



2023 Cultural Holidays

January

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- January**
12/12/2021-1/6: Navidad
1/1: New Year's Day*
1/6: Epiphany
1/7: Orthodox Christmas Day*
1/13: Old New Year and Malanka
1/21-2/5: Lunar New Year
January TBD: New Year's Dance (Eastern Shoshone)

February

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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- February**
1/21-2/5: Lunar New Year
2/2: Día de la Candelaria/ Candlemas
2/20-2/26: Maslenitsa

March

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
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- March**
3/22-4/21: Month of Ramadan*

April

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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- April**
3/22-4/21: Month of Ramadan*
4/2-4/8: Semana Santa*
4/9: Easter*
4/13-4/17: Thingyan Festival
4/16: Orthodox Easter*
4/21: Eid al-Fitr
April TBD: 1st Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)

May

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
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- May**
5/5: Vesak
May TBD: 2nd Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)

June

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
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- June**
6/5: Pentecost*
6/19: Juneteenth (USA)
6/28-6/29: Eid al-Adha
June TBD: Annual Powwow (Eastern Shoshone)

A quick reference of cultural holidays is listed to the left. Full descriptions of holidays with food suggestions are listed on subsequent pages.

- One Cultural Holiday
- Multiple Cultural Holidays

* Countries listed represent communities present in our service area but are not the only regions to recognize these holidays.

Please note: This is not a comprehensive list of holidays and should be used as a supplemental reference only. Individual preferences and cultural nuances may vary.

2023 Cultural Holidays

July

7/28-7/29: Ashura
July TBD: 3rd Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)
July TBD: Sundance (Eastern Shoshone)

August

8/24: Ukraine Independence Day
August/September TBD: 4th Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)
August TBD: Chokecherry Harvest Dance (Eastern Shoshone)

September

9/12: Ethiopian New Year
9/26: Mawlid
9/28: Meskel
9/29: Mid-Autumn Festival
August/September TBD: 4th Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)
September/October TBD: 5th Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)

October

10/9: Indigenous People’s Day (USA)
September/October TBD: 5th Ceremony (Northern Arapaho)

November

11/1-11/2: Día de Muertos
11/23: Thanksgiving

December

12/7 – 12/15: Hanukkah
12/12: Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe
12/12-1/6: Navidad
12/19: St. Nicholas Day
12/25: Christmas Day*
December TBD: Christmas Dance (Eastern Shoshone)
12/26-1/1: Kwanzaa

July

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August

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September

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October

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November

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December

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Annual Cultural Holidays

Eastern Shoshone

Ceremonies and feasts throughout the year include the Annual Eastern Shoshone Powwow in June, the yearly Sundance in July, Chokecherry Harvest Dance in August, Christmas Dance in December, and New Year's Dance in January. Partners should connect with their Eastern Shoshone neighbors to learn more about when these ceremonies will occur within those months. Items that are important during ceremonies include cooking oil, coffee, tea, baking powder, sugar, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder. These items are also used every day in households.

Northern Arapaho

Ceremonies are the most important celebrations for the Northern Arapaho people. The Northern Arapaho have 5 major ceremonies. The dates of the ceremonies may vary from year to year, as they do not follow the Gregorian calendar. There are also powwows (social dances) planned for the year but with no set dates as of yet. Partners should connect with their Arapaho neighbors to learn more about when these ceremonies will occur throughout the year. Important foods are coffee, bread (especially homemade fry bread, biscuits, and pan bread), meat (boiling meat for soup, ground hamburger, or roast- most preferable are beef and elk), and fruit (traditionally chokecherries, but can be substituted for blueberries. Also, watermelon, bananas, oranges, and strawberries).

January

Navidad: (12/12/21 - 1/6/22) Beginning with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and ending on Three Kings' Day, Latin American Catholic Christmas festivities last nearly a month. Many traditional regional foods are prepared during this time. In Mexico, tamales are a special staple and are made using a masa flour dough wrapped around a savory filling and then steamed in corn husks (or plantain leaves in parts of Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela.) Fillings typically include pork, beef, or occasionally chicken thighs/ legs alongside cheeses and/ or vegetables.

