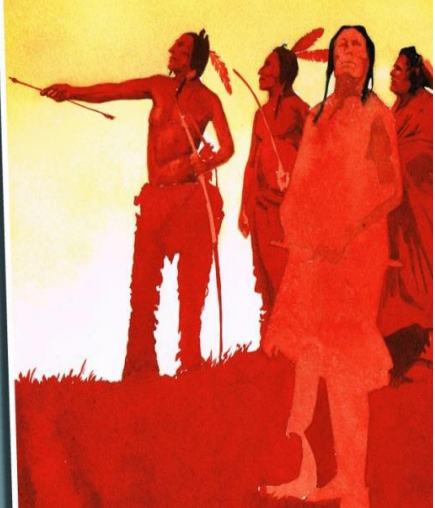


Religious & Ethnic Holidays & Days of Observance (Selected) Nov 2015

<p>November 2015</p> <p>IMAGE: Detail from <i>Sky Dogs</i>. Watercolor on paper by Barry Moser. Study for the book <i>Sky Dogs</i>. Courtesy of R. Michelson Galleries, Northampton, MA. www.RMichelson.com</p> <p><small>This graphic reflects the theme for this month.</small></p>		<p>This handout is to call your attention to just some of the many nationally and internationally recognized and/or celebrated diverse days of observance and religious/ethnic holidays that fall within the month of November. We invite you to share it with the students, staff, and faculty you work with across campus. For more information, feel free to visit the Multicultural Resource Calendar located on the Office of Student Life's Mosaic Center website: http://www.diversityresources.com/aa_gsr/main_month.php?key=0</p> <p>Thank you, The Office of Student Life's Mosaic Center for Culture and Diversity & Interfaith Center Staff</p>
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National American Indian Heritage Month, November: The term "American Indian" incorporates hundreds of different tribes and approximately 250 languages. Starting in 1976 as Native American Awareness Week, the period was expanded by Congress and approved by President George H. W. Bush in August 1990 by designating the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. In his proclamation for 1996, President William J. Clinton noted, "Throughout our history, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against all odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence."

Nov 1 Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos): Mexico: Beginning on the evening of October 31 and celebrated through November 2 by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, this holiday has its roots in two traditions: the Christian observance of All Saints and All Souls Day, and two Aztec festivals in which the souls of the dead were welcomed back to visit those who remembered them. Central to the observance is the creation of an *ofrenda*, or altar, in the home, with flowers, foods, and favorite possessions to honor the memory of deceased loved ones and to welcome their visiting souls. The holiday is celebrated with family and community gatherings, music, and feasting, and the festivity of its observance acknowledges death as an integral part of life.

Nov 2 All Souls Day: Christian. This is a Roman Catholic holiday for commemorating those souls who have been baptized, but who are still considered to be in purgatory for committing lesser sins. Prayers offered on their behalf are thought by Roman Catholics to help cleanse these sins and increase their likelihood of entering heaven.

Nov 11 Diwali: Hindu, Jain. This is one of the most important festivals of the year for Hindus. It lasts for five days and combines a number of festivals to celebrate different gods and goddesses and events in their lives as described in Hindu tradition. The day before Diwali is spent cleaning the house, shopping, and decorating with flowers. A design is painted in white in front of the door of the house to bring good luck. Lamps are lit for the entire five days beside roads and streams, along edges of roofs, and on window sills to enable Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of prosperity, to find her way to every home. For Jains, Diwali is celebrated as the day that Mahavira attained Nirvana.

Nov 12 Birthday of Baha'u'llah: Baha'i. This date marks the birthday of Baha'u'llah (1817-1892), prophet-founder of the Baha'i faith. Baha'u'llah was a member of one of the great aristocratic families of Persia who renounced his wealth and position to embrace the teachings of the Bab. He was subjected to imprisonment, torture, and exile.. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

Nov 15 Seven, Five, Three Festival (Shichi-go-san): Japan. This day is celebrated by children who are seven, five, and three years old. They are dressed in their best clothes. Little girls sometimes have their faces powdered white and their hair dressed in adult styles. The children are given bags of "thousand-year" candy to ensure a long, happy, and healthy life and are taken to shrines by parents to express thanks for good health and to pray for future blessings.

Nov 16 Dutch American Heritage Day: United States. On November 14, 1991, President George H. W. Bush signed a proclamation later adopted by Congress establishing November 16 as a day to recognize the contributions made by people of Dutch ancestry to the United States. The Dutch settled in North America in the 1600s, creating in 1625 the colony of New Amsterdam in what is now Manhattan. Approximately 8 million people of Dutch ancestry live in the United States, including many who played an important role in American history, such as both Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, both descendants of Claes Martenszen van Rosenvelt, a farmer who settled in New Amsterdam in the 1640s.

Nov 16 International Day for Tolerance: United Nations. In 1996, the U.N. General Assembly established the International Day for Tolerance to promote respect for and appreciation of the world's many religions, languages, cultures, and ethnicities, and to recognize the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.

Nov 23 Labor Thanksgiving Day (Kinro Kansha No Hi): Japan. This observance began as a harvest festival when Japan was primarily an agricultural society and now is a public holiday celebrating all those who work.

Nov 25 Guru Nanak Ji's Birthday: Sikh. This holiday celebrates the birth of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism, which comes from the Hindi word *sikh*, meaning "disciple," is one of the three religions most widely practiced in India with approximately 16 million followers, mostly concentrated in the state of Punjab in northern India.

Nov 26 Thanksgiving Day: United States. This legal holiday in all territories of the United States is a time for giving thanks for the harvest and for the blessings the year has brought. Although the celebration at Plymouth in 1621 is considered the first American thanksgiving observance, the idea was not a new one; harvest festivals and days of thanksgiving had long been observed in many cultures. In his first presidential proclamation on October 3, 1789, President George Washington declared Thursday, November 26, 1789 to be "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer."

Nov 29 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975): People with Disabilities, United States. Signed into U.S. law on this date, this act establishes the right of every child with a disability to a free and appropriate public education. It requires states to identify such children and develop individualized education programs for them, and to provide educational services in the least restrictive environment possible. The law also protects the rights of such children and their parents in educational decisions.

Nov 29 Advent begins: Christian. *Advent*, which means "coming" or "arrival," marks the beginning of the Western Christian ecclesiastical year. It begins on the Sunday nearest to the Feast of St. Andrew on November 30, and continues through Christmas Eve, encompassing four Sundays.

Nov 30 Magal de Touba Day: Sénégal. On this day the followers of Mouridism, a large Islamic Sufi order founded in Sénégal by Amadou Bamba, mark the founder's exile imposed by the French colonial authority. The Mouride constitute about one-sixth of Sénégal's population.

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