



## DIVERSITY CALENDAR – MARCH

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.

### MARCH MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES:

- **Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month:** Established in Canada to increase awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Read more at [Canada.ca](#).
- **Hellenic Heritage Month:** More than 270,000 people of Hellenic descent live in Canada today and over half of them live in Ontario. Canadians of Hellenic descent have contributed to every field of life in Ontario, have enriched our culture and have strengthened our economy. Read more at [The Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#).
- **Irish Heritage Month:** Since 2021, Canada officially recognizes March as Irish Heritage Month, acknowledging the important contributions that Irish-Canadians have made to building Canada, and marking the importance of reflecting upon Irish heritage and culture for future generations.

### March 1: St. David's Day

The feast day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

### First Friday in March: Employee Appreciation Day

Launched in 1995 by Workman Publishing in the United States, Employee Appreciation Day reminds managers that strong employer-employee relations are at the core of any truly successful business.

### March 8: International Women's Day

First observed in 1911 in Germany, International Women's Day has now become a major global celebration honouring women's economic, political and social achievements. Read more on [Canada.ca](#).

**March 11: World Day of Muslim Culture, Peace, Dialogue and Film**

Created in 2010 by Javed Mohammed, a San Francisco Bay area based writer-producer and who proclaimed the day and week of March 11 each year as a special observance to share and discuss Muslim culture. The goal of the week is to use culture, art, and film to create bridges and dialogue of understanding. Learn more in this [article from Emory University](#).

**March 13 to April 15: Deaf History Month**

This observance celebrates key events in deaf history, including the founding of Gallaudet University and the American School for the Deaf.

**Late winter/early spring: Great Lent**

In the Orthodox Christian faith, the late winter/early spring observance of Great Lent is 46 days long. Its first day is known as Clean Monday.

**March 17: St. Patrick's Day**

A holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith.

**March 19: St. Joseph's Day**

In Western Christianity, the principal feast of St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**March 19 - 20: Naw-Rúz**

The Bahá'í New Year is celebrated on the vernal equinox. It is one of the nine Bahá'í holy days on which work is suspended.

**March 20: Ostara**

A celebration of the spring equinox commemorated by Pagans and Wiccans. It is observed as a time to mark the coming of spring and the fertility of the land.

**March 21 - 22: Nowruz/Norooz, Persian New Year**

A day of joy, celebration and renewal. It is held annually on the spring equinox.

**March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

Observed annually in the wake of the 1960 killing of 69 people at a demonstration against apartheid pass laws in South Africa. The United Nations proclaimed the day in 1966 and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. This day was proclaimed in 1966 by the United Nations. Read more on [Canada.ca](#).

### **March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

A United Nations international observation that offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. First observed in 2008, the international day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

### **March 25: Annunciation of the Virgin Mary**

A Christian celebration of the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus. The day is also known as Lady Day in some English-speaking countries.

### **Late March: Birth of prophet Zoroaster**

Birth anniversary of Zoroaster, a spiritual leader and ethical philosopher who taught a spiritual philosophy of self-realization and realization of the divine. Zoroastrians celebrate this day with prayer and feasting.

### **Late March or April 4: Passover**

An seven or eight-day Jewish holiday and festival in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. The date is set according to the Hebrew calendar.

### **Late March or April: Lord's Evening Meal**

Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate an event believed to have occurred on the first night of Passover in approximately 33 CE, the Last Supper, known as the Lord's Evening Meal.

### **Late March or April: Palm Sunday**

A Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of the Holy Week.

### **Late March (sundown to sundown): Holi**

The annual five-day Hindu and Sikh spring religious festival observed in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, along with other countries with large Hindu and Sikh populations. Celebrated by throwing coloured powder and water at each other. Bonfires are lit the day before in the memory of the miraculous escape that young Prahlada accomplished when demoness Holika carried him into the fire. Often celebrated on the full moon (the Phalguna Purnima) before the beginning of the Vernal Equinox as based on the Hindu calendar.

### **March 28 - 29: Lailat al Bara'a or Night of Forgiveness**

Practitioners of Islam seek forgiveness for sins during an Islamic holiday. Muslims spend the night in special prayers. One of the most sacred nights on the Islamic calendar.

**March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility**

Celebrated to bring awareness to transgender people and their identities as well as recognize those who helped fight for rights for transgender people. Read more on [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca).

**Late winter/early spring: Orthodox Sunday**

Celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. The day commemorates the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Eastern Christians.