Mahayana New Year is celebrated on January 25, 2024 by Buddhists around the world.

Mahayana Buddhists observe the New Year at different times according to country and tradition, and each region has its own customs and traditions for practicing Mahayana Buddhism.

Many celebrate it on the full moon day of January, usually mid-month. Others mark the New Year on the Lunar New Year or the secular date, January 1.

Translated to “Great Vehicle” in English, Mahayana is more than just a holiday – it represents a distinctive set of Buddhist practices and philosophies within one branch of Buddhism.

Mahayana is one of the two main branches of Buddhism and is mostly practiced in Northeast Asia — China, Japan, Tibet, Taiwan, Mongolia, and Korea.

Mahayana Buddhists believe that anyone, not just monks, can achieve enlightenment or everlasting Nirvana during their lifetime. The core idea is for everyone to seize the opportunity to attain enlightenment.

Mahayana aims for nirvana, similar to Theravada Buddhism, emphasizing that recognizing the illusion of the ego, causing pain and suffering, leads to enlightenment.

Believers mark the event with meditation and prayer, bathing statues of Buddha, visiting temples and lighting candles for good luck. They clean house, give gifts, feast with family and friends, and enjoy fireworks at midnight.
Vietnamese New Year, also known as Tet Festival, is the most significant festival of the year in Vietnam.

Tet, is an abbreviation for Tet Nguyen Dan, which is Vietnamese for the feast of the first morning of the first day of their calendar.

The Vietnamese celebration of lunar new year falls on February 10, 2024.

According to the Vietnamese zodiac, 2024 is the year of the dragon.

The dragon is known as “the holy one” and, according to Vietnam Online, people born in the year of the cat are considered to be “born talented however arrogant and tactless.”

People in Vietnam and Vietnamese people around the world celebrate the new year with a festival that focuses on family, food and welcoming in good luck for the year to come.

Tet is also celebrated with parades, dances, and fireworks, as well as a lantern festival.

Tet is the most family-centered holiday, and Vietnamese people often travel and spend the holiday with their extended families.

Vietnamese people clean their homes before the festival to remove bad luck from the previous year.

Tet is also considered a lucky time of year for opening a shop or starting a new business.

The Vietnamese believe that the first visitors to a family determines their fortune for the whole year, and they like to invite someone of good morality to be the first ones visiting the house.
Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is considered the holiest month for Muslims. It is a holiday that holds great significance in Islam, fostering spiritual growth, empathy and community bonding.

**Fasting** - During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. At sunset, the fast is broken with a meal called iftar.

**Spiritual reflection** - Ramadan is a time for increased devotion, self-discipline, and spiritual growth. Muslims focus on prayer, reading the Quran, and engaging in acts of kindness.

**Prayer** - Special nightly prayers called Tarawih are performed. These are additional prayers recited at night in congregation.

**Laylat al-Qadr** – “The Night of Power”, which falls within the last ten nights of Ramadan, is considered the night when the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad. It is a night of intense prayer and supplication.

**Eid al-Fitr** – Ramadan concludes with the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, a festive day marked by special prayers, feasting, and gift giving. It is a time of joy and gratitude.

Ramadan will begin on March 10th, 2024.
St. Patrick’s Day is a lively celebration of Irish culture and heritage, marked by a sea of green and various festivities. It is named after Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who is credited with bringing Christianity to the country. St. Patrick’s Day is celebrated annually on March 17th, believed to be the death date of Saint Patrick in the 5th century.

**Fun facts about St. Patrick’s Day:**
- Wearing green is a popular tradition to avoid getting pinched. The color is also associated with the lush green landscape of Ireland.
- Saint Patrick is said to have used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity (Father, son and the Holy Spirit).
- The first recorded St. Patrick’s Day parade was held in New York City in 1762.
- Every year the Chicago River is dyed green for the occasion. The river dyeing event will take place on March 16th this year.
- A traditional meal for the day is corned beef and cabbage. The beverage of choice is Guinness and other Irish stouts.
**International Labour Organization (ILO) recognizes: World Day for Safety and Health at Work**

April 28th (Annually)

**2024 Theme: Impacts of Climate Change on Occupational Safety and Health**

Ensuring Safe and Healthy Work in a Changing Climate

World Safety Day, also known as the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, is an annual international event observed on April 28th. It is organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency, to promote and raise awareness about the importance of preventing occupational accidents and diseases. The day aims to encourage governments, employers, employees, and stakeholders to collaborate and take action to reduce workplace accidents, injuries, and occupational diseases. The theme of World Day for Safety and Health at Work in 2024 is “Impacts of Climate Change on Occupational Safety and Health.”

