

2024 Cultural Holidays



**ARLINGTON
FOOD SECURITY
COALITION**

One Cultural Holiday

Multiple Cultural Holidays

January

- 1/1** New Year's Day
- 1/6** Epiphany (Catholic)
- 1/7** Orthodox Christmas Day (Orthodox Christian)
- 1/14** Old New Year (Russian)

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY

February

- 2/2** Día de la Candelaria/ Candlemas (Christian)
- 2/10** Lunar New Year
 - **2/10 - 12** Seollal (Korean)
 - **2/11 - 16** Tet (Vietnamese)
- 2/14** Ash Wednesday (Catholic)
- 2/14 - 3/30** Lent (Catholic)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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March

- 2/14 - 3/30** Lent (Catholic)
- 3/10 - 4/9** Ramadan (Islam)
- 3/11 - 17** Maslenitsa (Russian)
- 3/20** Nowruz (Iranian)
- 3/24 - 30** Semana Santa (Catholic)
- 3/31** Easter Sunday (Catholic)

MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

APRIL

April

- 3/10 - 4/9** Ramadan (Islamic)
- 4/10** Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)
- 4/22 - 30** Passover (Jewish)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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May

- 5/5** Orthodox Easter (Orthodox Christian)
- 5/19** Pentecost (Christian)
- 5/23** Vesak (Buddhist)

MAY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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JUNE

June

- 6/15** Day of Arafat (Islamic)
- 6/16 - 17** Eid al-Adha (Islamic)
- 6/19** Juneteenth (African American)
- 6/24** Orthodox Pentecost (Orthodox Christian)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

***Disclaimer:** The countries listed represent communities present in the Arlington community. This is not a comprehensive list of holidays and should be used for supplemental reference only. Individual preferences and cultural nuances may vary.

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July

7/4 Fourth of July (American)
7/16 - 17 Ashura (Islamic)

September

9/11 Ethiopian New Year (Ethiopian)
9/15 - 16 Mawlid (Islamic)
9/16 - 18 Chuseok (Korean)
9/17 Mid-Autumn Festival (Vietnamese)
9/27 Meskel (Ethiopian)

JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October

10/2 - 4 Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
10/12 Yom Kippur (Jewish)
10/31 Diwali (Hindu)

November

11/1 Dia de Todos los Santos/All Saints' Day (Latino)
11/2 Dia de Muertos/All Souls Day (Latino)
11/28 Thanksgiving (American)

December

12/16 - 24 Las Posadas (Catholic)
12/19 St. Nicholas Day (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
12/20 Yalda/Chelle (Iranian)
12/24 Christmas Eve/Noche Buena (Christian)
12/25 Christmas Day (Christian)
12/25 - 1/2 Hanukkah (Jewish)
12/26 - 1/1 Kwanzaa (African American)

SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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29	30					

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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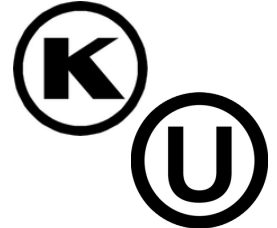
Annual Cultural Holidays

Terms

Halal: Foods that are permitted under Islamic Law as defined by the Quran. Halal diets prohibit foods that contain blood, alcohol, and certain types of meat, such as pork. Pork products such as gelatin are prohibited. Halal meat must come from a supplier that uses halal slaughtering practices. Halal food items will have a Halal certification logo on its packaging. The green logo to the right is an example of what this logo might look like.



Kosher: Food prepared in accordance with Jewish dietary laws. Pork, shellfish, and scallops are not considered kosher. Meat that is allowed must be slaughtered according to kosher slaughtering practices. Kosher food items will have a Kosher certification logo on its packaging. The K and U logos to the right are examples of Kosher certification labels.



Vegan: A diet that does not include any animal products, such as meat, eggs, fish, shellfish, or cheese. Some cultures participate in fasting on certain holidays that prohibits the consumption of animal products, such as Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity.

Vegetarian: A diet that does not include any meat or seafood. Individuals who practice vegetarianism can still eat animal by-products, such as eggs, milk, cheese, and butter. Some vegetarians, known as pescatarians, eat fish.

