

Diversity Calendar

February 2024

Gibson Chowdhury Mediation
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Feb 1st American National Freedom Day

In 1865, Abraham Lincoln signed the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which outlawed slavery. In commemoration of the signing, Richard Wright, a former slave, founded National Freedom Day.

Feb 2nd Groundhog Day US and Canada

Groundhog day is a folklore derived from people who worshiped animals and nature. They believed that groundhogs or similar burrowing animals could predict the weather. If the groundhog sees its shadow, winter will be prolonged for another six weeks!

Feb 2nd Christian Candlemas

Celebrating the presentation of Jesus; Jesus' first entry into the temple and Virgin Mary's purification. A candle-lit procession leads the mass in many Churches around the world. Celebratory customs vary, depending on location.

Feb 3rd Japan Setsubun-Sai (Beginning of Spring)

A celebration acknowledging the beginning of Spring in Japan. Some customs include dressing up as ogres or devils to scare away evil spirits. There are many different traditions in celebrating this holiday, depending on the region in Japan

Feb 7-8th Islam Lailat ul Mihraj

This was the night when the instructions for the 5 daily prayers was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed in Jerusalem. The day is marked by private prayers, from sundown the night before.

Feb 8th - 10th Buddhist Losar

The Tibetan Buddhist New Year. The holiday is based on the lunar calendar and is a time of renewal through spiritual practices and rituals of gratitude.

Feb 10th Chinese Lantern Festival

This is the first significant holiday, marking the last day of the Chinese New Year celebrations. Beautiful and decorative Chinese lanterns illuminate the sky during the night of the event.

Feb 13th Catholicism Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday

The last day for Catholics before the long fast for Lent begins. The occasion is referred to as Mardi Gras in parts of the world including Europe and South America. In England, it is known as Pancake Tuesday. Mardi Gras is famously celebrated around world by dressing in costumes and masks during street parades.

Feb 14th U. S, U.K. and Canada St. Valentine's Day

Holiday honouring the martyrdom the saint Valentine, or Valentinus. Typically associated with romantic love. St. Valentine's Day was recognized as a day of romance, in the 14th century.

February Is:

Black History Month in Canada and the U.S. It was established in 1976 by Carter G. Woodson.

Resources to help you learn and support Black friends, colleagues and communities can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month.html>

Feb 14th Christian Ash Wednesday

40 days of Lent begins. The fasting during Lent is an imitation of Jesus Christ's fast in the Judean deserts before beginning his public ministry. It is a time to abstain from certain types of food, including meats and dairy. It is a reminder to devote oneself to God. Lent ends on Easter Sunday.

Feb 14th Hindu Vasant Puja

Coming of the Spring is a Hindu Festival dedicated to the worship of Sarawati Devi, the goddess of wisdom, knowledge and culture. The holiday is celebrated in a variety of ways, depending on geographical location such as West Bengal or Punjab.

Feb 24th Hindu Maghi-Purnima

Magha is the name for February in Hindu culture. It is the month of good deeds and charity. Maghi-Purnima is a Hindu festival in worship of Lord Vishnu, protector of the universe. Millions of devotees take a holy bath in the Ganga carry out charity work throughout the month.

Feb 24th Buddhism Magha Puja

This Buddhist holiday celebrates a time when 1,250 enlightened Buddhist monks, ordained by the Buddha came to see the Buddha **without** being summoned on the night of the full moon of the third lunar month. Traditionally, the Three Jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma are honoured on this day.

Feb 24th Chinese Lantern Festival

Also known as Shangyuan, the light festival signifies the final day of the Chinese New Year. It is typically a celebration in Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. Paper lanterns are usually released into the night sky.

February 24-25th Islam Shab-e-Barat

A "Night of Forgiveness" during the month of Shaban in the Islamic faith. It is a night dedicated to prayer.

Feb 26 - 29th Baha'i Ayyám-i-Há

Ayyám-i-Há is the addition of 4 days to the Baha'i solar calendar. Members of the faith begin a 19 day fast to welcome in the new year.

About the Calendar

This calendar shows some of the multicultural celebrations for February 2024. There may be some celebrations that have not been included in this calendar and customs may vary. If you would like Afsana to add a special holiday or vary the customs, please email afsana@gcmediation.com.

This calendar was produced by, Gibson Chowdhury – Clear Collaborative Mediation, through careful research and references to various sources and materials.

About Afsana

Afsana is a lawyer and a Qualified Mediator. She founded 'Gibson Chowdhury', a Toronto-based mediation boutique, specializing in workplace discrimination, civil and commercial disputes. Afsana is an Adjudicator and Chair of the Property Standards Committee for the City of Toronto. Afsana served as the Chair (2022/2023 term) of the Ontario Bar Association's ADR Section Executive Board, where she led initiatives to promote diversity in the mediation profession. Her dedication to fostering inclusivity is evident in the OBA Working Group's groundbreaking report, 'Neutral Diversity in Ontario,' where she served as co-chair. This effort aims to enhance diversity within the mediation field. Afsana further contributes to the field through her role as a committee member of the Winkler Institute, organizing cutting-edge material for the annual Winkler/Osgoode PD/IAM conference. Afsana is often asked to attend speaking engagements globally to present on issues concerning dispute resolution and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in ADR. She often attends Canadian Universities as a guest lecturer to advance DEI in mediation.

Afsana is the recipient of the ADR Institute of Ontario, Star Award. Afsana is a British-born national and daughter of British Muslim Immigrant parents from Bangladesh. She is now a Canadian immigrant where she enjoys the company of her husband and three children, living in the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, also known as Toronto.

To book a mediation, contact Afsana at afsana@gcmediation.com or via her online calendar <https://gcmediation.com/calendar-and-fees/>