

Faith Festivals January 2019

1st January: New Year's Day/Hogmanay (National) - is widely observed, as is New Year's Eve the preceding night, throughout the UK, and more especially in Scotland, where bagpipes, haggis and first footing are widespread.

1st January: Mary, Mother of God –Tradition: **Christian Catholic**

“Like the Churches of the East, Rome wished to honour the Virgin Mother of God during the days after Christmas: as a result, the Natale S. Mariae ("Annax. + Anniversary of St. Mary") made its appearance on January 1st in the seventh century. It has accurately been called "the first Marian feast of the Roman liturgy." — the Church at Prayer” For more,

1st January: The Circumcision or Naming Of Jesus - Tradition: **Christian**

It is also called Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus celebrated by holding a vigil on the night of 31st December. Being born a Jew, it was natural that Jesus, like all Jewish male should be circumcised and named on his 8th day, to be received within the Jewish community.

5th January: Twelfth Night – tradition: **Christian**

The Twelfth Night marks the conclusion of the twelve days of Christmas and the eve of Epiphany. According to tradition, three kings arrived in Bethlehem twelve days after Jesus' birth to bestow gifts. This night is celebrated much like Christmas Eve, with merrymaking, eating traditional foods like King Cake, and parties. For more

http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/holidays/twelfth_night.htm

6th January: Epiphany- tradition: **Christian**

Epiphany commemorates the Magi's (Three Wise Men) visit to Bethlehem, and the “shining forth” or revelation of Jesus as God in human form. Some traditions celebrate Epiphany by giving gifts to represent the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh that Jesus received from the wise men. In many countries, the feast is celebrated by the baking and eating of a special cake or sweet bread in which is hidden a little figure, often in the shape of a lamb or of Christ. The observance had its origins in the eastern Christian churches, and included the birth of Jesus Christ; the visit of the three Magi (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar) who arrived in Bethlehem; and all of Jesus' childhood events, up to his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. The feast was initially based on (and viewed as a fulfilment of) the Jewish Feast of Lights. More at <http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/holidays/epiphany.htm>

6th January: Theophany / Baptism Of Christ –tradition: **Orthodox Christian churches**

Christians commemorate the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan, by John the Baptist; they recall how at this event the heavens were opened and a voice was heard proclaiming Jesus, while God's spirit descended on him in the form of a dove, i.e. the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity. At the Baptism of Christ, all three Persons of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—were made manifest. Thus, the name of the Feast is Epiphany, meaning manifestation, or Theophany, meaning manifestation of God. For more

http://www.goarch.org/special/listen_learn_share/epiphany/

6th January: Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) - tradition: Christian (Hispanic)

In Hispanic countries, the day of the Epiphany is referred to as Dia de los Reyes, Three Kings Day, and children receive gifts from los Reyes Magos: the three wise men. In Spanish tradition, the three kings represented Europe, Arabia, and Africa, and arrived on a horse, camel, and elephant. Children and adults leave their shoes out for the Kings' presents before they go to bed the night before, and leave treats to refresh the traveling Magi

6th January: Christmas day- tradition: Armenian Orthodox Christian

This day marks the Armenian Orthodox celebration of Christ's birth and baptism. It is preceded by a seven-day fast and, on the eve of the feast, a Divine Liturgy is celebrated in honour of Jesus as the Son of God, followed by a Blessing of the Waters. The Blessing of the Waters symbolizes Jesus' descent into the Jordan River, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. The following day, worshippers often partake in drinking or anointing with the blessed water. More at <http://www.armenianchurch-ed.net/feasts/feastschristmas/about/>

7th January is Christmas Day or day of the Nativity of Christ –tradition: Orthodox Christian

The Feast of the Nativity is the Orthodox Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus. It is also the break of a 40-day fast of the Advent started this year on November 15th, in which participants purify both body and soul in preparation for Christ's birth. For more <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/orthodox-christmas-day> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16453975>

13th January: Maghi- tradition: Sikh

On this day, our Sikh friends commemorate the sacrifice of forty Sikhs, who fought for Guru Gobindh Singh Ji. Maghi generally coincides with Makar Sankranti on the first day of the month of Magh which heralds the arrival of spring in India. The eve of Maghi is the common Indian festival of Lohri when bonfires are lit in Hindu homes to greet the birth of sons in the families and alms are distributed. In the morning, people go out for an early-hour dip in nearby tanks. For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh. For more on Maghi, see <http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-festivals/the-sikh-festivals-maghi>

13th January: Baptism of the Lord Jesus – tradition: Christian

The Baptism of the Lord is the name of a distinct feast day observed in the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican or Episcopalian Church, as well as the Eastern Orthodox Church. This occasion memorializes the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The Baptism of Christ was originally celebrated on Epiphany, which commemorated three events: the arrival of the Magi (the wise men), Jesus' baptism and the wedding in Cana, where Jesus turned the water into wine. Over time, the Baptism of the Lord feast was separated from the other events of Epiphany. More at <http://www.sharefaith.com/guide/Christian-Holidays/baptism-of-the-lord-the-feast.html>

14th January: Makar Sankranti/Pongal- Tradition: Hindu

This is a day for almsgiving and patching up quarrels. It is celebrated with rice sugar,

pancakes and halva, eaten around a fire, especially when following the birth of a son. Cornmeal chapatis and mustard leaf constitute the traditional meal. Celebrating, the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere and the beginning of spring, Makar Sankranti is one of the most auspicious day for the Hindus, and is celebrated in almost all parts of India in myriad cultural forms, with great devotion, fervour & gaiety. People in their thousands take a dip in places like Ganga Sagar & Prayag and pray to Lord Sun. It is celebrated with pomp in southern parts of the country as Pongal, and in Punjab is celebrated as Lohri & Maghi. Gujarati's not only look reverentially up to the sun, but also offer thousands of their colorful oblations in the form of beautiful kites all over the skyline. For more, see <http://www.vmission.org.in/hinduism/festivals/sankranti/>

18th -25th January: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - tradition: **Christian**

United services are held, and dialogue on unity is encouraged; some worshippers visit others' churches or invite preachers from denominations different from their own. This week was first set aside in 1908.

20th at sundown to 23rd January sundown: World Religion Day - tradition: **Baha'i**

World Religion Day was initiated in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. The Assembly's purpose was to call attention to the harmony of spiritual principles and the oneness of the world's religions and to emphasize that religion is the motivating force for world unity. It is observed the third Sunday in January in January by Baha'is in the United States and increasingly by people around the globe, with interfaith discussions, conferences and other events that foster understanding and communication among the followers of all religions

20th January (starts on 24th at sundown): **Tu B'shevat** - tradition: **Jewish**

Tu B'shevat is a popular minor festival which celebrates the New Year for trees. Jewish tradition marks this day as the day when the sap in the trees begins to rise, heralding the beginning of spring, aka The New year for the trees and the beginning of spring in Israel. It is one of the four Jewish New Years' (Rosh Hashanahs). Tu B'Shevat is a transliteration of 'the fifteenth of Shevat', the Hebrew date specified as the new year for trees. The Torah forbids Jews to eat the fruit of new trees for three years after they are planted. The fourth year's fruit was to be tithed to the Temple. On Tu B'Shevat Jews often eat fruit associated with the Holy Land, especially the ones mentioned in the Torah, particularly the kinds associated with Israel. The Torah praises seven 'fruits' in particular: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. A short blessing is recited after eating any fruit. A special, longer blessing is recited for the fruits mentioned in the Torah. Some Jews plant trees on this day, or collect money towards planting trees in Israel. For more <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday8.htm>