

FAITH & FOOTBALL

A CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2020/21 SEASON



Supported by:



FOREWORD

“ Faith and football have entered the field of play, hand in hand, since time immemorial. Far from being at odds with each other, they enrich each other, bringing people of different faiths and those of none together through a common language and educating those in the game about the cultures, religions and beliefs of those whom they did not previous know. It is only through dialogue and these commonalities, like the beautiful game, that we can truly come together as communities. ”

Rabbi Alex Goldber
Chair of The FA Faith and
Football Network



HOW TO USE THIS CALENDAR?

This calendar is meant as a guide to some of the most prominent faith dates and festivals which could have an impact on how people participate in and enjoy football. The calendar is by no means definitive, but more a general guide to some of the key facts which most people agree on. If you are involved in running the game, whether through a club, team, league or facility, we would always recommend speaking directly to people who may be of faith, about the way that they believe and practice their belief and how it may impact football for them.

KEY RELIGIOUS DATES FOR THE 2020/21 SEASON

	2020					2021				
	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
BUDDHISM							12 CHINESE NEW YEAR			26 VESAK DAY/ BUDDHA DAY
CHRISTIANITY					25 CHRISTMAS DAY		17-3 APRIL LENT		2/4 GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER SUNDAY	2 ORTHODOX EASTER SUNDAY
HINDUISM			17-25 NAVARATRI	14 DIWALI				*29 HOLI	*12 HINDU NEW YEAR	
JUDAISM		18-20 /27-28 ROSH HASHANAH / YOM KIPPUR	2-9/9-11 SUKKOT/ SHEMINI ATZERET & SIMCHAT TORAH		10-18 CHANUKAH (HANNUKAH)		25-26 PURIM	27-4 APRIL PASSOVER*		16-18 SHAVUOT*
ISLAM	30-3 Aug EID UL-ADHA	21/30/21-18 Sept START OF AL-HIJRA/ ASHURA/MUHARRAM							12 April - 11 May/12 May RAMADAN/ EID AL-FITR	
SIKH FAITH				14/30 DIWALI & BANDHI CHHOR DIVAS/ BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK		20 BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH			14 VAISAKHI	



“

No one should be subject to discrimination. We as humans should love each other regardless of the colour of ones skin, religion or sexual orientation as in unity there is strength.

”

Salma Mahamud
Brentford Women's FC

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. In this calendar we have only highlighted the six largest faiths in England by population and recognise there will be other faiths not mentioned.

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

GUIDANCE TO GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL AROUND 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 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 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
- Vesak/Buddha Day

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 first and 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 with the exception of significant days of observance)

Christianity

- Christmas Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- Sundays unless the League is a Sunday League (Membership of or participation in Sunday football could be taken as consent to play on Sundays, except for example when Christmas Day falls on a Sunday or on Easter Sunday. To avoid confusion, dialogue between players, their clubs and leagues is vital. Rule 5B will always take precedent)

Islam

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

Sikh Faith

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



“

As a professional player, I had many struggles both on and off the pitch. When I found God and the church, it gave some sense of clarity, peace and order to my life, I felt like I had literally seen the light.

”

Linyoy Primus MBE

Former player for Charlton Athletic, Barnet, Reading and Portsmouth
Trustee of Faith and Football

EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Al-Hijra/Muharram

Islamic New Year and the first 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 the founder of the Sikh faith. This is one of the holiest Sikh festivals which is celebrated over a three day period. 2021 will be the 552 birthday anniversary.

Buddha Day (or Vesak)

Buddha Day is a celebration of the Buddha's birthday and, for some Buddhists, marks his enlightenment, when he discovered life's meaning.

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. Sikhs also call this festival 'Bandi Chhor Divas'.

Easter Sunday

Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Eid-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.

Eid-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.



“

The professional game can be stressful, even at Academy level, so creating an environment where people can be themselves and express their faith freely helps to create happy players and high performing players. Being the only Muslim Head of Academy at an English club, I am very open about my faith and am more than happy to act as a role model for any young player..

”

Sevvly Aslam
Academy Manager
Port Vale FC

EXPLANATION OF KEY RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

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.

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 Durga 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 (Seder), 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-Al-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 Israel. Sukkot 2020 runs from 2-9 October but the religious restrictions on working, carrying, driving only apply from sunset 2 to sunset 4 October.

Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)

Vaisakhi marks the Sikh new year and celebrates the formation of the 'Khalsa Panth' (family of warrior soldiers) formed by the 10th Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699, who initiated 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.



“

Going to a football match should be an enjoyable experience for people of all faiths and of none. Unfortunately, as someone who is Jewish, this has not always been the case, but by producing the film, 'The Y Word,' I hope to have raised awareness of this issue and helped to combat it.

