

**f. Jum'at al-Wada'** (juh-m-at al-wah-DAH, Farewell Friday) is the last Friday of the month of Ramadan. Though not a strict festival, many Muslims consider it a special day.

**g. Laylat al-Qadr** (LAHAY-let al-KAHD-ehr, Night of Power) commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an. This event came to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. (A.D.), when he was forty years old.

**h. 'Id al-Fitr** (i-EED al FAHT-ehr, Festival of the Breaking of the Fast).

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Along with 'Id al-Fitr, Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) comprise the two main Islamic festivals. 'Id al-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan. It comes on the first day of the month Shawwal which follows Ramadan.

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**i. Day of Hajj** (al-HAHJ, Day of Arafat) comes on the ninth day of Dhul'Hihha (the month of pilgrimage). It commemorates the concluding revelation to the Prophet at Mt. Arafat, a mountain 18 kilometers east of Mecca. All Muslims on Hajj attend a service on the plains in front of Mt. Arafat (Waqfatu Arafat).

**j. Id al-Adha** (i-EED ahl-OOHD-hah, Festival of Sacrifice)

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The concluding act of pilgrimage. Muslims offer sheep, goats, and camels in a pattern after Abraham's offering of his son Ismail to God. The poor and needy receive the meat. Muslims observe these two festivals (Day of Hajj and Id al-Adha) whether on pilgrimage or not.

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Islam considers Ismail--the son of Abraham and Hagar (thus Abraham's "firstborn")--as the rightful heir, the son to be sacrificed. (In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Abraham's second son [Isaac, born of Sarah] is seen to be the true heir, the son to be sacrificed]).



## Vocabulary List: Holidays and Observances

**'Id al-Fitr** (*i*-EED al FAHT-ehr, Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) Celebrates the end of Ramadan. It comes on the first day of the month, Shawwal, which follows Ramadan.

**A.H.** Anno Hegirae, in the year of the Hajra

**Arhats** (AHR-huht--worthy ones) 1,250 original members of the first Sangha, meeting in Rajagriha in northern India. Now the term refers to those who have achieved the final stage of enlightenment in Theravada Buddhism.

**Ashura** (ah-shoo-RA) Commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn (grandson of the prophet Muhammad) on the 10th of Muharram, A.H. 61, (C.E. [A.D.] 680)

**B.C.E.** Before Common Era

**Bodhi Tree** (BOH-dee) Type of tree under which the historical Buddha received his first enlightenment.

**Buddha** (BOO duh) Title meaning 'enlightened, awakened one,' and refers to those who attain the enlightenment goal of Buddhist religious life.

**C.E.** Common Era

**Clear and Bright Remembrance** Second most important Chinese festival which involves visiting ancestral tombs. Family members groom and conserve burial sites, eat together and offer money/gifts to departed ancestors.

**Day of Hajj** (ahl-HAHJ, Day of Arafat) Commemorates the concluding revelation to the Prophet at Mt. Arafat, a mountain 18 kilometers east of Mecca.

**Dharma** (DHAR-muh) Teaching--the proper course of conduct, norm, ultimate principles, of Buddhism.

**Dragon Boat Celebration** Event recalling when Chu'u Yuan (328-298 B.C.), a Chinese poet and statesman, drowned himself in the Tungsing Lake to protest corruption in the royal court.

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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**Ghost Festival** Taoist, Buddhist, Chinese festival to kwei (gway), hungry ghosts. These souls of the restless must be appeased through offerings of food and prayers.

**Hijra** (HIJ-ruh) Migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622) This date begins the Islamic calendar.

**Id al-Adha** (i-EED ahl-OOHD-hah, Festival of Sacrifice) The concluding act of pilgrimage. Muslims offer sheep, goats, and camels in a pattern after Abraham's offering of his son Ismail to God. The poor and needy receive the meat.

**Kathina Festival** Observance which marks the end of the monsoon rain retreats. The Sangha receives new robes and wishing trees from village members on this occasion.

**Kuei** (gway) Hungry ghosts. These harmful spirits--souls which are restless due to violent and untimely deaths, ill placed burial sites or neglect by descendants--must be appeased. The Ghost Festival fulfills this function.

**Lantern Festival** Event marking the end of the Lunar New Year's celebration where lanterns are viewed and displayed.

**Laylat al-Qadr** (LAHY-let ahl-KAHD-ehr, Night of Power) This event came to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. (A.D.), when he was forty years old. It commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an.

