

Interfaith Insider August 2024

Krishna Janmashtami

On the Hindu Calendar, Krishna's birth is celebrated on the 8th day of Krishna Paksha for the month of Bhadrapada which often lands between the months of August and early September. His birth is celebrated and venerated with various traditions. Leading up to the midnight of the Krishna's birthdate, devotees often fast for day(s) until the big feast at midnight happens. Relics or statues of Krishna are bathed in water and milk, then dressed and worshipped. Along with this practice, temples and shrines are adorned with foliage and offerings of sweetmeats, and then shared to household members. On a similar note, reenactments of his birth at his birthplace, Yamuna River, are held to commemorate his birth. People hang milk pots from the street poles and form human pyramids to break those pots to imitate Krishna's childhood activities. People also sing bhajans and perform group dancing. Dairy products like milk curds are served during this day as well as, Sabudana, Makhana, Panjiri, and Kheer.

In Calgary, this event is celebrated with ISKCON Calgary (iskconcalgary.ca) and a variety of activities are celebrated for the Krishna Janmashtami. Aarti (ritual of worship) and Kirtan (call and response chant) are followed through a program throughout the day including a variety show.



August 1, 2024

- Wicca/NeoPagan – Imbolc (Southern Hemisphere)
- Wicca/NeoPagan – Lughnasadh (Northern Hemisphere)
- Christian – Lammas

August 6, 2024

- Orthodox Christian – Transfiguration of the Lord

August 12, 2024

- Judaism – Tisha B'Av

August 13, 2024

- Judaism – Tisha B'Av
- Buddhist – Obon

August 14, 2024

- Buddhist – Obon

August 15, 2024

- Buddhist – Obon
- Orthodox Christian – Dormition of the Theotokos
- Catholic Christian – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

August 26, 2024

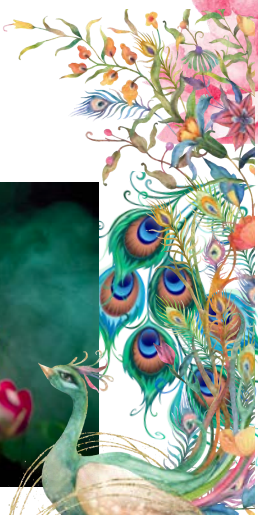
- Hindu – Krishna Janmashtami

August 29, 2024

- Christian – Beheading of St. John the Baptist

August 31, 2024

- Jain – Paryushana



Obon Festival

In Buddhism, this 3 day event (August 13-15) commemorates those who have passed away by showing gratitude and respect to our loved ones. They believe that spirits are able to return to their families during this time. To guide the spirits home, families would hang lanterns along the streets. In addition, families would clean their deceased relatives' graves, burn incense, offer sacrifices or decorate them. While this event may appear solemn, this event celebrates the dead with street food, music, and dancing.



There are some taboos that are avoided during this time. Some of these include hanging clothes at night as ghosts may take them, swimming as ghosts may pull you down, or taking photos at night as there may be spirits that appear in the picture. While people celebrate this joyous event with cheer, they continue to be careful with their actions to prevent attracting bad spirits.

Obon came from the Ullambana Sutra, pronounced Urabon in Japanese. Maudgalyayana, or Mokuren in Japanese, served food to the sangha to relieve his mother from her torment. As she became free from this, the son celebrated. In present times, Obon is not a national holiday, but taking the week off is normalized for many Japanese nationals to return to their hometown and celebrate this tradition with the family.

At Calgary, there is no event directly pertaining to the Japanese Obon; however there is an annual Japanese cultural celebration, Omatsuri, that happens at the Max Bell Centre from August 9th to August 10th.



Floyd Tan
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(He/Him/His)



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.