

2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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Cultural events

*Orthodox Christmas 7 January	Palm Sunday 29 March	*Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year) 14 April	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 9 August	Term 1 27 January – 2 April

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This calendar aims to raise awareness of key cultural and religious events observed by members of the University community. It also highlights some national and international days of significance that relate to cultural diversity, First Peoples and the LGBTQIA+ community.

While it is not exhaustive, the calendar is intended to support staff to be inclusive when planning and scheduling key events and meetings. In particular, it highlights

Cultural event descriptions

7 January

Orthodox Christmas

Many Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas Day by the Julian calendar. It is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

13 February – 1 March

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

Taking place annually since 1978, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is a month-long festival celebrating the vitality of the LGBTQIA+ community with cultural events held at historically significant sites across Eora Country.

17 February

Chūn Jié, Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year)

Chūn Jié, the Chinese Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, marks the beginning of the lunar calendar year. This festival is a time of renewal, reflection, and fostering relationships, embodying hopes for health, happiness, and success in the coming year.

17 February

Seollal (Korean New Year)

Seollal, the Korean Lunar New Year, marks the first day of the Korean lunar calendar and is a time for family reunions, ancestral rites, and various cultural activities.

17 February

Tết (Vietnamese New Year)

Tết, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, marks the arrival of spring and is a time for family reunions, honoring ancestors, and welcoming the new year with hopes for prosperity and good fortune.

17 February – 18 March

Ramadan

The holy month of Ramadan begins with the first light of dawn commemorating the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. During Ramadan Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset.

18 February

Tsagaan Sar (Mongolian) New Year

Tsagaan Sar, the Mongolian Lunar New Year, celebrates renewal and unity. Families gather for traditional feasts and offer blessings for health, prosperity, and peace. This festival honors ancestral spirits and is marked by sharing special foods, customs, and respect for elders.

18–20 February

Losar (Tibetan New Year)

Losar, the Tibetan New Year, marks the start of the lunisolar Tibetan calendar. It is a time for spiritual renewal, family gatherings, and celebration of Tibetan heritage.

18 February

Ash Wednesday – Lent begins

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar, traditionally a time of fasting and reflection. It begins with Ash Wednesday.

4 March

Holi

A joyous spring Hindu festival that is dedicated to Krishna or Kama. People throw coloured water or coloured powder in celebration.

19–20 March

Eid al-Fitr

An important religious holiday that celebrates the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. Also known as the festival of the 'Breaking of the Fast.'

21 March

Nowruz (Norooz)

Nowruz means 'new day' in Farsi and is a traditional festival of spring that has been celebrated for more than 3000 years. Nowruz is shared by many people from Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq and others in the Black Sea basin, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Western, Central and Southern Asia.

21 March

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." The day is an opportunity to reflect on our collective responsibility for promoting and protecting this ideal.

29 March

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the Christian Holy Week and commemorates the story of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem before his crucifixion.

1–9 April

Passover (Pesach)

Celebrates the redemption of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. Many Jews refrain from work during the whole festival, or at least for the first two days.

2 April

Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday)

Maundy Thursday commemorates the washing of the feet (Maundy) and the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles, as described in the Christian New Testament.

3 April

Good Friday (Western)

10 April

Good Friday (Eastern)

Good Friday is a solemn Christian remembrance of the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Many countries observe Good Friday as a national holiday on the Friday before Easter.

4 April

Holy Saturday (Western)

11 April

Holy Saturday (Eastern)

Holy Saturday is a Christian commemoration of the final day of Christ's death. It is associated with traditions regarding Christ's triumphant descent into hell and a 40-hour-long vigil that followers of Jesus Christ held after his burial on Good Friday.

5 April

Easter Sunday (Western)

12 April

Easter Sunday (Eastern)

Easter Sunday is regarded by Christians as the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

6 April

Easter Monday (Western)

13 April

Easter Monday (Eastern)

Easter Monday is the day after Easter Sunday in Eastern or Western Christian traditions. The day marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his crucifixion.

13–15 April

Songkran (Thai New Year)

Songkran marks the Thai New Year and is known as the Water Festival. Traditionally, people pour water on each other as a way to wash away bad luck and usher in a fresh start, celebrating with joy, family gatherings, and spiritual activities.