**Lunar calendar** Using the moon to calculate the days marking a given calendar year

**Lunar New Year** Most important Chinese religious year celebration, held the second new moon after the winter solstice. Feasts honor various deities, ancestors and restless spirits.

**Mawlid al-Nabiy** (MOW-lid oon-NA-bee--Birthday of the Prophet) The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. For many Muslims, this day ranks third in importance, after 'Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha.

**Mid-Autumn Festival** Celebration of the harvest moon, centered on popular deity of Ch'ang O. People go to the countryside, eat moon shaped cakes and enjoy the holiday spirit.

**Ramadan** (RAH-mah-dahn) A holy month of fasting wherein Muslims, who are physically able, do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset.

**Relics** Items (tooth, finger bone) thought to originate from the historical Buddha. These items become objects of great veneration.

**Sangha** (SAHN-guh) Buddhist monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen.

**Shia** (SHEE-uh) Muslims who believe Muhammad passed his successorship directly through his bloodline. This school of thought comprises some 15% of Middle Eastern Muslims.

**Solar calendar:** Using the sun to calculate the days marking a given calendar year

**Tet offensive** North Vietnamese Army attack in 1968 which focused on Vietnamese cities throughout the country. This event, conducted during the Vietnamese New Year, proved a strategic turning point in the war.

## Review Quiz: Holidays and Observances



**Part 1--Multiple Choice** Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The initials C.E. represent
  - a. Calvin's Enterprise.
  - b. Common Era.
  - c. Cultural Enlightenment.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The initials B.C.E. represent
  - a. Before the Christian Era.
  - b. Before the Common Era.
  - c. Before the Cultural Enlightenment.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Islam follows a \_\_\_\_\_ calendar resulting in a year 354 days long.
  - a. lunar
  - b. solar
  - c. lunisolar
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The abbreviation A.H. represents
  - a. Anno Hegirae, the year of the Hijra.
  - b. After Hanukkah.
  - c. Ali's Harvest.
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The migration (Hijra) of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina took place in the year A.D. \_\_\_\_\_. It is the date which begins the Islamic calendar.
  - a. 1492
  - b. 622
  - c. 732

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ For Muslims \_\_\_\_\_ is the day of communal weekly gathering.
- Saturday
  - Friday
  - Sunday
7. \_\_\_\_\_ commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn on the battlefield of Karbala A.H. 61. It is an important day for Shia Muslims.
- Hijra
  - Muharran
  - Ashura
8. \_\_\_\_\_ After 'Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha, this day ranks third in importance for many Muslims.
- Mawlid al-Nabiy (birthday of the Prophet)
  - Nisf-Sha'ban (Night of Repentance)
  - Mi'Raj al-Nabiy (ascension of Prophet to heaven)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The two most important Muslim festival/observances are
- 'Id al-Fitr (Breaking of Fast) and Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice).
  - Day of Hajj and Mawlid al-Nabiy (birthday of Prophet).
  - Christmas and New Years.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is the holy month of fasting for Muslims.
- Muharran (beginning the Muslim year)
  - Dhul-Hijja (last month of year--pilgrimage)
  - Ramadan
11. \_\_\_\_\_ The Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power) commemorates
- the first revelation of the Qur'an.
  - the ascension of the prophet to heaven following his night journey.
  - the last day of Ramadan.

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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12. \_\_\_\_\_ The 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam
- was a total tactical and strategic victory for the North Vietnamese Army.
  - celebrated traditional Vietnamese Thanksgiving.
  - demonstrates the importance of knowing holidays/observances in tactical operations.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Throughout East Asia, Buddhist calendars
- are uniform with little variation.
  - vary from country to country.
  - all celebrate Zen masters.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ The most important Chinese festival/observance is the
- Lantern Festival.
  - Ghost Festival.
  - Lunar New Year.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Kuei (gway) are
- hungry ghosts and harmful spirits who must be appeased.
  - Buddha relics--teeth and bones.
  - ceremonial burial hats worn at Korean funerals.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ During what festival are participants most likely to eat moon cakes?
- Buddha's birthday
  - Mid-Autumn Festival
  - Kathina Festival
17. \_\_\_\_\_ The most holy day on the Buddhist calendar is
- Prince Vassantara's Day.
  - founding of the Sangha.
  - Buddha's birthday (Visakha Puja).
18. \_\_\_\_\_ For Buddhists, the significance of the Bodhi tree is that
- it was the favorite place for Buddha to take a bath.
  - under this type of tree Buddha received enlightenment.
  - its fruit is desired by both living and departed ancestors.

