



# BOW VALLEY MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR



BOW VALLEY  
IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP

**Explore the diverse cultures of the Bow Valley!** Learn about important dates from the most common countries of origin of local residents in Lake Louise, Banff, Canmore, Kananaskis, and West MD of Bighorn. Join us in creating a more welcoming and inclusive community for all.



## JAN 01: Shōgatsu (Japan)

New Year (正月, shōgatsu) is the most important holiday in Japan. It is a very auspicious day, best started by viewing the new year's first sunrise (hatsu-hinode), and traditionally believed to be representative for the whole year that has just commenced. People celebrate it as a day full of joy, free from stress and anger.



## JAN 13: Maghi-Lohri (Sikh and Hindu Celebration)

A winter solstice and harvest festival celebrated by Sikhs and Hindus. This religious festival marks the start of the agricultural year and increasing daylight. Lohri rituals include lighting bonfires and offering foods such as black sesame seeds, jaggery, popcorn and peanuts to the fire. This tradition is believed to help remove negativity from life and bring prosperity.



## JAN 19: Timkat (Ethiopia)

Timkat is an Orthodox Christian celebration of Epiphany in Ethiopia that is marked by a spectacular celebration in the capital city of Addis Ababa, as well as elsewhere in the country. The day marks Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, and the festivities draw pilgrims from around the world to witness a reenactment of the baptism, as well as partake in processions, singing, dancing and prayer.



## JAN 21: Sinulog Festival (Philippines)

One of the largest festivals in the Philippines, this celebration happens on the third Sunday of January in Cebu City. The festival honours Santo Niño and recognizes the birth of Christianity in the country. The main event is a dance prayer carried out in a grand parade by brightly costumed participants. Parades, street parties, fireworks, food and music are all part of the fun.



## JAN 26: Australia Day (Australia)

Australia Day marks the anniversary of the first British fleet landing in Sydney Cove. Many Australians fly the flag, attend festivals, fireworks and sporting events or gather for barbecues on this day. However, a growing number of people choose not to observe this day on account of the impact of colonization on Indigenous people in Australia.



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## FEBRUARY: Black History Month

February is Black History Month in Canada, offering an opportunity to learn more about the important contributions and experiences of Black Canadians throughout Canada's history. Black Canadians have been part of Canada's heritage since the 1600s, and continue to actively shape Canada's culture, identity, and achievements.



## FEB 6: Waitangi Day (New Zealand)

New Zealand's National Day marks the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. The official Waitangi celebration takes place at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. Celebrations include dancing, community tree planting, and families gathering to share a hāngī - traditional Maori food cooked using hot rocks buried in a pit oven.



## FEB 10: Lunar New Year (Asia)

2024 is the Year of the Dragon! Across Asia, Lunar New Year is often celebrated with red decorations, red-wrapped gifts, and red clothes. Lunar New Year is celebrated in many countries, including in China, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Each country celebrates with their own unique customs and traditions.



## FEB 15: Parinirvana Day (Buddhist Festival)

An annual Buddhist festival commemorating the death of the Buddha at age 80 when he reached Nirvana, Parinirvana Day is also known as Nirvana Day. To mark this solemn holiday, Buddhists meditate and take part in pilgrimages to temples and shrines. During this special occasion, Buddhists prepare traditional foods and some exchange gifts.



## FEB 19-21: Carnival of Basel (Basler Fasnacht)

This is the largest carnival in Switzerland. Celebrations start early in the morning when drummers and fifiers in costumes and masks make their way through the dark streets playing carnival music. The days to follow feature singing and dancing in the streets, and a procession with large lanterns.



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## MARCH: Alberta Francophonie Month

March is an opportunity to highlight the vibrancy and energy the Francophonie brings to Alberta. Many of the first settlers to Alberta were French-Canadian. Brought by fur traders, French was in fact the first European language spoken in Alberta. Around 1 in 5 Canadians speak French.



## MARCH 3: Hinamatsuri 雛祭り - Girls' Day (Japan)

Hinamatsuri is a Shinto religious day and a Japanese day of celebration where households with young daughters decorate their homes with ornamental hina dolls. The dolls are said to represent the emperor, empress, attendants and musicians in traditional court dress of the Heian period. This festival is deeply rooted in Japanese culture and celebrates the health and happiness of young girls.