Kayin New Year Day: The date of Kayin or Karen New Year varies because Kayin use a lunar calendar. The New Year comes on the first day of Pyatho, the month that comes at the end of rice harvest time. Due to the cycle of the lunar calendar, it does not occur in 2023 but will be celebrated on 1/4/24, 12/30/24, and 12/19/25. Friends and family gather wearing traditional clothing and take part in traditional songs and dances. Steamed sticky rice is eaten in celebration of the new rice harvest.

Russian New Year: (1/1/22) Secular New Year celebrations on January 1st often include red or black caviar, citrus fruits (especially tangerines), pickled vegetables, "Olivier" potato salad, and baked duck with apples and pears.

Orthodox Christmas: (1/7/23)

Ethiopian: Leading up to the holiday, Orthodox Christians observe a 43-day fasting period beginning on November 25th. During this time, animal products such as meat, cheese, butter, and eggs are not consumed. On Christmas, the fast is commonly broken with a meat and egg stew.

Russian: Christmas is celebrated with traditional preparations of aspic (gelled meat), meat pies, savory dumplings, fish, and pickled vegetables. A period of fasting before Christmas day eliminates meat, dairy, and oil from Orthodox diets. The 12 fasting foods usually served on Orthodox Christmas Eve include barley, honey, stewed prunes, pierogi, sauerkraut, potatoes, lima beans, garlic, Lenten bread, mushroom soup, and salt.

Ukrainian: The main Christmas meal, called 'Sviata Veчерia' (or Holy Supper) is eaten on Christmas Eve (6th January). Traditionally people fast all day but you might start the day by drinking some holy water that has been blessed at church. You can't start eating the meal until the first star is seen in the sky. The star represents the journey of the Wise Men to find Jesus and that Jesus has been born, so Christmas can start. The meal normally has 12 dishes which represent

Jesus's 12 disciples. Traditionally the dishes don't have any meat, eggs, or milk in them. The main dish is often 'kutia' a type of a kind of sweet porridge made of wheat. Other dishes can include mushrooms, sauerkraut, red 'borsch' (beet soup), dumplings known as 'varenyky' (Pierogi), 'holopchi' (cabbage rolls, make without meat in them at Christmas!), 'pyrizhky' (cabbage buns), whitefish and 'kolach' (special Christmas bread).

Old New Year and Malanka: (1/13/23) These two holidays coincide and are often celebrated together. Many Ukrainians believe that serving certain food will bring them good luck for the upcoming year. Pork symbolizes abundance while fish signals the opposite, just as an example of some of their beliefs.

Lunar New Year: (1/21/23 - 2/5/23), Lunar New Year is celebrated for 15 days but only the first 7 days are officially considered a national holiday. Chinese, Vietnamese, and many other families of Southeast Asian heritage will celebrate and take time away from work. In addition to several traditional festivities and observances, large quantities of food are cooked and shared between families and friends. The specific dishes prepared vary depending on the region, but Vietnamese feasts sometimes feature a dish of pork belly simmered overnight and served with an egg and Jasmine rice. In Vietnamese culture, platters of dried fruits and nuts are offered to guests and family alongside savory *bánh chung* cakes made out of pork, mung beans, glutinous rice, and banana leaves.

February

Día de la Candelaria/ Candlemas: (2/2/22) This is a common celebration among Latin American Catholics. Usually has a connection with Three Kings' Day, where people eat "la rosca", a traditional dessert bread, containing hidden surprises within. Typically celebrated by having a huge tamale feast hosted by whoever found the surprise in "la rosca".

Maslenitsa: (2/20/23-2/26/23) Traditionally celebrated in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine to mark the end of winter. Also known as Pancake Week because there is a mass baking and consumption of flat pancakes, called Mlinsi in Ukraine. Most places also celebrate by going sledding, having snowball fights, and having live music and folk performances.

