



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar May - 2025

Month-Long Observances:

Asian Heritage Month: Asian Heritage Month in May celebrates the diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of Asian communities in Canada. It highlights the significant impact that people of Asian origin have had in shaping the country. The 2024 theme, "Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future: Amplifying Asian Canadian Legacy," honors the rich heritage of Asian Canadians while looking forward with hope and optimism. The month focuses on recognizing the achievements of Asian Canadians in various fields, including the arts, sports, and social justice.

Canadian Jewish Heritage Month: Canadian Jewish Heritage Month, observed every May since 2018, celebrates the diverse culture, faith, and history of Jewish Canadians, highlighting their significant contributions across fields like arts, politics, business, and social justice. It also acknowledges the rise of antisemitism in Canada and the government's ongoing efforts to combat hate. The month emphasizes the experiences of racialized Jews, including Sephardic, Ashkenazi, and Mizrahi communities, and promotes the preservation of Jewish heritage for future generations. It encourages all Canadians to engage in activities that foster understanding and unity.

Haitian Heritage Month: Haitian Heritage Month, celebrated in May, honors the rich culture, history, and contributions of the Haitian people. It reflects on Haiti's significant historical events, including its revolutionary past, and celebrates the lasting impact of the Haitian diaspora. The month also highlights the negative effects of Western colonialism, particularly the exploitation and interference that have shaped Haiti's current political instability. These challenges have contributed to ongoing humanitarian crises. Haitian Heritage Month encourages reflection on both the struggles and resilience of the Haitian people, raising awareness of the political and social issues that continue to affect Haiti.

Day Observances:

May 2nd Twelfth Day of Ridván: The Twelfth Day of Ridván, celebrated on May 2, marks the end of the Bahá'í Ridván Festival, commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's departure from the Garden of Ridván in 1863. It is one of the Bahá'í holy days when work is suspended, observed with prayers and gatherings to honor the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh's mission and His journey toward Constantinople.

May 3rd World Press Freedom Day: World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3, is an international day declared by the United Nations to highlight the importance of a free and independent press. It honors journalists who have lost their lives or faced persecution and promotes the need for governments to uphold freedom of expression, access to information, and media safety worldwide.



May 5th Cinco De Mayo: Cinco de Mayo, celebrated on May 5, commemorates the Mexican army's victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States it has become a popular celebration of Mexican culture, heritage, and pride, marked with festivals, music, food, and parades.

May 5th Dutch Heritage Day: Dutch Heritage Day in Canada, celebrated on May 5, honors the strong ties between Canada and the Netherlands, especially Canada's role in liberating the Netherlands in 1945. It also recognizes the contributions of Dutch Canadians to the country's cultural and social fabric.

May 5th Red Dress Day: Red Dress Day, observed annually on May 5, serves as a national day of awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S) in Canada. The day was inspired by Métis artist Jaime Black's REDress Project, which uses red dresses displayed in public spaces to symbolize the absence of these individuals and to draw attention to the ongoing crisis of violence against Indigenous communities. The 2019 National Inquiry into MMIWG2S concluded that the violence constitutes a genocide and issued 231 Calls for Justice aimed at addressing systemic issues and supporting affected families. On Red Dress Day, individuals and organizations participate by wearing red, displaying red dresses, and engaging in educational and commemorative activities to honor the lives of those lost and to advocate for justice and systemic change.

May 12th International Day of Plant Health: International Day of Plant Health, held every May 12, highlights the vital role of plant health in ensuring global food security, protecting biodiversity, and supporting sustainable development. Established by the United Nations, the day raises awareness about the impact of plant pests and diseases, which destroy up to 40% of crops annually. It also promotes international cooperation, safe trade practices, and the use of digital technologies to prevent the spread of plant threats and safeguard ecosystems.

May 12th Buddhist Vesak Day: Vesak, or Buddha Day, is the most important Buddhist festival, commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. In 2025, it falls on Monday, May 12, aligning with the first full moon of May in the Buddhist lunisolar calendar. Celebrated across many countries, Vesak traditions include temple visits, meditation, chanting, and acts of charity, reflecting core Buddhist values of compassion and mindfulness.

May 15th Global Accessibility Awareness Day: Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) is observed on the third Thursday of May, and in 2025 it falls on May 15. The day promotes digital accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, encouraging discussions, events, and actions that support accessible design. Since its launch in 2012, GAAD has grown into a global movement advocating for a more inclusive digital world.



May 17th International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia:

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) is observed annually on May 17. In 2025, this day falls on a Saturday. Established in 2004, IDAHOBIT commemorates the World Health Organization's 1990 decision to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. The day aims to raise awareness about the discrimination and violence faced by LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide and to promote inclusivity and equality. Celebrations and events are held in over 130 countries, including marches, workshops, and educational activities, to support the LGBTQ+ community and advocate for their rights .

May 20th World Bee Day: World Bee Day 2025 will be on Tuesday, May 20. This day raises awareness about the vital role bees play in pollination, which is crucial for over 75% of global crops. The 2025 theme, "Bee inspired by nature to nourish us all," focuses on their importance to agriculture and biodiversity. To participate, you can plant bee-friendly flowers, support local beekeepers, create bee gardens, and share awareness online with hashtags like #WorldBeeDay. Educational materials are also available for schools and communities.

May 21st World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development:

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is observed annually on May 21. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, this day promotes the appreciation of cultural diversity and the importance of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development. The day encourages individuals and communities to reflect on the value of cultural diversity, engage in discussions, and participate in activities that foster mutual understanding and respect among different cultures. In Canada, this observance is an opportunity to celebrate the nation's rich multicultural heritage and to promote inclusivity and cultural awareness.

May 23rd Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i): The Declaration of the Báb is a major Bahá'í holy day celebrated on May 22, marking the moment in 1844 when the Báb announced His mission in Shiraz, Persia. This event began the Bahá'í Faith and foretold the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'ís observe it with prayers and gatherings starting about two hours after sunset, and it is a work- and school-free holy day for followers.

May 25th—May31st International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories:

The International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories is observed annually from May 25 to May 31. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, this week aims to raise awareness and promote support for the rights of peoples in territories that have not yet attained full self-government and independence. Currently, there are 17 such territories remaining worldwide. The week serves as a reminder of the ongoing efforts towards decolonization and the importance of self-determination for all peoples.