

# INTERFAITH INSIDER

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CANADA'S NATIONAL FLAG DAY AND ITS HISTORY

### INTERFAITH INTERFACE DATES

**FEBRUARY 7**  
WIHW

**FEBRUARY 14**  
Love 101

**FEBRUARY 21**  
Ramadan 101

**FEBRUARY 28**  
Lent 101

Every Friday

MB305 11-12



### WHAT WAS THE OLD CANADIAN FLAG?

Before the maple leaf flag was introduced in 1965, Canada's official flag was the Canadian Red Ensign. This flag featured a red background with the Union Jack in the top left corner and the Canadian coat of arms on the right. The Red Ensign symbolized Canada's colonial ties to Britain, and it remained in use until the shift towards a more independent national identity.



The Canadian Red Ensign was unofficially used on land and sea as Canada's flag.

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### WHY DID CANADA GET A NEW FLAG?

Canada adopted a new flag in 1965 to mark its independence and shift away from colonial symbols. The new maple leaf flag reflected Canada's self-governing status and aimed to unify the diverse English and French-speaking populations. It symbolized a break from British colonial rule and was seen as a neutral and inclusive symbol for all Canadians.

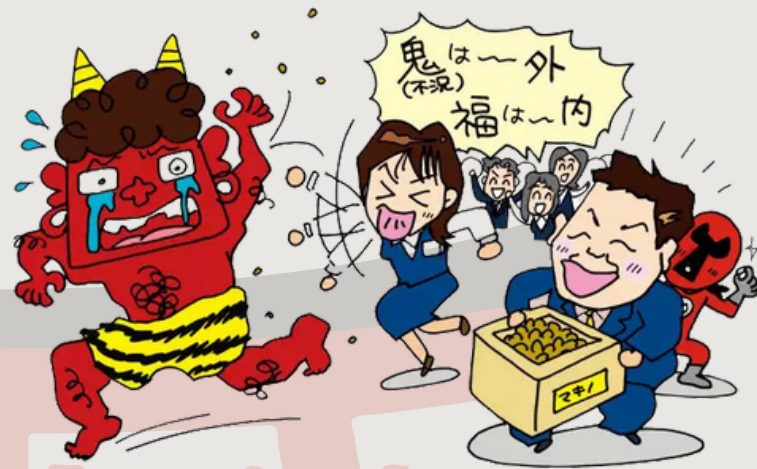
### WHAT DO WE DO ON CANADA'S NATIONAL FLAG DAY?

Canada's National Flag Day, celebrated on February 15, honors the adoption of the maple leaf flag. On this day, Canadians reflect on the nation's history, pride, and unity. Schools, communities, and government buildings often display the flag, and many Canadians participate in activities that celebrate the country's heritage and diversity, showcasing the values the flag represents.

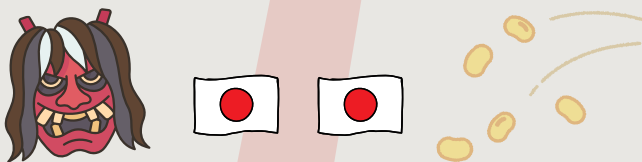
# Setsubun: Celebrating the Beginning of Spring in Japan

Setsubun is a traditional Japanese festival that marks the beginning of spring. Celebrated annually on February 3rd or 4th, Setsubun is held just before the start of Risshun, the first day of spring according to the Japanese lunar calendar. This festive occasion has deep roots in Shintoism, Japan's indigenous religion, and is a time for both purification and the welcoming of good fortune.

The central tradition of Setsubun is mame-maki (豆撒き), or "bean throwing." During this ritual, people throw roasted soybeans either outside their homes or at a family member who is dressed as an oni, a demon-like creature. As the beans are thrown, participants shout the phrase, "Oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi" (鬼は外、福は内), which means "Out with the demons, in with the good fortune." This act is believed to drive away evil spirits and bring in health, happiness, and prosperity for the year ahead.



Out with the demons, in with the good fortune



## Unique Setsubun Customs with Lucky Rolls and Demon Masks

Setsubun is not only about the traditional bean-throwing ceremony but also features other fun and unique customs that vary across Japan. One of the most popular customs is the eating of ehomaki, or lucky sushi rolls. These rolls, which are uncut and filled with a variety of ingredients, are eaten in silence while facing the "lucky direction" for the year. This direction changes based on the zodiac, and the act of eating the entire roll without speaking is believed to bring good health and fortune for the year.



Clara Lee  
Interfaith Centre Student Lead  
She/Her



The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) acknowledges it is situated on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, which today encompasses the Indigenous people of the Treaty 7 region: the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda, and the homeland of the Northwest Métis. SAIT also recognizes all Peoples who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of southern Alberta.