January

Epiphany (1/6/24)

- **Bolivia:** Christmas is celebrated from Christmas Eve (12/24) until Epiphany (1/6). On the last day of the Christmas season children usually receive gifts.

Orthodox Christmas Day (1/7/24)

- **Ethiopia:** Orthodox Christians do not eat meat and animal products, such as eggs, milk, cheese, and butter, in the 43 days leading up to this holiday. This abstinence begins on November 25th and is known as the 'Fast of the Prophets' (Tsome Nebiyat). On Christmas day, families gather and eat a traditional dish called "wat", a stew that contains, meat, vegetables, and eggs.
- **Russia:** Leading up to this holiday, Russian Orthodox Christian observers abstain from all animal products for 40 days starting on November 28th. On Christmas Day, 12 dishes representing the 12 apostles are eaten. Dishes include Olivier salad, Lenten bread, borscht (beet soup), pirozhki (beef stuffed buns), mushroom soup, meat pies, puddings, and more.

Old New Year (1/14/24)

- **Russia:** This holiday is typically celebrated by spending time with family, gift giving, and eating dishes such as Olivier salad (mayonnaise, pickles, potatoes, peas, eggs, and onions), herring under a fur coat (herring covered with layers of vegetables, onions, and mayonnaise), and fruits.

Annual Cultural Holidays

February

Lunar New Year (2/10/24) Lunar New Year occurs during the first new moon of the lunar calendar and the duration of celebration varies by country.

- **Mongolia (2/10/24)** Mongolian Lunar New Year is the biggest national holiday. Lunar New Year Eve and the day of are celebrated, or if it falls on a weekend, the whole weekend will be a celebration. People gather with extended family and friends.
- **South Korea (2/9/24 - 2/11/24)** Korean Lunar New Year, known as Seollal, is three days long because it includes the first day of the new year, the day before and the day after. During this time, many return to their hometowns to visit family and perform ancestral rites. A table piled with pancakes, meat, rice cakes, fruits, vegetables, tea, and snacks is prepared as an offering to ancestors. Offerings vary by family. Foods eaten include rice cake soup, spring onion pancakes, mung bean pancakes, kimchi dumplings, and Korean glass noodles.
- **Vietnam (2/8/24 - 2/16/24)** Tết, Vietnamese Lunar New Year, is the longest public holiday in Vietnam, spanning from 5 to 9 days. In 2024, the holiday is supposed to last 9 days, but celebration usually extend past this. Some traditional foods eaten during this time are bánh chưng (a square sticky rice cake filled with sweet green beans, mildly spicy pepper, and fatty pork meat), bánh tét (a sweet rice cake topped with mung beans and coconut), braised pork with eggs, pickled salmon, and candied fruits. An fruit platter offering is made to ancestors including fruits such as bananas, mangos, apple, pears, dragon fruit, pineapple, and more.

Ash Wednesday (2/14) Ash Wednesday begins the 40 days of lent, representing the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting. Catholics do not eat meat and are limited to one meal during Ash Wednesday.

Lent (2/14 - 3/30) Lent is celebrated over 46 days. During this time, Catholics reduce their food intake by abstaining from all meat on Fridays and only eating one large meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Since meat consumption is restricted, many eat fish as a substitute. Those ages 18-59, in reasonable health, are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Many individuals also make personal commitments during this time such as eating less sweets or not drinking alcohol.

March

Ramadan (3/10/24 - 4/9/24) The ninth month of the Islamic calendar and observed as a month of fasting. Muslims who are not ill, traveling, elderly, pregnant, breastfeeding, diabetic, or menstruating are expected to abstain from food and drink from dawn to sunset. A pre-dawn meal and a nightly meal are the only meals allowed during this time, and include foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, halal meats, bread, cheeses, and sweets including dates. Dates break the fast.

Maslenitsa (3/11/24 - 3/17/24) This holiday marks the end of Winter in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. During this week-long celebration, meat is forbidden for Orthodox Christians. Russian blini (crepes) filled with jams, sour cream, mushrooms, sour cabbage, and condensed milk are traditionally eaten.

