



THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS 2015-16





KEY RELIGIOUS DATES FOR THE 2015-16 SEASON

	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
BUDDHISM							8 CHINESE NEW YEAR			14 BUDDHA DAY		
CHRISTIANITY					25 CHRISTMAS DAY		10 BEGINNING OF LENT	25/27 GOOD FRIDAY/ EASTER SUNDAY				
HINDUISM	29 RAKSHA BANDHAN		13 NAVARATRI	11 DIWALI				23 HOLI	8 HINDU NEW YEAR			
JUDAISM		14/23/28 ROSH HASHANAH*/ YOM KIPPUR/ SUKKOT*	5-6 SHEMINI ATZERET / SIMCHAT TORAH		7-14 CHANUKAH			24 PURIM	23/30 PASSOVER*		12 SHAVUOT*	
ISLAM		22 'ID AL-ADHA	23/14 OCT ASHURA/1ST MUHARRAM & AL HIJRA								6 JUNE – 5 JULY RAMADAN	6 'ID AL-FITR
SIKHISM		1 FIRST READING OF THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB		11/25 DIWALI/ BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK		5 BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH			14 VAISAKHI			

Some dates are provisional, based on the lunar calendar and/or sighting of the moon. The FA recognise that in the case of most of the faiths concerned there are various ways of spelling the same word. This is because of the range of languages (and alphabets) of the original terms. Some dates may also vary and the date of local celebrations may differ. We therefore recommend anyone using this calendar to arrange fixtures and events only after consultation with local representatives of the faith communities concerned.

*All these festivals are observed for two days. All Jewish Festivals start the night before.



GUIDANCE TO COUNTY FAS AND LEAGUES ON LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

As part of The Football Association's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all to participate in football, Rule B5 was amended at the 2005 AGM in order to include all religions.

RULE B5 FOOTBALL & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

(a) A Participant cannot be compelled to play football on bona fide occasions where religious observance precludes such activity, save where the Participant:

- (i) has consented to do so on such occasions;
- or
- (ii) is registered as a player under written contract, which shall be taken as consent to play on such occasions unless otherwise provided for in the contract.

(b) Annually, when planning programmes, Competitions shall define and notify agreed dates of such occasions.

GUIDANCE

In order to support you with your fixture planning this guidance has been written to provide you with the most significant dates for religious observance together with some information on them. It is not intended that you avoid all these dates, and the list is by no means exhaustive, but you are advised to consult with your clubs and communities as to the most relevant dates to consider for your locality as this will vary considerably.

A calendar of these dates will be provided by The FA annually. You should note that some religions work on a lunar calendar (10/11 months) rather than the Gregorian (12 months) which means dates will vary from year to year. In addition some dates can only be confirmed by the sighting of the moon so are sometimes expressed as two or three dates and confirmed nearer the time of the festival. Some dates also have alternative spellings.

FAITH DATES BY RELIGION

Buddhism

- Chinese New year
- Buddha Day

Christianity

- Christmas Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- Sundays unless the League is a Sunday League (membership of or participation in Sunday football shall be taken as consent to play on Sundays, except when Christmas Day be on a Sunday)

Hinduism

- Diwali (or Divali)
- Navaratri – this is nine nights but usually finishes quite late, not ideal when playing matches
- Raksha Bandhan
- Holi – Only for evening fixtures as Holi is celebrated in late afternoon/evenings

Judaism

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Passover – the last two days of the festival
- Sukkot – the first two days of the festival
- Friday evening to Saturday evening (Sabbath) unless the League is a Saturday League (membership of, or participation in, Saturday football shall be taken as consent to play on Saturdays)

Islam

- 'Id-al-Fitr (occurs at the end of Ramadan)
- 'Id-al-Adha
- Al-Hijra/Muharram

Sikhism

- Diwali (Divali or Bandi Chhor Divas)
- Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)
- Birthday of Guru Nanak



EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Al-Hijra/Muharram

Islamic New Year and the 1st of the month of Muharram, where Muslims celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. For Shi'as the first ten days are a period of mourning culminating in Ashura Day, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn.

Birthday of Guru Nanak

Birthday of founder of Sikhism. This is the holiest festival of the Sikhs which is celebrated over a three day period.