## MARCH 17: St. Patrick's Day (Worldwide)

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with enthusiasm all around the world, and Canada is no exception. The celebration of St. Patrick's Day has its origins in the religious Feast Day celebration, but as Irish Immigrants moved around the world, the day became synonymous with celebrating Irish identity. Many people wear green, host a céilí (Irish dance) and use Irish symbols such as the shamrock or Gaelic harp to decorate.



## MARCH 19: St. Joseph's Day (Czechia, Poland & Italy)

St. Joseph's Day or the Feast Day of St. Joseph is a popular day of celebration in the Czech Republic, Poland and Italy (especially in Sicily). The day is rooted in the Christian religion, honor's the husband of Mary and normally falls during the period of Lent. Due to the timing, celebrational feasts are usually meatless. In contrast to St. Patrick's day, which is celebrated by the wearing of green, St. Joseph's Day is celebrated by wearing and decorating with red and white.



## MARCH 21: International Day to Eliminate Racism

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination kickstarts a week that recognizes that the injustices and prejudice fueled by racial discrimination take place every day. Observed annually on March 21, it commemorates the day police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960. This day serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and all levels of government to actively work to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, injustice, systemic racism and hate.



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## APRIL 3 - 5: Hansik - Cold Food Day (South Korea)

Traditionally on the day of Hansik, people did not use fire and ate cold food, according to custom. While the day has lost some cultural significance in South Korea over the years, people still worship their ancestors and visit gravesites, and sometimes also worship mountain spirits on this day. Cold Food Day signals the start of the farming season, and the day's weather has been known to predict harvest conditions.



## APRIL 4: Ching Ming / Qingming Festival - Tomb Sweeping Day (China)

One of China's largest events, Tomb Sweeping Day follows the lunar calendar and starts 104 days after the winter solstice. On this day, people pay tribute to their ancestors through various traditions such as kite flying, as the kites symbolize good fortune. People also clean their ancestors' graves and adorn them with flowers or incense to pay their respects.



## APRIL 6: Tartan Day (North America)

In Canada, Tartan Day is an annual celebration of more than four million Canadians who have Scottish Heritage. Officially marked by the federal Government of Canada, Tartan Day originated in the mid-1980s in Nova Scotia and has grown more popular every year, adopted by diaspora around the world since the 1990s. Tartan Day offers an exciting opportunity to build on these Scottish Connections and celebrate the threads of Scottish influence woven through the fabric of Canadian society.



## APRIL 9: Eid al-Fitr (Islam / Worldwide)

Eid al-Fitr is a festival that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. During Eid al-Fitr, Muslims around the globe celebrate with communal morning prayers. They also prepare and dine on traditional meals with their families. Eid al-Fitr is a time of forgiveness, as well as a time to honor ancestors.



## APRIL 13: Vaisakhi (Sikh / Worldwide)

One of the most important Sikh holidays, Vaisakhi is the Punjabi New Year festival. This ancient harvest festival is celebrated by wearing colourful clothing, visiting places of worship, parades, singing, music and Bhangra dancing. Vaisakhi festivities also include feasts and free food offered to those in need.



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## APRIL 15: Sechseläuten - Spring Festival (Switzerland)

This historic festival marks the end of winter with the burning of the Böögg, a snowman figure, in Zurich where the festivities happen on the third Monday of April every year. The Böögg's head is filled with firecrackers, and folklore suggests that the bigger the explosion, the hotter and longer the following summer will be.



## APRIL 17: Equality Day (Canada)

While much progress has been made, Indigenous peoples, and racialized and religious minority communities in Canada continue to face racism and discrimination every day. This day serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and all levels of government to actively work to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, injustice, systemic racism and hate. Re-committing efforts, to ensure all people are respected and have equal access and opportunity to be safe and to succeed.



## APRIL 22 - 30: Passover (Jewish / Worldwide)

Passover is an 8-day Jewish holiday commemorating the liberation of Hebrews from slavery in ancient Egypt. The main event is a festive meal called the 'Seder'. During Passover, it is forbidden to eat leavened foods like bread or pasta. You can say "chag sameach" which translates to "happy festival" in Hebrew.