Annual Cultural Holidays

March

Nowruz (3/20/24) The Iranian/Persian New Year celebrated in various countries, including Afghanistan. The holiday represents the start of Spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Holiday celebrations and preparations last for about 2 weeks, culminating in the first day of the Afghan New Year. Celebrations include preparing a Haft Nawa, a fruit salad made from seven different dried fruits which are served in their own syrup. Other dishes include spinach and lamb stew, Kulcha Nowruz cookies, and fried fish and Jalebi (yeast dough fried and then dipped in a syrup of honey and rose water).

Semana Santa (3/24/24 - 3/30/24) During this week-long celebration leading up to Easter Sunday, Catholics from Latin America and Spain traditionally do not eat meat. Other proteins such as fish, beans, eggs, milk of grain can be eaten as a substitute to meat. Dishes such as fish/seafood soup, vegetable or bean-filled tamales, fried pastries, rice puddings, drinks made with fruit or corn, and marmalades can be eaten during this period.

Easter Sunday (3/31/24) Catholic holiday that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and marks the end of the Lent fasting period. Many celebrate by attending mass and having a large meal afterwards. Though specific recipes vary by region and country, in general individuals will eat dishes containing beef, pork, or chicken.

April

Eid al-Fitr (4/10/24) Eid al-Fitr is celebrated by Muslims worldwide and marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The holiday is affectionately called "Sweet Eid" or "Sugar Feast" because sweets are prepared.

- **Afghanistan:** Ingredients such as flour, vermicelli, vegetable oil, whole milk, sugar and dates, cardamom, pistachios, almonds, cloves, raisins can be used to create dishes such as sheet khorma or elephant ear pastries.
- **Ethiopia:** Fatira (flour pancakes) are enjoyed during this holiday. The pancake is made with teff flour, egg, oil, onion, and peppers, and is dipped into honey. It is customary to also have a cup of coffee with the pancake.

Passover (4/22/24 - 4/30/24) Also known as Pesach, Passover is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the Biblical story of the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. The holiday is often celebrated for eight days, beginning before sundown on the first day. The first two nights of Passover include a traditional meal called a Seder. The Seder plate is made up of the following elements: karpas (a green vegetable), charoset (ground mixture of apple, nuts and cinnamon), maror (a bitter herb such as horseradish), zeroa (a shank bone), and beitzah (a hard-boiled egg). In addition to this, a Passover meal is served. The meal's menu will differ depending on family tradition but traditional dishes include matzo ball soup (a chicken soup willed with dumplings made out of matzah meal, eggs, chicken fat, and broth), gefilite fish (a poached mixture of ground deboned fish), beef brisket, chicken, and potatoes. Leavened bread is not eaten during this time and includes pasta, cookies, bread, and cereal.

Annual Cultural Holidays

May

Orthodox Easter (5/5/24)

- **Ethiopia:** Easter in Ethiopia, known as Fasika, is the most celebrated holiday in the country and comes after an 8-week period in which no meat or animal products are consumed. In 2024, this period of dietary restriction begins on March 11. On Easter Eve, it is customary to attend a church service that last until early morning the next day and then eat meat-filled dishes. Doro wot (a spicy chicken stew with hard boiled eggs) is the most popular dish prepared.
- **Russia:** Easter in Russia is preceded by a 40 day period in which meat, dairy products, and, on certain days, vegetable oil cannot be consumed. On the last Friday before Easter, eating and drinking is not allowed until the evening. Eggs, Easter ham (fresh, uncured, bone-in ham), Aspic (jellied meat - beef or pork), vinegret (beetroot, carrot and potato salad), fish pie, roasted lamb, sweet Easter bread, and poppy seed pie are some dishes that are eaten on Easter.

Vesak (5/23/24) A Buddhist holiday commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and death of Siddhartha Gautama, who is commonly known as Buddha. Many celebrate by gathering at and decorating their temples, and practicing noble acts such as volunteering or donating. Many Buddhists abstain from eating meat on this day to symbolize their compassion for all living things. The holiday is celebrated in many East and Southeast Asian Countries, such as Vietnam and South Korea.