March

The Month of Ramadan: (3/22/23 – 4/21/23) During the month of Ramadan, people who practice Islam will fast from sunrise to sunset. Food traditions vary around the world, but both the *suhoor* (pre-dawn) and *iftar* (evening) meals contain fresh fruit, vegetables, halal meats, bread, cheeses, and sweets including dates. Pork products are never consumed by followers of Islam.

April

Semana Santa/ Holy Week: (4/2/23 – 4/8/23) Many people from Latin America and Spain observe Semana Santa is a week-long Catholic holiday where most meats are not consumed due to religious restrictions. During this week, consider offering alternative sources of protein like eggs, milk, fish, legumes, or grains. Traditional recipes vary by country or region but may include dishes such as vegetable or bean-filled tamales, cod or other white fish soups, sweet or savory fried wheat pastries, rice pudding, and fresh fruit drinks.

Thingyan Festival: (4/13/23 - 4/17/23) Thingyan, or Water Festival, is the biggest festival of the year celebrated with three days of playful water fights on the streets intended to wash away the bad luck of the past year. The festival concludes with Burmese New Year on the 17th. During major festivities in Myanmar, folks host *satuditha* feasts, preparing and handing out parcels of traditional food such as rice, curries, and pea soup and desserts to revelers and passersby, reinforcing the importance of generosity and almsgiving as a Burmese cultural norm.

Orthodox Easter: (4/16/23)

Ethiopian: Also known as *Fasika* or *Tensae*, this Christian holiday often occurs after Easter and is celebrated in the West. During Lent (a 55-day fasting period before Easter), Ethiopian Orthodox Christians do not eat animal products like meat, cheese, butter, or eggs. On the eve of Easter, it is customary to break this fast with a meat-filled feast which may include many of the regional dishes served during the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha.

Russian/ Ukrainian: In keeping with the Julian calendar, the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates Easter or *Paskha* (Пасха) later than other Christian denominations. The day typically starts with a breakfast of eggs, kulich (кулич)— a sweet, yeasted Easter bread, and paskha—a truncated pyramid-shaped dessert made of cottage cheese or ricotta and an assortment of dried and/or candied nuts and fruits, depending on the family recipe. Eggs play a central role in many Russian Easter traditions, from dyeing and painting them to exchanging them with friends and loved ones.

Eid al-Fitr: (4/21/23) Eid al-Fitr, celebrated by Muslims worldwide, marks the end of the month of Ramadan and is particularly associated with the preparation of festive sweets. Ethiopian and Somali clients may celebrate Eid al-Fitr by preparing recipes using teff flour, sugar, dates, beef, butter, and coffee.

May

Vesak: (5/5/23) Buddha's Birthday, Buddha Day, or Wesak is the most important holiday in Buddhism. It falls on the first full moon day in May. On this day, Buddhists aim to practice noble acts that will help them attain enlightenment such as volunteering with and donating to community organizations and providing hunger relief. These moments of remembrance, good deeds, and prayer are capped off with candlelit parades in the streets.

June

Pentecost: (6/5/23) In Orthodox Christianity, Pentecost Monday is the day that the Holy Spirit appeared to the Apostles. A great feast, whose religious importance is second only to Easter occurs on Pentecost Sunday. Echoing a similar Jewish holiday, some religiously observant Ukrainians decorate their houses with plants and greenery and then visit cemeteries and leave food for deceased relatives.

Juneteenth: (6/19/23) Celebrated by African American communities to commemorate the emancipation of slaves in the U.S. The holiday is often celebrated with family gatherings. Red-colored foods like strawberry pie, red soda water, and red rice (rice with tomatoes) are often served to commemorate the blood spilled during slavery. Barbeque, collard greens, sweet potatoes, and watermelon are commonly prepared.