Buddha Day

Buddha Day or Wesak celebrates the Buddha's birth and for some marks his enlightenment and death.

Chinese New Year

The most important day in the traditional Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first Lunar month.

Christmas

Celebrates the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the Son of God. Christians focus on the incarnation of God becoming a man in this major festival.

Diwali (or Divali) – (Hindu/Sikh)

Festival of Lights. Celebration of good over evil. Victory of Lord Rama over demon Ravana and end of over 14 years of exile of Lord Rama. Prayers are said for Goddess Laxmi for prosperity at the beginning of financial year. For Sikhs this has a special significance because the sixth Guru was released from prison on Diwali.

Easter Sunday

Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

'Id-al-Adha

This Muslim festival marks Day Three of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and also commemorates the Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son Ishmael.

'Id-al-Fitr

This day marks the end of the month of fasting for Muslims (Ramadan). The day is marked with prayers and festivity and presents for children.

Good Friday

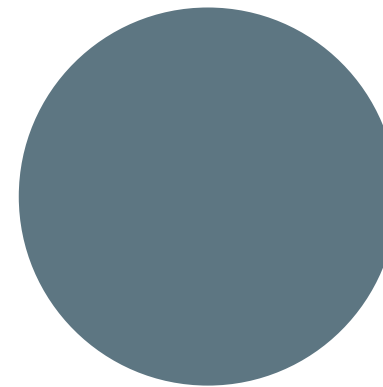
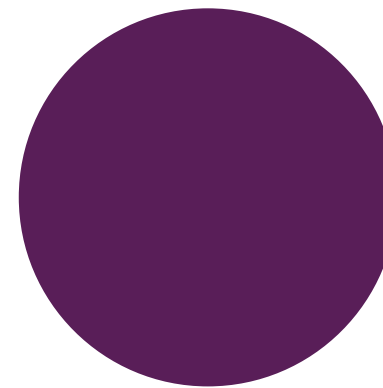
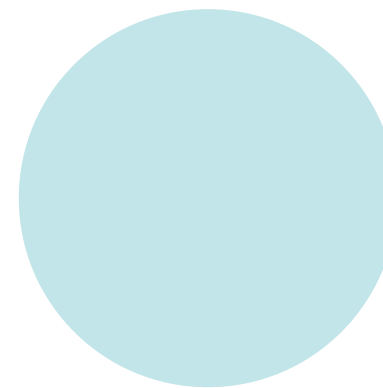
This day commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus.

Hindu New Year

Often thought of as more important than Diwali, many Hindus celebrate this in the spring but some on the day following Diwali.

Holi

Spring Festival of Colours for Hindus which symbolises the triumph of good over evil. The event celebrates the death of the evil demoness Holika who was consumed by fire while her nephew Prahlad, who was a devotee of Vishnu, survived. These days the event is signified by burning large bonfires, dancing and spraying coloured powder and water on each other.





EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Lent

A period of preparation including prayer, fasting and reflection lasting six weeks up to Easter Sunday.

Navaratri

Nine days of dance (Garba) and celebration when the Goddess Laxmi is worshipped by Hindus.

Passover

A Jewish festival recalling the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and celebrating the barley harvest. Unleavened bread is eaten with a special meal (Sedar), with food, prayers, games and song.

Raksha Bandhan

Sisters tie holy thread onto brothers wrists for protection. Brothers in return give sisters presents and also offer the sisters protection.

Ramadan

The Islamic month of fasting from before dawn to sunset every day, normally 30 days ending with Eid-ul-Fitr.

Rosh Hashanah

Two-day religious observance that marks the start of the Jewish New Year. It is traditionally announced by blowing a shofar, a ram'shorn trumpet. It is the first of the high holy days, or 'days of awe', and celebrates the creation of the world, the repentance of sins, and the renewal of God's relationship with the Jewish people.

Sukkot

Jewish harvest festival commemorating the forty years spent in the wilderness on the way to freedom in the Promised Land.

Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)

Founding of Khalsa (Sikhism) order of the Guru by Guru Gobind Singh – he baptised five disciples known as the Five Beloved Ones.

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement (Jewish). The last day of 10 days of repentance and the holiest day of the year with fasting and prayer.

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