China, but also in other parts of the world.

<b>July</b>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Puri Ratha Yatra</b>
	This is a Hindu chariot festival in which three enormous chariots are built to carry the icons of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in a procession across the town of Puri. Many pilgrims go to Puri to pull the chariots.
<b>22</b>	<b>Tisha B'av</b>
	This is a commemoration of the tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, traditionally by fasting and abstinence.
<b>27</b>	<b>Asalha Puja/Dharma Day</b>
	This celebrates Buddha's first sermon and setting the wheel in motion on the path to enlightenment. Buddhists go to temple and listen to many of Buddha's sermons and hold candle-lit processions around the statue of Buddha.

<b>August</b>	
<b>15</b>	<b>Assumption of Mary</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Raksha Bandhan/Rakhi</b>
	This is a Hindu festival of brotherhood and love. Girls traditionally make a bracelet for their brother or other male relative. By tying the bracelet on their brother's arm it shows their love for him, and also asks for their brother's protection.
<b>22</b>	<b>Eid-al-Adha</b>
	This festival coincides with the end of the period in which Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The festival celebrates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son. Traditionally each family slaughters an animal and divides the meat between themselves, friends and neighbours and those in need.

<b>September</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Installation of the Sikh scriptures in the Harmandir (Golden Temple)</b>
	This day commemorates the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy book) being delivered to its final home, the Golden Temple in Amritsar.
<b>2</b>	<b>Krishna Jayanti</b>
	This is a festival which celebrates the birth of Krishna. Typically, Hindus fast for two days and then dance and sings songs about Krishna
<b>10</b>	<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>
	Jewish New Year. Traditions include Tashlikh – casting off – where Jews empty their pockets into a river or stream to symbolise casting off their sins. Then they can look forward to a better life in the New Year. Also eating apples coated in honey, or bread dipped in honey as a wish for a "sweet" New Year.
<b>12</b>	<b>Muharram</b>
	Islamic New Year. Dates vary across countries. Muharram is actually the first month in the Islamic Hijri Calendar.
<b>12</b>	<b>Ganesh Chaturthi</b>
	This is the Hindu festival for the god Ganesh. Typically families will bring a new clay idol of the god into their homes and worship it.
<b>19</b>	<b>Yom Kippur</b>
	Is the holiest of days in the Jewish calendar. The day of atonement. The day is usually observed by a 25 hour fast and prayers at synagogue.
<b>24-30</b>	<b>Sukkot</b>
	This commemorates the forty years that the children of Israel spent wandering in the desert, it also coincides with the harvest. Today Sukkot is celebrated by building a temporary shelter, in your garden, to live in.

<b>October</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Rabbit in The Moon Festival</b>
	The rabbit is a symbol of the moon in Chinese mythology. The legend tells of Chang'e who became the Moon Goddess after drinking an elixir of immortality, to save it from falling into wicked hands. The festival is celebrated with lighting lanterns and making/eating mooncakes.
<b>9-17</b>	<b>Navaratri/Durga Puja</b>
	This is one of the most important Hindu festivals, it celebrates the goddess Durga. The nine days of the festival represent the nine manifestations of the goddess. Days are spent worshipping idols of the goddess and the nights are spent dancing the Garba.
<b>20</b>	<b>Conferring of Guruship on the Guru Granth Sahib.</b>
	The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, declared that he would be the last living guru, and that henceforth the Sikh book of scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, would become the last and eternal guru for all Sikhs.
<b>28</b>	<b>Picnic in a High Place</b>
	This is a Chinese festival to celebrate how Huan Jing (a student of FeiChangfang) and his family were saved from disaster by climbing a mountain, carrying sprigs of dogwood and drinking chrysanthemum wine. Today Chinese people go for a picnic in a "high place", drink wine and/or eat sweet cakes.
<b>31</b>	<b>Halloween</b>

<b>November</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>All Saints' Day</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>All Souls' Day</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Guy Fawkes</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Diwali</b>
	Although this is thought of as a Hindu festival, it is also celebrated by Sikhs because it marks the date of when Guru Hargobind was released from prison. They celebrate by lighting up the Golden Temple. For Hindus it is also a festival of light and a time to celebrate the harvest.
<b>11</b>	<b>Remembrance Sunday</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Birthday of Guru Nanak</b>
	Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikhism. His birthday is celebrated with a 48-hour reading of the Sikh scriptures. In some places they hold processions with music. On the morning of his birthday the gurdwaras are decorated with flowers and lights, Sikhs come here to pray, sing and eat together.
<b>21</b>	<b>Prophet's Birthday/Milad un Nabi</b>
	Muslims celebrate the birth of the prophet Mohammed, usually through prayer and telling stories about his life.
<b>30</b>	<b>St Andrew's Day</b>
	St Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland. On this day the Saltire (Scottish flag) is flown in place of the Union flag. Celebrations include ceilidh dancing.

<b>December</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b>
<b>3-10</b>	<b>Hanukah</b>
	Celebrates the miracle of the oil. After fighting against the Greeks for over three years, the Jews reclaimed their temple in Jerusalem, relighting a lamp that should have been kept burning. They had only enough oil for one night, but by a miracle it remained burning for eight nights - just the time needed to make more oil. Hanukah is a festival of light and remembering miracles, for this they light eight candles over eight days.
<b>8</b>	<b>Bodhi Day</b>
	This celebrates Buddha's enlightenment after meditating under the Bodhi tree. Traditions include decorating a tree with coloured lights, lighting a candle to show the path(s) to enlightenment. Also eating a meal of rice and milk.
<b>8</b>	<b>Feast of the Immaculate Conception</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>New Year's Eve</b>