

Tidbit: Spring Celebrations

Now that spring has arrived and the last traces of winter are slowly leaving us, it's time to celebrate the new season of sun and happiness. And there are so many things to celebrate - take a look at what's happening all around the world this spring!

April 12th - May 12th

Ramadan

For Muslims, Ramadan is the month in which the first verses of the Quran, Islam's holy book, were revealed to Prophet Muhammad more than 1,400 years ago. Those who observe Ramadan throughout the world partake in fasting from just before sunrise to sunset to achieve greater "taqwa", or consciousness of God. Ramadan ends in Eid al-Fitr (which in Arabic means "festival of breaking the fast"), a holiday where many attend communal prayers, listen to sermons, and give zakat al-Fitr (charity in the form of food).



April 13th - 16th

Songkran, Thailand

A festival marking the Thai New Year, the holiday's main focus is about moving forward. The word Songkran comes from the Sanskrit phrase "passage of the sun". Water plays a main role in the festival as it signifies a washing away of the previous year so people can get ready for the next one. People also prepare for the new year by cleaning houses, schools, offices and other public spaces. Songkran is celebrated with street parties with loud music and a giant water fight.



May - July

The Fallas of Valencia, Spain

The Fallas is a festivity that originates from the old carpenter's tradition celebrating the arrival of spring. Fully furnished monuments are set up in Valencia, the night skies are filled with fireworks, and a parade marches through the city from Valencia to the Plaza de la Virgen ending in a flower offering. This year, the Fallas will take place between May and July.



May 5th

Battle of Puebla (Cinco de Mayo), Mexico

Mainly observed in the Mexican State of Puebla, Cinco de Mayo celebrations include parades and reenactments of the Battle of Puebla. Cinco de Mayo officially commemorates the anniversary of an early victory by Mexican forces over French forces in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.





May 5th - May 10th

Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Hong Kong

In the 18th century, the island of Cheung Chau was devastated by a plague and infiltrated by pirates. A local fisherman brought an image of the god Pak Tai to the island and paraded through the village lanes, using it to drive away evil spirits. Every year the islanders organize a weeklong thanksgiving in a festival that includes traditional lion and dragon dances, and a “bun snatching” event where designated climbers ascend towers filled with buns; the higher the bun being snatched, the better the fortune it brings to one’s family.

May 26th

Vesak, Asia

A holy festival that honors the life and enlightenment of Buddha, Vesak takes place on the full moon of the fourth lunar month. Thousands of Buddhist monks and observers gather at the UNESCO-listed temple complex of Borodubur on the island of Java, and circle the religious site while carrying candles and offerings. Other primarily-Buddhist nations such as Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bangladesh, Thailand and Cambodia also celebrate.



May 31st

Coopers Hill Cheese Rolling, England

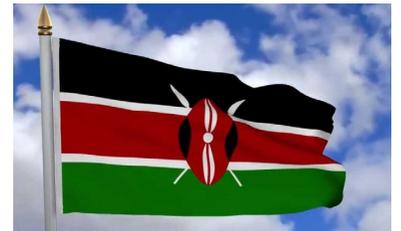
Each May, a ‘Feats of Strengths’ event takes place in the south west region of England known as Gloucestershire. Upwards of 40 different contests annually attempt to chase a rolling cheese wheel down a hill. Legend believes this event began in the 1800s to celebrate the turn of winter and a fresh batch of crops.



June 1st

Madaraka Day, Kenya

Madaraka is the Swahili word for “power”, and Madaraka Day is a public holiday that celebrates the day Kenya became a self-governing country on June 1st 1963 when Jomo Kenyatta became the first Prime Minister. In commemoration of this day, Kenyans gather in the thousands for an event that features military parades, singing and dancing, and is followed by the Madaraka Day speech given by the President.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

On Parenting- Teach Your Kids about Ramadan with These Books

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2017/06/02/teach-your-kids-about-ramadan-with-these-books/>

The Old Farmer’s Almanac for Kids - Spring Celebrations Around the World

<https://www.almanac.com/kids/springtime-fun-around-world>

National Geographic Kids - Spring Celebrations 2021

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/celebrations/article/spring-celebrations>