June

Eid al-Adha (6/16/24) The second and larger of the two main holidays celebrated in Islam. The holiday celebrates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God. Traditionally, Muslims who could afford to sacrifice an animal (usually sheep) and distribute it to the poor and neighbors, keeping only one third for themselves. The holiday is referred to as "Salty Eid" because families prepare meat-centric dishes.

Juneteenth (6/19/24) Celebrated by African American communities to commemorate the emancipation of slaves in the U.S. The holiday is often celebrated with family gatherings. Red-colored foods like strawberry pie, red soda water, and red rice (rice with tomatoes) are often served to commemorate the blood spilled during slavery. Barbeque, collard greens, sweet potatoes, and watermelon are commonly prepared.

Orthodox Pentecost (6/24/24) A Christian holiday commemorating the Holy Ghost's descent upon Jesus's twelve apostles. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Pentecost is one of the Orthodox Great Feasts, second in rank only to Easter, and is also known as Trinity Sunday. Many Russian practitioners celebrate by decorating with greenery and flowers, attending festive church service, and preparing egg-based dishes, blini (a type of thin pancake), stuffed buns, and kissel.

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June

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July

Ashura (7/16/24 - 7/17/24) A day of commemoration in Islam that marks the parting of the Red Sea by Moses and the salvation of the Israelites. The day is observed by fasting and religious ceremonies.

September

Ethiopian New Year (9/11/24) Known as Enkutatash or "Gift of Jewels", this holiday marks the beginning of a new year according to the Ethiopian calendar. After attending church, families gather to share a traditional meal of injera (teff flour flatbread), wat (sauce), and doro wat (spicy chicken stew), and partake in a coffee ceremony. Dishes that include chicken, minced beef, liver, or lamb are common.

Mawlid (9/15/24 - 9/16/24) The Islamic observation of the day when the Islamic prophet Muhammad was born. Mawlid is celebrated in a carnival manner, large street processions are held and homes or mosques are decorated. Charity and food is distributed, and stories about the life of Muhammad are narrated with recitation of poetry by children.

Chuseok (9/16/24 - 9/18/24) Also known as Hangawi, Chuseok is a 3-day mid-autumn harvest festival in South Korea. Koreans travel to their ancestral homes and participate in customs such as participating in charye (ancestral memorial rites), dressing traditional clothing, and playing folk games. Food preparing for this holiday include songpyeon (rice cakes prepared with rice powder, filled with sesame seeds, red beans, or chestnut), japchae (glass noodles), and jeon (vegetable pancakes). Popular gifts are Spam gift sets, fruit baskets, and meal sets.

Mid-Autumn Festival (9/17/24) Also known as the Moon Festival or Children's Festival, this holiday is celebrated in Vietnam as well as in other Asian countries. In Vietnam, the festival is mainly a celebration of children. Families will prepare for celebrations a week in advance by preparing colorful lanterns and masks as well as preparing sweets such as mooncakes (cakes made out of either sticky rice or wheat flour and lard dough). Mooncakes can have a variety of fillings, ranging from lotus seeds, pumpkin seeds, and green beans to egg, pork fat, fried onion, and peanuts.

Annual Cultural Holidays

September

Meskel (9/27/24) An Orthodox Ethiopian festival that celebrates the discovery of the True Cross that Jesus was crucified on. The festival with the burning of a large bonfire in the afternoon and carries on until after sunset. Celebrants then feast together with friends, family, and neighbors.

October

Rosh Hashanah (10/2/24 - 10/4/24) Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Preparations for this holiday typically start a month in advance. Some traditional foods include round challah bread (a braided bread made of all-purpose flour) and apples with honey. Many families hold a Rosh Hashanah Seder here a series of symbolic foods are eaten before the meal. Pomegranates, dates, string beans, beets, pumpkins, leeks, and fish heads are examples of foods that are included in the Seder.

Yom Kippur (10/12/24) Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day in Judaism. In 2024, the holiday begins at sundown on October 11 and concludes at nightfall on October 12. During this time, Jews fast, refraining from both food and drink, and attend prayer services at synagogue.