Eid al-Adha: (6/28/23 - 6/29/23) Also known as the Feast of Sacrifice, is the second festival of the year observed by Muslims as a major holiday for a period of 3 to 4 days. Though recipes and traditional foods vary from Southeast Asia to the Middle East to Africa, most Muslims will commemorate this time by ritually processing a whole animal for meat (usually sheep) and preparing savory meat-centric dishes for friends and family.

July

Ashura: (7/27-7/28) Occurs annually on the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic Calendar. Is usually celebrated through large demonstrations of high-scale mourning and fasting.

August

Ukrainian Independence Day: (8/24/23) Aside from state-sanctioned festivities, Ukrainians attend outdoor concerts, parties with lots of food, and reenactments of Kyivan Rus traditions.

September

Ethiopian New Year: (9/12/23) Called the “Gift of Jewels” or *Enkutatash* in Amharic, this day includes both Eastern Orthodox and secular traditions and brings extended family together for several special celebratory community events. Traditionally, families gather to share a morning meal of *injera* (teff flour flatbread) with varying kinds of sauces and participate in a ritual coffee ceremony that lasts for several hours. Dishes that include chicken, minced beef, liver, or lamb are common.

Mawlid: (9/26/23 - 9/27/23) The birthday of the Islamic prophet Muhammed. In some countries, Mawlid is celebrated in a carnival manner, large street processions are held and homes or mosques are decorated. Charity and food are distributed, and stories about the life of Muhammad are narrated with recitation of poetry by children.

Ethiopian Meskel: (9/28/22) One of the most important holidays for Ethiopian Christians, the True Cross celebration coincides with the end of the difficult rainy season and has been celebrated with many of the same traditions since at least the 13th century. Many Ethiopians travel to spend time with their families, and some groups celebrate by ritually processing either a bull (water buffalo) or goat. Though no unifying special dish is served on this day, typical meals always include flatbread (*injera*) made from teff flour as well as green coffee beans that are roasted at home and ceremonially served as fresh coffee to guests and family.

Mid-Autumn Festival: (9/29/23) Also known as the Children’s Festival or Moon Festival, this holiday is celebrated by many Asian cultures, including China and Vietnam. The celebration occurs in either September or October depending on the Lunar Calendar. Preparations begin weeks in advance including creating decorations, practicing traditional dance, and making food. Citrus and other fruits are especially important as symbolic table pieces and specialty items like Moon Cakes (made out of either sticky rice or wheat flour and lard dough with savory or sweet fillings) are customarily enjoyed. Traditional foods vary by region.

October

Indigenous People’s Day: (10/9/23) Celebrated in several cities and states in opposition to Columbus Day, this holiday recognizes Native peoples as the first inhabitants of the lands that would later become the United States. Indigenous People’s Day aims to recognize native cultures, tribal sovereignty, and the myth of the “discovery of America” by European colonists. Many local and large-scale projects related to food sovereignty, the decolonization of foods and foodways, and the repatriation of heirloom seeds and traditional lands are highlighted on this day, though they occur year-round.

November

Día de Muertos: (11/1/23 – 11/2/23) Many people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean observe Dia de Muertos, or Day of the Dead, to honor the lives of the deceased. Sweets and pastries are associated with its celebration.

December

Hanukkah: (12/7/23 – 12/15/23) Hanukkah is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people that lasts 8 days and nights. During these days people celebrate by singing, playing games, and eating oil-based foods such as latkes and sufganiyot, as well as dairy-based products.

St. Nicholas Day: (12/19/23) Predominantly celebrated in Western Ukraine, which shares many cultural ties to traditionally-Catholic Poland, St. Nicholas Day kicks off the winter holiday season. Rather than exchanging gifts on Christmas, gift-giving largely occurs on St. Nicholas Day. The day is particularly anticipated by children, who write letters

to St. Nicholas with specific requests. Many people also give to charity on St. Nicholas Day, especially to organizations that help orphaned and low-income children.

