



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar January - 2024

Month-Long Observances:

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month: National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, observed in January in the United States, serves as a dedicated platform to highlight the pervasive issues of modern slavery and human trafficking. Throughout this month, individuals, communities, and organizations engage in heightened awareness campaigns, advocacy efforts, and educational initiatives. It's a critical time to underscore the prevalence of these crimes, support survivors, and unite in collaborative actions aimed at preventing and eradicating human trafficking in all its forms.

Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony: The Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony, deeply rooted in Haudenosaunee tradition, is a sacred and significant observance held during the winter months by the various nations within the Iroquois Confederacy. This ceremonial event, conducted with reverence and spiritual significance, involves rituals, songs, dances, and prayers led by community elders and spiritual leaders. It serves as a time for reflection, gratitude, and seeking harmony with the natural world, marking a period of renewal and connection with ancestral traditions while honoring the teachings and values passed down through generations within the Iroquois culture.

Day Observances:

January 1st New Years Day: The first day of the year according to the modern Gregorian calendar, celebrated within most Western countries.

January 1st Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation: The Emancipation Proclamation anniversary on January 1st marks Lincoln's 1863 order to free enslaved people in Confederate areas, a pivotal step towards ending slavery and paving the way for the 13th Amendment.

January 1st Gantan-Sai (Japan): Gantan Sai is Japan's New Year's celebration, a festive time filled with traditions, family gatherings, and visits to shrines or temples to pray for good fortune in the upcoming year.

January 4th World Braille Day: World Braille Day is celebrated annually on January 4th. It marks the birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system, which has been instrumental in providing a means of communication and literacy for people who are blind or visually impaired worldwide. This day serves to recognize the contributions of Braille in enhancing accessibility and independence for individuals with visual impairments.



Diversity Thunder Bay

January 6th Feast of the Epiphany: The Feast of the Epiphany, observed on January 6th in many Christian traditions, commemorates the visit of the Magi, or Three Wise Men, to the infant Jesus. It's a celebration of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, symbolizing the manifestation of God's light to the world. This day holds significance as it marks the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas and the beginning of the liturgical season of Epiphany, focusing on the revelation of Jesus to all nations.

January 7th Christmas (Coptic & Eastern Orthodox): On January 7th, both the Coptic and Eastern Orthodox Christian churches celebrate Christmas, marking the birth of Jesus Christ. While many Christian denominations observe Christmas on December 25th, the Coptic and Eastern Orthodox traditions follow the Julian calendar, placing their Christmas celebration on January 7th. This day is marked by special church services, prayers, and festivities to honor the birth of Jesus Christ. It's a time of joy, family gatherings, and spiritual reflection within these traditions.

January 13th Lohri Sikh (Hindu): Lohri is a joyous Sikh and Punjabi festival celebrated on January 13th each year, marking the winter solstice. It's a time of cultural significance, symbolizing the end of winter and the arrival of longer days. Families gather around bonfires, sing traditional songs, perform folk dances like Bhangra and Gidda, and share special foods like popcorn, peanuts, and sesame seeds. Lohri holds communal importance, fostering unity and celebrating the harvest season while bringing warmth and happiness to the community.

January 15th Martin Luther King Jr Day: Martin Luther King Jr. Day is observed on the third Monday of January each year in the United States. It honors the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a prominent leader in the civil rights movement. This day serves as both a celebration of Dr. King's achievements in advancing civil rights, equality, and justice, and as a reminder of the ongoing work needed to realize his dream of a more equitable and inclusive society. It's a time for reflection, service, and activism, with many communities engaging in volunteer work and events that promote Dr. King's messages of peace, equality, and nonviolent social change.

January 18th Bodhi Day (Buddhist): Bodhi Day, celebrated on January 18th in some Buddhist traditions following the lunar calendar, commemorates the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Buddha. It marks the day when he attained enlightenment while meditating under the Bodhi tree. Buddhists around the world use this day for reflection, meditation, and teachings on the path to enlightenment. It's a time to contemplate the Buddha's teachings and strive for personal awakening and spiritual growth.



January 21st World Religion Day: World Religion Day, observed on the third Sunday in January, promotes interfaith understanding and harmony. It's a global celebration encouraging respect for all religions and fostering unity among diverse faiths through dialogue and shared values.

January 24th/25th Tu B'Shevat (Arbor Day) Tu B'Shevat, also known as the Jewish New Year for Trees, typically falls on January 17th or 18th, though the date can vary. It's a significant day in the Jewish calendar dedicated to the appreciation and ecological awareness of trees, nature, and the environment. Traditionally, it's a time for planting trees, enjoying fruits, and reflecting on our responsibility towards preserving the earth's natural resources.

January 24th International Day of Education: The International Day of Education is celebrated on January 24th each year. It was established by the United Nations to underscore the importance of education in fostering peace, development, and human rights worldwide. This day serves as a reminder of the fundamental role education plays in empowering individuals and societies and highlights the need for accessible, quality education for all, regardless of background or circumstance.

January 25th Mahayana New Year (Buddhist): The Mahayana New Year, also known as Mahayana Buddhist New Year, varies in date as it follows the lunar calendar predominantly observed in East Asian countries like China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. It usually falls on the first full moon day in January or February. This celebration marks a time for devout Buddhists to engage in spiritual practices, visit temples, and partake in rituals to honor ancestors and seek blessings for the upcoming year. The exact date can differ each year, so it's advisable to check specific lunar calendars or consult local Buddhist communities for the precise date of the Mahayana New Year in a particular year.

January 27th International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust: The International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is observed annually on January 27th. This day, designated by the United Nations, honors the memory of the millions of people, primarily Jews but also others, who suffered and perished during the Holocaust under the Nazi regime. It serves as a solemn reminder of the horrors of genocide, promotes education about the Holocaust's history, and emphasizes the importance of preventing future acts of genocide. This commemoration encourages remembrance, reflection, and a commitment to fostering a world rooted in respect, tolerance, and human rights for all.

January 29th National Day of Remembrance of 2017 Islamophobic Attack in Quebec: On this day in 2017, a tragic shooting occurred at the Quebec Islamic Cultural Center in Quebec City, resulting in the loss of several lives and injuring many others. This day serves as a solemn remembrance to honor the victims and survivors of this senseless act of violence.