November

Diwali (11/1/24) Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights that celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. Celebrations typically last five or six days. During Diwali, people wear their finest clothes, illuminate their homes, perform worship ceremonies, light fireworks, and partake in family feasts. Sweets, called mithai, are a staple part of celebrations. Gulab jamun (doughnut holes served in sweet syrup), laddus (little balls made with flour, ghee or oil, and sugar and often nuts of fruit like raisins), and barfi (a milk-based sweet made with condensed milk and sugar) are popular sweets. Savory foods such as bhaji (a vegetable fritter made of onion, spinach and cabbage mixed with a chickpea flour), samosas (a fried pastry filled with potatoes, onions, peas, and meat/fish), and puri (a flatbread fried in ghee) are also enjoyed alongside sweets.

Dia de Todos los Santos and Dia de Muertos (11/1/24 - 11/2/24) Many people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean observe Dia de Muertos, or Day of the Dead, to honor the lives of the deceased. Traditional recipes eaten vary by country.

- **Guatemala:** Celebrations are highlighted by the construction and flying of giant kites. Fiambre (a salad made of sausages, cold cuts, baby corn, onions, beets, cheese, olives, and chicken) is traditionally eaten on this day.
- **Peru:** Families will visit the graves of loved ones and decorate them with flowers or play music. Traditional foods of the holiday include tantawawa (doll-shaped pastries) and lechon (a roasted suckling pig).

Thanksgiving (11/28/24) An American holiday celebrating and express gratitude for the autumn harvest. The traditional Thanksgiving dinner features a large roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. However, thanksgiving menus may vary due to regional and cultural differences. Food that are eaten on a daily basis will be needed in larger abundance for holiday celebrations.

Annual Cultural Holidays

December

Yalda Night (12/20/24) A festival that takes place on the winter solstice in Iran and Iranian-influenced regions. This holiday is a time of year for families to gather together to eat, drink and read poetry. Pomegranates and watermelon are eaten during this holiday because it is thought that starting off winter with summer fruit will prevent one from getting sick. Other fruits and nuts are also enjoyed on this day.

Christmas Eve/Noche Buena (12/24/24) A Christmas Eve celebration for many Latino countries. This holiday is a time for family and friends to gather, eat, drink, and exchange gifts. Ingredients typically used are needed in greater volume.

- **Bolivia:** After attending church mass, families often eat picana (a stew made from chicken, beef, or pork) which is served with potatoes and corn. There may also be salad, roast pork, and lots of fruits.
- **El Salvador:** It is traditional to eat panes rellenos (a chicken sandwich made with a variety of spices and condiments, cucumber, lettuce, tomato, beets, radishes, and more) and tamales.
- **Honduras:** The main meal often consist of roast pork, turkey, or chicken, and nacatamales (like traditional tamales but more moist)
- **Guatemala:** Tamales, Kak'ik (a turkey stew), and chicken soup are often prepared during this holiday.
- **Peru:** The main Noche Buena meal consist of roast turkey, chicken or pork with salads and other dishes like tamales. Drinking hot chocolate with panetonne is also common.

Christmas (12/25/24) A Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. In the Unites States of America, it is traditional to eat roasted turkey, Christmas ham, beef tenderloin, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, and green bean casserole. Desserts like fruitcake and gingerbread houses are also enjoyed. However, Christmas dinner menus vary due to family tradition or culture. Ingredients typically used are needed in greater volume.

Hanukkah (12/25/24 - 1/2/25) Hanukkah is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people that lasts 8 days and nights. During these days people celebrate by singing, playing games, and eating oil-based foods such as latkes, sufganiyot, and jelly donuts

Kwanzaa (12/26/24 - 1/1/25) Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture. On the last day of Kwanzaa people often have a feast called Karamu where they eat a variety of foods, from traditional African food to soul food. Dinner tables are often laid with few symbolic foods such as fruits and vegetables to symbolize the bounty of the harvest. Some of the fresh produce may include okra, yams, squash, sweet potatoes, and bananas.