## APRIL 25: ANZAC Day (Australia & New Zealand)

Anzac Day is a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand that broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served". Observed on 25 April each year, Anzac Day was originally devised to honour the members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) who served in the Gallipoli campaign, their first engagement in the First World War (1914–1918).



## APRIL 27: Freedom Day (South Africa)

Freedom Day on 27 April is an annual celebration of South Africa's first non-racial democratic elections of 1994. It is significant because it marks the end of over three hundred years of colonialism, segregation and white minority rule and the establishment of a new democratic government led by Nelson Mandela and a new state subject to a new constitution.



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## APRIL 27: Koningsdag - King's Day (The Netherlands)

On April 27, the Dutch celebrate 'Koningsdag' (King's Day), a national holiday to commemorate the birthday of King Willem-Alexander (27 April 1967). It is by far the most widely celebrated holiday in the Netherlands. Amsterdam is packed to the gills on April 27, welcoming up to 2 million party-going visitors. In recent years, King's Day has become more and more of an open air party, particularly in Amsterdam, which attracts anywhere from 500,000 to 2 million visitors.



## APRIL 29 - MAY 5: Golden Week (Japan)

Many Japanese have a week off of work at the end of April and beginning of May to celebrate four national holidays. Festivities begin on April 29, a holiday called Showa Day. The other holidays celebrated during Golden Week include Constitution Day (May 3), Green Day (May 4) and Children's Day (May 5).



## APRIL 30: El Dia del Niño - Children's Day (Mexico)

In Mexico, Children's Day is celebrated on April 30th. On this day, children are honored with special activities and gifts. School children play games, share their favourite foods, and listen to music.



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## MAY 2024: Asian Heritage Month - (Canada)

Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity for us to learn more about the diverse culture and history of Asian communities in Canada, as well as to acknowledge the many achievements and contributions of people of Asian origin who, throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the country we know and love. The theme for Asian Heritage Month 2024 is "Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future: Amplifying Asian Canadian Legacy".



## MAY 2024: Canadian Jewish Heritage Month

In 2018, Parliament unanimously passed a bill proclaiming, that throughout Canada, the month of May will be marked as "Canadian Jewish Heritage Month," celebrating the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across the country. From law, to politics, to culture, to sports, this important initiative celebrates the contributions Jewish Canadians have been making to this country for 250 years.



## MAY 2024: Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month in Canada, a time for fostering understanding, promoting resilience, and raising awareness about the importance of mental well-being for all Canadians. Mental health, often misconstrued and stigmatized, is fundamental to our overall health. It's essential to acknowledge that mental health affects everyone, irrespective of age, background, or status, and to dismantle the societal barriers and stereotypes that prevent people from seeking the help they need.



## MAY 2024: Sexual Violence Awareness Month

Sexual Violence Affects Everyone. In Alberta, 45% of adults have experienced some type of sexual violence (SV) in their lifetime (AASAS, 2020). SV is an umbrella term, encompassing sexual abuse, assault, harassment, as well as emerging forms like sextortion and revenge porn. Any behaviours and actions that are sexual in nature and unwanted, coerced, and committed without consent, are SV.



## MAY 6 - 12: Mental Health Week 2024 (Canada)

We all have the capacity to be compassionate, and we know that doing so can make an enormous difference. This year's Mental Health Week is centered on the healing power of compassion. In a world plagued by suffering, we emphasize that kindness is equally intrinsic to our humanity.



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## MAY 1: World Maternal Mental Health Day (Worldwide)

Women of every culture, age, income level and race can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy and the first 12 months after childbirth. Increasing awareness will drive social change with a goal toward improving the quality of care for women experiencing all types of PMADs, and reducing the stigma of maternal mental illness.



## MAY 5: Red Dress Day - (Canada)

(National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)

Red Dress Day honours the memories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. Métis artist Jaime Black helped inspire the red dress movement, where red dresses are hung from windows and trees to represent the pain and loss felt by loved ones and survivors.



