



DIVERSITY CALENDAR – FEBRUARY

This monthly calendar has been created by [Diversity Thunder Bay](#) to mark annual observances. Although not intended to be comprehensive (there are hundreds of worldwide observances each month), it demonstrates the great variety of holidays, celebrations and observances - both religious and secular - that occur worldwide and here in Thunder Bay.

FEBRUARY MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES:

- **Black History Month:** honours the legacy of Black Canadians and their communities. Read more at [Canada.ca](#).

Feb. 1: National Freedom Day

Celebrates the signing of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that abolished slavery in 1865.

Feb. 1-2: Imbolc

A traditional Celtic festival marking the beginning of spring.

Feb. 1: St. Brigid of Kildare

Feast day for St. Brigid celebrated by some Christian denominations.

Feb. 2: Candlemas

A Christian holiday that celebrates three occasions according to Christian belief: the presentation of the child Jesus, Jesus' first entry into the temple, and Virgin Mary's purification.

Feb. 2: Groundhog Day

A fanciful secular holiday in Canada and the USA that grew from Candlemas and pagan traditions, celebrating the legend that the groundhog emerges from his burrow on this day and predicts an early spring or continuing winter weather.

Feb. 3 or 11: St. Blaise Day

The Blessing of the Throats, the feast day of St. Blaise of Sebaste celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church (Feb. 3) and some Eastern Catholic churches (Feb. 11).

February 2, 3 or 4 (varies): Setsubun-Sai

The day before the beginning of spring in Japan, celebrated yearly as part of the Spring Festival.

Feb. 14: St. Valentine's Day

A Western Christian feast day honouring one or two early saints named Valentinus. Typically associated with romantic love and celebrated by people expressing their love via gifts.

Feb. 15: National Flag of Canada Day

At noon on Feb. 15, 1965, Canada's red and white maple leaf flag was raised for the very first time on Parliament Hill. On the same day in 1996, National Flag of Canada Day was declared.

Feb. 15: Parinirvana or Nirvana Day

A Mahayana Buddhist holiday. Remembers Buddha's passing in 483 BC and his final nirvana. The commemoration of Buddha's death at the age of 80, when he reached the zenith of Nirvana. Feb. 8 is an alternative date of observance.

Third Monday in February: Presidents' Day

A federally recognized celebration in the USA. Commemorates George Washington's Birthday, as well as recognizing every president after Washington.

Feb. 20: World Day of Social Justice

International World Day of Social Justice. Read more on the [United Nations website](#).

Feb. 21: Mother Language Day

Mother Language day is a worldwide annual observance that promotes an awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity as well as multilingualism. It commemorates the Bengali people who sacrificed their life to protect their language and culture. Read more on the [United Nations website](#).

Feb. 25 to March 1: Intercalary Days or Ayyám-i-Há

Celebrated by people of the Bahá'í faith. At this time, days are added to the Bahá'í calendar to maintain their solar calendar. Intercalary days are observed with gift giving, special acts of charity, and preparation for the fasting that precedes the New Year.

Full-moon day of the third lunar month: Māgha Pūjā or Mukha Bucha Day

The second most important Buddhist festival, celebrated on the full moon day of the third lunar month in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka and on the full moon day of Tabaung in Myanmar. It celebrates a gathering that was held between the Buddha and 1,250 of his first disciples, which, according to tradition, preceded the custom of periodic recitation of discipline by monks.

February or early March: Mardi Gras

A festival of varying duration, leading up to its final day on Shrove Tuesday, and associated with celebrations of Carnival in Northern Europe. Popular in some US cities, particularly those with French or Cajun heritage, such as New Orleans, home to the largest Mardi Gras festival.

February or early March: Shrove Tuesday

Also known as “Pancake Day,” the day before Ash Wednesday. Though named for its former religious significance, it is chiefly marked by feasting and celebration, which traditionally preceded the observance of the Lenten fast. It is observed by various Christian denominations.

February or early March: Ash Wednesday

The first day of Lent, a period of fasting for 40 days until Easter Sunday on the Christian calendar. Its name is derived from the symbolic use of ashes to signify penitence. It takes place immediately after the excesses of the two days of Carnival that take place in Northern Europe and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

February or early March: Lantern Festival

The first significant feast after the Chinese New Year, named for watching Chinese lanterns illuminate the sky on the night of the event. It marks the final day of the traditional Chinese New Year celebrations.

Late February or early March: Isra and Mi'raj (*Al Isra' wal Miraj, Lailat al Mi'raj, or Laylat al Miraj*)

Many Muslims in Canada observe this event to commemorate the Prophet Muhammad’s journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and his ascent into heaven. It is observed on the 27th day of Rajab, the seventh month in the Islamic calendar.

Late February or early March: Maha Shivarati

Hindu festival celebrated each year to honour Lord Shiva. It is celebrated just before the arrival of spring. It is also known as the Great Night of Shiva or Shivaratri and is one of the largest and most significant among the sacred festival nights of India. The date is set according to the Hindu calendar.

Late February or March: Magha Puja Day

Also known as Maka Bucha, a Buddhist holiday that marks an event early in the Buddha’s teaching life when a group of 1,250 enlightened saints, ordained by the Buddha, gathered to pay their respect to him. It is celebrated on various dates in different countries.

February or March: Meatfare Sunday (The Sunday of the Last Judgment)

Traditionally the last day of eating meat before Easter for Orthodox Christians.

Late February or March: Cheese Fare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday

The last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent for Orthodox Christians.

Feb. 28 (sunset) to March 19 (sunset): Intercalary Days or Ayyam-i-Ha

The "Nineteen-Day Fast" - a time in the Bahá'í Faith to reinvigorate the soul and bring one closer to God. This fast takes place immediately before the beginning of the Bahá'í New Year. Baha'is prepare for their important fasting period through celebration, hospitality, charity and gift giving. Baha'is observe their annual 19-Day fast by refraining from eating or drinking from sunrise to sunset.