

FEBRUARY 2025

## MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCE:

- *Black History Month (Canada, USA)*

### Feb 1

#### *Abolition of Slavery (Mauritius)*

Mauritius is a small island nation in the Indian Ocean. It is located off the southeast coast of Africa east of Madagascar. Slaves were brought from Africa, Madagascar, and India to work on sugar plantations. The British Empire passed the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, which came into effect in Mauritius on February 1, 1835. This date is observed to honour the struggles and resilience of the enslaved population.



Slavery  
ends  
Mauritius  
Rises

### Feb 2

#### *Basant Panchami (Hindu)*

This is a Hindu festival that marks the end of winter and the arrival of spring. The festival holds seasonal, cultural, and religious significance and is observed across India and among Hindu communities worldwide. It is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, learning, and arts. Yellow, symbolizing energy, prosperity, and the vibrancy of life, is the dominant colour of the day. People wear yellow clothes, prepare yellow-coloured dishes like saffron rice and sweets, and decorate their homes with yellow flowers.



### Feb 11

#### *International Day of Women and Girls in Science (UN)*

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, this observance aims to promote gender equality and empower women and girls to participate fully in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Activities and celebrations include Workshops and Conferences to showcase successful women scientists and their contributions, Educational Campaigns to inspire young girls to explore STEM through hands-on activities and programs, Mentorship Programs, and Media Campaigns.





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## Feb 13

### *Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)*

Also known as “New Year for Trees”, this day celebrates Judaism’s roots in the natural world. It is considered a time for celebrating nature, trees, and the environment. Traditionally, Tu B’Shevat is celebrated by planting trees, and eating the seven fruits of the land - wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and dates. In recent years, it has become a time to raise awareness about environmental issues and reflect on the importance of nature and sustainability.

## Feb 14

### *Valentine’s Day (Canada, UK, USA)*

This day is dedicated to expressing love and affection between romantic partners, friends, and family. Valentine’s Day has a history rooted in a blend of ancient Roman traditions, early Christian martyrdom, and medieval romantic ideas. It has evolved into a global celebration associated with gifting, romantic gestures, and heartfelt expressions of love. Common activities include romantic dinners, date nights, exchanging cards or handwritten notes, and surprising loved ones with thoughtful gestures. Whether you celebrate this day with a partner, friends, or indulge in self-love, it is a wonderful opportunity to spread kindness and appreciation.



## Feb 15

### *National Flag Day (Canada)*

This date commemorates the first time the red-and -white maple leaf flag was raised on February 15, 1965. The design was chosen after extensive debate and a competition to select a new flag. The Maple Leaf represents peace, unity, and tolerance. The Red and White colours are Canada’s official colours as declared by King George V in 1921. Red represents sacrifice, and white symbolizes peace and honesty. National Flag Day serves as a reminder of Canada’s unity, and pride in its history. Schools use the day to teach students about the history and meaning of the Canadian flag.





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**Feb 21**

## *International Mother Language Day (UNESCO)*

This day was declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1999 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and raise awareness about the importance of preserving and promoting native languages worldwide. The day highlights the significance of mother languages in preserving cultural identity, fostering communication, and ensuring access to education. It also advocates for multilingualism and encourages the protection of languages that are at risk of extinction.

**Feb 25**

## *Anti-Bullying Day (Canada)*

Anti-Bullying Day, also known as Pink Shirt Day in Canada, is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about bullying and promoting kindness, inclusion, and acceptance. It is observed on the last Wednesday of February each year. This day originated in 2007 in Nova Scotia when two high school students, **David Shepherd** and **Travis Price**, took a stand against bullying. They organized a protest in support of a fellow student who had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt. This captured national attention and became a symbol of anti-bullying advocacy. On Pink Shirt Day, participants often wear pink clothing to show their commitment to ending bullying.



**Feb 26**

## *Shivratri (Hindu)*

This is a significant Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the principal deities in Hinduism. The name 'Shivratri' translates to 'the night of Shiva'. The day is observed with fasting, prayer, and night-long vigils. Devotees engage in chanting mantras and visit temples to offer prayers to Lord Shiva and seek his blessings for health, wealth, and spiritual growth. It is believed that during this night, Lord Shiva performs his divine dance of creation, preservation, and destruction.



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**Feb 28**

## *Losar (Tibet, Buddhist)*

This is the traditional New Year festival celebrated by Tibetans and other Himalayan cultures such as Nepal and Bhutan. It marks the beginning of the lunar year according to the Tibetan calendar. Losar is celebrated for three days and is a time for family reunions, feasts, rituals, and various cultural events including wearing colourful traditional clothing, engaging in festive dancing, and preparing special foods.

## **OTHER OBSERVANCES:**

- Feb 2 - *Groundhog Day (Canada, USA)*
- Feb 4 - *World Cancer Day (International)*
- Feb 11 - *Thaipooosam Cavadee (India, Mauritius)*
- Feb 15 - *Parinirvana Day (Buddhist)*
- Feb 22 - *Abu Simbel Festival (Egypt)*
- Feb 24 - *Dragobete (Romania)*
- Feb 28 - *Purim begins at sunset (Jewish)*
- Feb 28 - *Ramadan begins in the evening (Islamic)*

## **NATIONAL AND INDEPENDENCE DAYS**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb 4 - <i>Independence Day (Sri Lanka)</i></li> <li>• Feb 6 - <i>Waitangi Day (New Zealand)</i></li> <li>• Feb 7 - <i>Independence Day (Grenada)</i></li> <li>• Feb 11 - <i>National Foundation Day (Japan)</i></li> <li>• Feb 12 - <i>Lincoln's Birthday (USA)</i></li> <li>• Feb 15 - <i>National Day (Serbia)</i></li> <li>• Feb 16 - <i>Independence Day (Lithuania)</i></li> <li>• Feb 17 - <i>Family Day (Canada)</i></li> <li>• Feb 17 - <i>Louis Riel Day (Canada)</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb 17 - <i>Presidents Day (USA)</i></li> <li>• Feb 18 - <i>Independence Day (Gambia)</i></li> <li>• Feb 22 - <i>Washington's Birthday (USA)</i></li> <li>• Feb 22 - <i>Independence Day (Saint Lucia)</i></li> <li>• Feb 23 - <i>Heisei Emperor's Birthday (Japan)</i></li> <li>• Feb 25 - <i>People Power Day (Philippines)</i></li> <li>• Feb 25 - <i>National Day (Kuwait)</i></li> <li>• Feb 27 - <i>Independence Day (Dominican Republic)</i></li> </ul> |
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*In creating this newsletter, we aim to honour and celebrate the diversity of our community. While we strive to acknowledge a wide range of cultural and religious holidays and observances, we recognize that we may not be able to include every holiday or tradition. This is not a reflection of the value or importance of any holiday or tradition. We deeply respect all cultural, religious, and personal celebrations and appreciate your understanding.*

Reference

Multicultural Calendar 2025

Sheena Singh, Creative Cultural Communications,  
Toronto, ON.