## MAY 5: Liberation Day - (The Netherlands)

Canadians played an important role in the liberation of the German-occupied Netherlands during the Second World War, forging lasting bonds between the two nations. This day marks the end of the Second World War, and the Netherlands' freedom from Nazi occupation. It is a national holiday every five years in Holland. However, celebrations take place every year, including the Liberation Festival (Bevrijdingsfestival) in Amsterdam, where musicians from around the country and the world take the stage.



## MAY 5: Orthodox Easter - (Worldwide)

Orthodox Christians in Canada celebrate Pascha according to the Easter date in the Julian calendar. Pascha is the most important event in the church calendar in the Orthodox Church. There are different types of Orthodox churches across Canada. Greek Orthodox, Romanian Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox churches spread in Canada as a result of immigration over the years. Other eastern Orthodox churches include the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.



## MAY 5: Children's Day / Kodomo no Hi (Japan)

In Japan, Children's Day – Kodomo no Hi – is held on May 5 and marks the final national holiday of the period known as Golden Week. This is a series of national holidays that allows Japanese people to take the best part of a week off to travel, visit family, and spend money. The purpose of Children's Day is to "honour the character of children, emphasise their welfare and give thanks to mothers". It is most famously signified by the Koi Nobori – carp streamers – which adorn houses, shopping streets and local parks.





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## MAY 5: Cinco de Mayo (Mexico/North America)

Cinco de Mayo, which falls on May 5th each year, is a day of celebration for Mexican culture and history. The holiday dates back to 1862 when Mexico was under French rule, and the Mexican army was able to defeat the much larger French forces in the Battle of Puebla. Today, Cinco de Mayo is celebrated throughout Mexico and around the world with parades, music, food, and dancing. So gather your family and friends together and join in the festivities!



## MAY 12: Mother's Day (Canada)

Many people in Canada express their gratitude towards mothers and mother figures on Mother's Day. Mother figures may include step-mothers, mothers-in-law, guardians (eg. foster parents), and family friends. It is the time for people to thank mothers and mother figures who took the time care for them and help them through life's challenges. Some people give cards, flowers, or chocolates, and/or make handmade items or special meals on Mother's Day.



## MAY 16: International Day of Living Together in Peace (Worldwide)

Living together in peace is all about accepting differences and having the ability to listen to, recognize, respect and appreciate others, as well as living in a peaceful and united way. The UN General-Assembly, in its resolution 72/130, declared 16 May the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity.



## MAY 16: Global Accessibility Awareness Day (Worldwide)

The purpose of GAAD is to get everyone talking, thinking and learning about digital access and inclusion, and the more than One Billion people with disabilities/impairments. Digital accessibility refers to the ability of people with disabilities/impairments to independently consume and/or interact with digital (e.g., web, mobile) applications and content.



## MAY 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (Worldwide)

Homosexuality was removed from the list of mental disorders of the World Health Organization (WHO) on May 17, 1990. The International day against homophobia and transphobia comes from Quebec. Fondation Émergence created in 2003 the first national day against homophobia. Since then, Émergence organizes an awareness campaign every year.



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## MAY 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (Worldwide)

Protecting the diversity of cultural expressions is more important than ever. Held every year on 21 May, UNESCO leads the celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development highlighting not only the richness of the world's cultures, but also the essential role of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development.



## MAY 23: Vesak Day (Worldwide / Buddhist)

Vesak, also known as Wesak or Buddha Day, is the most important Theravada Buddhist festival. This ancient holiday falls on a full moon. It commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. Celebrations differ depending on the culture, but often include visits to temples, chanting, meditation and reflection. Families may decorate their homes with lanterns.



## MAY 24: International Pansexual and Panromantic Visibility Day (Worldwide)

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## MAY 27: Memorial Day (U.S.A)

Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May. It was formerly known as Decoration Day and commemorates all men and women who have died in military service for the United States. Many people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day and it is traditionally seen as the start of the summer season. It is traditional to fly the flag of the United States at half staff from dawn until noon. Many people visit cemeteries and memorials, particularly to honor those who have died in military service. Many volunteers place an American flag on each grave in national cemeteries.