13–16 April

Thingyan (Burmese New Year)

Thingyan, Burmese New Year, is based on the lunisolar calendar and is a joyous, social and culturally symbolic time. The highlight of the celebration is the symbolic throwing of water, which represents the washing away of sins and bad luck from the previous year.

14 April

Navavarsha (Nepalese New Year)

Navavarsha, the Nepalese New Year, is a joyful time where Nepal comes to life with colourful celebrations. People typically get together with family and friends for parties and picnics, and in the morning, will typically make their way to temple to perform puja – a ritual offering presented to their gods.

14 April

Aluth Avurudda (Sinhalese New Year)

Celebrated in Sri Lanka, Aluth Avurudda marks the beginning of the solar New Year.

14 April

Puthandu (Tamil New Year)

Celebrated by Tamils, Puthandu, also known as Puthu-varusham, is the beginning of the solar new year.

dates relating to the most commonly practiced religions in Australia (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism), which may have work restrictions for those who observe them.

Please note that some dates may be subject to change. There may also be regional and/or denominational differences in when the event is observed.

14 April

Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year)

Pohela Boishakh is the first day of the Bangla Calendar. Bengali people clean and decorate their homes, and visit temples and pray for good fortune and prosperity in the coming year.

14 April

Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)

Celebrated by the Sikh community, Vaisakhi, also known as Baisakhi, is an ancient harvest festival that marks the beginning of a new solar year and harvest season.

14–16 April

Choul Chnam Thmey (Cambodian/Khmer New Year)

Choul Chnam Thmey marks the end of the harvesting season when farmers enjoy the fruits of their labour before the rainy season begins. The New Year coincides with the traditional solar new year in several parts of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Laos and Thailand.

14–16 April

Pii Mai (Lao New Year)

Boun Pi Mai, the Lao New Year, occurs from April 13 to 15 and celebrates renewal and purification. Observed with water-splashing, processions, and temple visits, the festival brings families together and marks a new beginning with traditional music, dance, and blessings.

1 May

Vesak

Vesak, also known as Buddha Jayanti, Buddha Purnima and Buddha Day, commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha in Theravada, Tibetan Buddhism and Navayana.

5 May

Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo marks the anniversary of the 1862 victory over invading French forces by Mexican troops at the Battle of Puebla, and is an important day of celebration of Mexican culture.

21–23 May

Shavuot

Shavuot is a Jewish celebration of Moses' descent from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments. It is the second of the Jewish pilgrim festivals.

24 May

Pentecost

Pentecost is a festival where Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter.

26–30 May

Eid al-Adha

The celebration concluding the Hajj. The Feast of Sacrifice commemorates the ordeal of Ibrahim (Abraham) who was asked to sacrifice his only son to prove his faith.

27 May – 3 June

National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

16 June

Al Hijri (Islamic New Year)

Al Hijri is the Islamic New Year observed on the first day of Muharram.

5–12 July

National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week

NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.

9 August

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

The United Nations' annual International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples encourages people to spread the UN's message on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

4 September

Krishna Janmashtami

Krishna Janmashtami celebrates the birthday of Lord Krishna, believed to be the eighth reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, who gave the vital message of the Bhagvat Gita – the guiding principles for every Hindu.

11–13 September

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival and commemorates the creation of the world. Customs include the blowing of the Shofar, a ram's horn trumpet, and the dipping of apples in honey as a symbol of the sweet New Year ahead. Work is not permitted on this day.

20–21 September

Yom Kippur

This holiest day of the Jewish year is observed with fasting and intensive prayer. Many Jews will refrain from work and attend synagogue services.

25 September – 2 October

Sukkot (Tabernacles)

Sukkot, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, is a Jewish holiday celebrated for seven days, beginning on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei. It is one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals.

2–3 October

Shemini Atzeret

Shemini Atzeret is a Jewish holiday celebrated on the 22nd day of Tishrei. It is a holy day devoted to the spiritual aspects of the festival of Sukkot.

3–4 October

Simchat Torah

Simchat Torah is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the conclusion of the annual cycle of the public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle.

20 October

Vijayadashami

Vijayadashami, also known as Dussehra or Dashain, is a major Hindu festival celebrated at the end of Navaratri every year.

2 November

Di a los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Di a los Muertos combines the ancient Aztec custom of celebrating ancestors with All Souls' Day. This Day is a holiday that Spanish invaders brought to Mexico starting in the early 1500s.

8 November

Diwali (also known as