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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19. \_\_\_\_\_ Visakha Puja (Buddha's birthday) celebrates
- a. only Buddhas' birthday.
  - b. the birth, enlightenment and death of the historical Buddha.
  - c. the birthday of all Bodhisattvas and Buddhas throughout past history and future transmigrations.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ According to legend, the birth, enlightenment and death of the historical Buddha occurred
- a. on different days during the lunar month of Visakha.
  - b. on the full moon day of the lunar month of Visakha.
  - c. in what is present day Tibet.
- 

## Part 2--True/False

Place a T or an F in the blank provided.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ Peoples the world over plan their lives by the solar calendar.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Ramadan always comes during the cooler, shorter (light) days of the year.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ During Ramadan, Muslims fast from 1200-2400 hrs.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Many Muslims observe the Day of Hajj and Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) whether on pilgrimage or not.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Arhats are "worthy ones," wandering ascetic Taoist monks.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ In Buddhist, the Dharma--important religious texts and writings--are venerated on days of remembrance and celebration.

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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7. \_\_\_\_\_ One of the reasons for the variety of celebration dates within Buddhism is the way historical events and pre-Buddhist traditions vary from country to country.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Selfless giving (dana) achieves merit within Theravadan Buddhist practice.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The Kathina Festival marks the beginning of the Buddhist rain retreat.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The "Clear and Bright Remembrance," a visiting and caring for ancestral burial sites, is the second most important Chinese folk religious festival.
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### Part 3--Matching

Place the correct letter in the blank provided. Not all of the letters will be used.

- |                         |                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ Hijra          | A. Celebrates the end of Ramadan.<br>It comes on the first day of the month, Shawwal, which follows Ramadan. |
| 2. _____ C.E.           |                                                                                                              |
| 3. _____ 'Id al-Fitr    | B. Anno Hegirae, in the year of the Hajj.                                                                    |
| 4. _____ Solar Calendar |                                                                                                              |
| 5. _____ Ramadan        | C. Commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn (grandson of the prophet Muhammad) on the 10th of Muharram, A.H. 61. |
| 6. _____ Lunar Calendar |                                                                                                              |
| 7. _____ Day of Hajj    | D. Before Common Era                                                                                         |
| 8. _____ Laylat al-Qadr | E. Common Era                                                                                                |
| 9. _____ A.H.           | F. Commemorates the concluding revelation to the Prophet at Mt. Arafat, a mountain 18 kilometers east of     |
| 10. _____ B.C.E.        |                                                                                                              |

11. \_\_\_\_\_ Ashura

Mecca.

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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12. \_\_\_\_\_ Id al-Adha                      G. Migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622). This date begins the Islamic calendar.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Shi'a
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Dragon Boat Celebration                      H. The concluding act of pilgrimage. Muslims offer sheep, goats, and camels in a pattern after
- Abraham's
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Ghost Festival                      offering of his son Ismail to God. The poor and needy receive the meat.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Lunar New Year
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Clear and Bright Remembrance                      I. Commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an. This event came to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. when he was forty years old.
- (A.D.),
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Lantern Festival                      J. Using the moon to calculate the days marking a given calendar year.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Autumn Festival
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Kathina Festival                      K. The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.
- able, do sign
- L. A holy month of fasting wherein Muslims, who are physically not eat or drink from the first of dawn until sunset.
- M. Muslims who believe Muhammad passed his successorship directly his bloodline.
- through
- N. Using the sun to calculate the days marking a given calendar year.
- O. Event marking the end of the Chinese New Year's celebration.
- P. Event celebrating the Chinese poet Chu'u Yuan, who drowned himself protest at the royal court's corruption.
- in

robes and

Q. End of the Sangha rain retreat.  
Sangha members receive new  
gifts (wishing trees).

## Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

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- before  
begins.
- R. Celebration seeking to appease  
restless souls and spirits.
- S. Most important Chinese celebration,  
marking the renewal period  
spring agricultural work
- moon.
- T. Celebration of the full harvest  
Participants eat moon cakes.
- U. Event involving visitation of  
ancestral tombs, grooming and  
conservation of burial  
sites.



"Flex Your Brain"



## Sources Used in Holidays and Observances



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## Resources for Further Study

MacDonald, Margaret Read, The Folklore of World Holidays,  
(Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, Inc., 1994). This resource  
is filled with data on religious and cultural festivals  
around the world. Most entries are detailed, thorough, and  
interesting. (Aiso)



"Pride in service, pride in self..."  
(General Gordon R. Sullivan)