



## DIVERSITY CALENDAR – MAY

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.

### MAY MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

- **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month:** This month recognizes pan-Asian diversity and the invaluable achievements of communities of Asian descent in all parts of Canadian society. Read more at [Canada.ca](#). The month of May has also been chosen by U.S. Congress to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States in May of 1843.
- **Canadian Jewish Heritage Month:** This marks a time to celebrate the richness of Jewish culture, heritage, and history in Canada. Read more at [Canada.ca](#). A similar day was proclaimed by U.S. President George W. Bush in 2006.

### Spring: Eid al-Fitr

A three-day holiday marking the end of Ramadan. Many Muslims attend communal prayers, listen to a khutuba (sermon), and give Zakat al-Fitr (charity in the form of food) during Eid al-Fitr. It is a festival of thanksgiving to Allah for enjoying the month of Ramadan. It involves wearing one's finest clothing, saying prayers, and nurturing understanding of other religions. The date is set according to the Islamic calendar.

### April-May: Mohini Ekadashi

Mohini Ekadashi is observed on the ekadashi (11th day) during the Shukla Paksha (the bright fortnight of moon) in the Hindu month of Vaisakha during the months of April-May on the Gregorian calendar. Hindus observe this holiday to wash away all sins, including those from his/her previous births.

### May 1: Beltane

An ancient Celtic festival celebrated on May Day, signifying the beginning of summer.

### May 1: Maharashtra Day

On this day in 1960, Maharashtra gained statehood after the division from the Bombay State. The state was formed on linguistic grounds.

**May 3: Feast of Saints Philip and James**

A Roman Catholic feast day for the anniversary of the dedication of the Church to Saints Philip and James in Rome.

**May 5: Cinco de Mayo**

Originating in Mexico, this day marks the defeat of the French army during the Battle of Puebla in Mexico on May 5, 1862. The day is actually considered to be relatively minor to native Mexican history, and is only significantly celebrated in the Mexican state of Puebla. In the U.S., Cinco de Mayo is celebrated to commemorate Mexican culture and heritage, chiefly in cities and towns with large Mexican populations, where it is recognized with parades, food, music, and dancing. (Note: Cinco de Mayo is not Mexican Independence Day, which takes place on Sept. 16.)

**First Thursday in May: National Day of Prayer**

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May in the United States, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the United States Congress.

**May 10: Dia de las Madres**

Mothers Day, observed on this date in Mexico and other Latin-American countries. The first official Mothers Day celebration in Mexico was held on May 10, 1922.

**May 19: "Malcolm X Day"**

An American holiday in honour of civil rights leader Malcolm X, celebrated on either his birthday (May 19, 1925) or the 3rd Sunday of May.

**Mid-May: Surdas Jayanti**

A day celebrated to commemorate the birth of poet Surdas who was renowned for his poems and songs adulating Krishna. He is believed to have been blind from birth. Because of his unwavering faith in Lord Krishna and the soulful poetry dedicated to him, Surdas is also addressed as *Bhakt Kavi Surdas* (devotee and poet Surdas). The date is set according to the Hindu calendar.

**May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia**

A global celebration of sexual orientation and gender diversities.

**May 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development**

A day set aside by the United Nations in 2001 as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better.

**May 22: Declaration of the Báb**

This joyous celebration commemorates the day that the Báb - the young Herald of the Baha'i Faith and the Founder of its revolutionary predecessor the Babi Faith - declared his mission on May 22, 1844.

**May 25: African Liberation Day**

Also known as African Freedom Day, this is a day of work in the area of political education and organization. The day marks determination of the people of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.

**Full moon in May or early June: Buddha Day (Buddha Purnima, or Vesak)**

A Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May and it is a holiday in India.

**Late May: Pentecost**

The Christian celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments by God at Mount Sinai.

**Late May: Trinity Sunday**

Observed in the Western Christian faith as a feast in honour of the Holy Trinity, on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

**Late May: All Saints' Day**

Celebrated by many Eastern Christian churches on the first Sunday after Pentecost, in recognition of all known and unknown saints.

**Late May - early June: Shavuot**

The "Festival of Weeks," this two-day Jewish holiday has double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in Israel and commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.