”

Ivor Baddiel

Writer

Producer of 'The Y Word' film

To see the film, [click here](#).

EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

ISLAM

EID-AL-ADHA

Eid Mubarak to all our Muslim followers!

30 JULY - 3 AUGUST 2020

Image of moon or lantern

MUHARRAM (ISLAMIC NEW YEAR)

Wishing all Muslims who are commemorating Muharram peace and blessings

AUG 20 - SEPT 20, 2020

AUG 9 - SEPT 7, 2021

Solemn holiday so no appropriate image

RAMADAN

#RamadanMubarak from everyone at to all those preparing to fast during the holy month.

12 APRIL - 11 MAY 2021

Image of a new moon, silver/gold bowl of dates, prayer beads

EID-AL-FITR

#EidMubarak to all our Muslim followers celebrating around the world!

12 MAY 2021

Image of a new moon

JUDAISM

ROSH HASHANAH

Wishing all our Jewish followers a Shana Tova today!

18-20 SEPTEMBER 2020

Image of apple dipped in honey

YOM KIPPUR

Wishing all our Jewish followers well over the fast of Yom Kippur

27 SEPTEMBER 2020

Solemn holiday so no appropriate image

CHANUKAH

Happy Chanukah to all our Jewish friends and followers who begin their celebrations today!

10-18 DECEMBER 2020

Image of Menorah

PURIM

We would like to wish a #HappyPurim to all those celebrating this evening!

25 FEBRUARY 2021

Image of Hamantaschen, traditional pastry

PASSOVER

Chag Kasher Vesameach! We would like to send our best wishes to everyone in the Jewish community as #Passover begins this evening.

27 MARCH - 4 APRIL 2021

Image of Matzvah, wine, crackers



CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas to all our followers!

25 DECEMBER 2020

Image of Christmas tree, snow, nativity scene

EASTER

Happy Easter to everyone celebrating over the extended weekend!

2-4 APRIL 2021

Image of something that represents Christs Resurrection e.g. an empty tomb. A Happy Easter message should go out on Easter Sunday rather than Good Friday



EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES CONTINUED...

SIKH FAITH

DIWALI/BANDI CHHOR

Happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor to all our Hindu, Sikh and Jain followers!

14 NOVEMBER 2020

Image of people celebrating with light or fireworks.
If Sikh specific, an image of the Golden Temple with fireworks

BIRTHDAY OF GURU NANAK

Happy Guru Nanak Gurburb to everyone celebrating the birth of the founder of the Sikh faith! #GuruNanak

30 NOVEMBER 2020

Image of Ik Onkar, a Sikh symbol

BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Happy Guru Gobind Singh Gurburb to all our Sikh followers – he stood for the universal values of freedom, equality and justice for all!

or

Wishing Sikhs everywhere a very happy Guru Gobind Singh Gurburb. Gurburb di lakh lakh vidaye! (The last part of the message means “Many many good wishes for the gurburb”)

20 JANUARY 2021

Image of Anandpur Sahib (the birthplace of the Khalsa) or the Takht Sri Patna Sahib (Gurdwara where he was born) or A Khanda (Sikh symbol)

VAISAKHI

#HappyVaisakhi to everyone from the Sikh community celebrating the birth of the Khalsa over the coming days!

14 APRIL 2021

Image of the triangular flag with the Sikh insignia of the Khanda

BUDDHISM

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Happy #ChineseNewYear to all our followers who this weekend celebrate the start of the Year of the Ox!

12 FEBRUARY 2021

Image of a golden Ox

BUDDHA DAY/VESAK

Happy Buddha Day. Best wishes for Vesak to all those celebrating across the world!

26 MAY 2021

Image of the Dharma Wheel or a silhouette of the Dharmader

HINDUISM/JAINISM

DIWALI

Happy Diwali to all our followers celebrating today!

14 NOVEMBER 2020

Image of people celebrating with light or fireworks

HOLI FESTIVAL

We'd like to wish a #HappyHoli to anyone celebrating the festival of colours today!

29 MARCH 2021

Image of people celebrating the festival with lots of colour





“

As practising Sikhs, we are proud that our club gives kids of all faiths the chance to play together and have fun. Football has a great power in the same way that faith does and we try and use that force for good at Sporting Khalsa.

”

Club Owners and brothers, **Manjit, Parm (pictured) and Raj Singh Gill**
Sporting Khalsa FC



The Football Association
Telephone: 0844 980 8200
Email: Equality@TheFA.com
Visit: www.TheFA.com



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Telephone: 020 3967 8989
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English Football League
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City Sikhs
Email: media@citysikhs.org.uk
Visit: www.citysikhs.org.uk



The Carob Tree Project
Email: alex.goldberg@carobtree.org
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