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work aims to raise awareness about the importance of workplace safety and health. Here are some ways you can celebrate this day to promote a safe and healthy work environment and build a positive safety culture:

- Raising awareness
- Reinforcing Policies and Procedures
- Encouraging Open Dialogue
- Employee Engagement and Participation
- Share Information
- Recognize Safe Practices
- Continuous Improvement


Climate change disrupts weather patterns, posing significant risks to worker safety and health globally. These risks include:

- **Heat stress**: Rising temperatures can lead to heat exhaustion and stroke, particularly for outdoor workers.
- **Increased UV radiation**: Stronger sunlight exposure increases the risk of skin cancer and eye damage for outdoor workers.
- **Worsened air pollution**: Climate change can exacerbate existing air pollution or create new sources, leading to respiratory problems for workers.
- **Extreme weather events**: Floods, hurricanes, and other severe weather events can cause workplace accidents and injuries.
- **Industrial accidents**: Climate change may increase the risk of major industrial accidents due to extreme weather events or infrastructure damage.
- **Vector-borne diseases**: Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns can create favorable conditions for mosquitoes and other insects, leading to an increase in diseases like malaria and dengue fever.
- **Chemical exposure**: Climate change may disrupt the storage and transportation of hazardous chemicals, increasing worker exposure risks.

Climate Change and Mental Health

Climate change isn’t just a threat to our environment and physical health; it’s also having a significant impact on our mental wellbeing. Here’s a breakdown of the key connections:

- **Increased Stress and Anxiety**: Witnessing extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and the destruction of ecosystems can be incredibly stressful and anxiety-inducing.
- **Loss and Displacement**: Climate change can lead to loss of homes, livelihoods, and even loved ones due to disasters or forced migration. This can trigger grief, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- **Eco-Anxiety and Ecological Grief**: These terms describe the chronic worry and emotional distress associated with climate change. People may experience a sense of loss for the environment they cherish and fear for the future of the planet.
- **Uncertainty and Fear**: The unpredictable nature of climate change and the looming threat of future disasters can create a constant sense of fear and uncertainty, impacting mental well-being.
- **Heat and Air Quality**: Rising temperatures and worsening air pollution can directly affect mood and cognitive function, sleep disturbance, increasing irritability and depression.
April is National Arab American Month

The first National Arab American Heritage Month Celebration took place in Washington, DC in April of 2017 at the New America. Along with various displays of Arab culture, including a fashion show, dancing, and singing, this event marked an important milestone for the recognition of Arab American Heritage Month to be celebrated nationally.

The Arab World is formerly comprised of 22 countries, represented by the League of Arab States. These countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. *Palestine is comprised of the West Bank and Gaza.*

In the Arab American home, you can find elements of ethnic pride and ancestral heritage. This might be in the form of artifacts carried by immigrants, pictures of villages, and/or general symbols of Arab identity.

Arabs are people who can encompass all religious faiths. The three Abrahamic traditions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism) are the faiths primarily represented among Arab peoples. All three of the Abrahamic faiths share a lineage of certain prophets, and as such bear some commonalities in traditions and faith elements (among other differences).

The category “Middle East” refers to a region of the world that is linked by a shared location, but not a common culture. Therefore, Arab Americans should not be referred to as Middle Eastern Americans.

During the month of April, the Arab American Foundation formally recognizes the achievements of Arab Americans through the celebration of National Arab American Heritage Month (NAAHM). Across the country, cultural institutions, school districts, municipalities, state legislatures, public servants, and non-profit organizations issue proclamations and engage in special events that celebrate our community’s rich heritage and numerous contributions to society.

The President of the United States recognized the month of April as National Arab American Heritage Month with a special commemorative letter to our organization. In 2022, Congress, the U.S. Department of State, and 45 state governors issued proclamations commemorating the initiative. Additionally, the following states have passed permanent legislation designating the month of April as NAAHM: Illinois, Oregon, Virginia, Indiana (Senate), and California.

Please see the below websites to learn more about this heritage month and the wonderful people that belong to the Arab American community.

[ArabAmerica.Com](https://www.arabamerica.com)
[The Story of Arab Americans’ Beginning in America](https://www.arabamerica.com/history)
[NAAHM Slides](https://www.arabamerica.com/nahom-slides)
[Who Started the Movement?](https://www.arabamerica.com/origin)
[The First NAAHM Celebration, 2017](https://www.arabamerica.com/first-nahom-celebration)