Navidad: (12/12/23 - 1/6/24) Beginning with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and ending on Three Kings' Day, Latin American Catholic Christmas festivities last nearly a month. Many traditional regional foods are prepared during this time. In Mexico, tamales are a special staple and are made using a masa flour dough wrapped around a savory filling and then steamed in corn husks (or plantain leaves in parts of Mexico and Venezuela.) Fillings typically include pork, beef, or occasionally chicken thighs/ legs alongside cheeses and/ or vegetables.

Christmas: (12/24/23 - 12/25/23)

Kenya: At midnight, church bells ring in synchronization to announce the start of the much-anticipated Christmas day, and songs of praise echo throughout the villages. Congregants head home to begin preparations for the Christmas Day meal, the focal point of the celebration. In many parts of Kenya, the feast centers around nyama choma or barbequed meat (goat is common, but beef might also be consumed), often accompanied by ugali, a cornmeal starch, and staple food in the Kenyan diet.

Uganda: Though the official holiday is December 25, Christmas, or Ssekukulu as it is called in central Uganda, is a grand event where the celebration lasts for days. Giving gifts is not a tradition upheld by most Ugandans, but it is common for women and children to purchase new clothes in commemoration of the holiday. The real anticipation builds around the holiday feast. Though meat is not a part of many Ugandans' daily diet, it is the centerpiece of the Christmas meal. It is common for families to slaughter a goat or other animal and enjoy the meat for four days leading up to the December 25 celebration.

Kwanzaa: (12/26/23 – 1/1/24) Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture. On the last day of Kwanzaa people often have a feast called *Karamu* where they eat a variety of foods, from traditional African food to soul food. Dinner tables are often laid with few symbolic foods such as fruits and vegetables to symbolize the bounty of the harvest. Some of the fresh produce may include okra, yams, squash, sweet potatoes, and bananas.

Heritage Months and Identity Recognitions

Black History Month – February

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history. The Black History Month 2023 theme, “Black Resistance,” explores how “African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms, especially the racial terrorism of lynching, racial pogroms, and police killings,” since the nation's earliest days.

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month – May

Heritage Month (AAPI Heritage Month) is an annual celebration that recognizes the historical and cultural contributions of individuals and groups of Asian and Pacific Islander descent to the United States. The AAPI umbrella term includes cultures from the entire Asian continent—including East, Southeast, and South Asia—and the Pacific Islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. AAPI Heritage Month 2022 will take place from Sunday, May 1 to Tuesday, May 31. AAPI Heritage Month celebrates the unique journey of all AAPI immigrants and citizens in the United States and their unique life experiences, traditions, and cultures

National Hispanic Heritage Month – September

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of the independence of Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

Native American Heritage Month – November

The month is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. This is also an opportune time to educate the general public about tribes and to raise general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and, in the present, and how tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

Cultural Holiday Foods from Food Bank of the Rockies

Food Bank of the Rockies currently sources cultural holiday foods in recognition of Lunar New Year, Ramadan, and Navidad. [Please complete this survey](#) to indicate your interest in purchasing foods to support your neighbors' celebration of these holidays in 2023. This will enable us to do our best to accommodate the amounts needed. You can also provide further information regarding the holidays your neighbors may require specific foods to celebrate.

Examples of foods sourced

Lunar New Year: Dried Dates, Fresh Oranges, Fresh Apples, Canned Pineapple, Peanuts, Cashews, Sunflower Seeds, Banana leaves, White Long Grain Rice, Ground Pork.

Ramadan: Dried Dates, Almonds, Cashews, Pistachios, Broth, Dried Chickpeas, Dried Lentils, Cooking Oil, Jasmine Rice, Raisins, Plain Yogurt, and Halal Meat.

Navidad: Fresh Onions, Fresh Tomatoes, Fresh Tomatillos, Fresh Garlic, Corn Husks, Masa Flour, Dry Pinto Beans, Dry Black Beans, Ground Beef, Ground Pork, Chicken Drumsticks, Dried Ancho Chilies, Dried Guajillo Chilies, Ground Cumin.

Find these items on Partner Express by searching “Culturally Responsive” in the description.