

Cultural News

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Cambodian New Year

When is Khmer New Year?

Khmer New Year, also known as Cambodian New Year is usually a three day public holiday in Cambodia. In Khmer, it is called “Chaul Chnam Thmey”, which means “enter the new year”.

It is based on the traditional solar new year, that was observed in parts of India and Asia. It falls on either 13 April or 14 April.

The Khmer new year is marked by the sun entering the sign of Aries the Ram. This particular event was traditionally closely related to the Vernal Equinox. In ancient times, the dates of the sun entering Aries and the Vernal Equinox would have been even closer, but they have shifted due to an effect called procession, where the Earth wobbles on its axis over a 25,000 year period.

In Cambodia it marks the end of the harvest before the beginning of the rainy season.

How is Khmer New Year Celebrated?

Like most New Year holidays, Khmer New Year is full of tradition and rituals. The three days of celebration each have their own name and associated traditions:

First Day- Maha Songkran

The first day of the Khmer New Year is called ‘Maha Songkran’. Similar to the Tamil tradition, it is believed that this was the day of creation. In Khmer tradition, the world was created by God’s angels and to welcome the angels, people will clean their houses and illuminate them with candles. Families will place an idol of Buddha on an altar.

Second Day- Vanabot

Also known as Virak Wanabat, the second day of Khmer New Year is a time to think of the less fortunate. People offer charity by helping the poor, servants and homeless. Families may go to monasteries to pay respect to their ancestors, and it also a time for family members to exchange gifts.

Third Day- Leang Saka

On the third day of New Year celebrations Buddhists wash and clean statues of Lord Buddha with scented water. This cleansing is done to ensure that Cambodia will receive all the water it needs in the coming year. Another tradition is that children wash and bathe their parents and grandparents in return for blessing and good advice for the future.



APRIL 2018 CALENDAR

BLACK WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH
ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

- 1- Easter (Christian)
- 3- Mahavir Jayanti (Jain)
- 6- Holy Friday (Orthodox Christian)
- 8- Buddha Day (Buddhism)
- 7- World Health Day
- 10- National Sibling Day (US)
- 12- Yom HaShoah (Jewish)
- 13-15- Lao, Thai and Cambodian New Year
- 15-22- National Volunteer Week (US)
- 14- Baisakhi (Sikh)
- 18- World Hemophilia Day (All)
- 20- Chinese Language Day (US)
- 21- First Day of Ridvan (Baha’i)
- 29- Mother, Father Deaf Day (US)
- 30- Animal Advocacy Day (US)

Yom Hashoah - Holocaust Remembrance Day



It has been over 60 years since the Holocaust. To survivors, the Holocaust remains real and

ever-present, but for some others, sixty years makes the Holocaust seem part of ancient history.

Year-round we try to teach and inform others about the

horrors of the Holocaust. We confront the questions of what happened? How did it happen? How could it happen? Could it happen again?

We attempt to fight against ignorance with education and against disbelief with proof. But there is one day in the year when we make a special effort to remember (Zachor). Upon this one day, we remember those that suffered, those that fought, and those that died. Six million Jews were murdered. Many families were completely decimated.

Jewish history is long and filled with many stories of slavery and freedom, sorrow and joy, persecution and redemption. For Jews, their history, their

family, and their relationship with God have shaped their religion and their identity. The Hebrew calendar is filled with varied holidays that incorporate and reiterate the history and tradition of the Jewish people.

How is it observed

Since Yom Hashoah is a relatively new holiday, there are no set rules or rituals. What kind of ritual could represent the Holocaust?

There are various beliefs about what is and is not appropriate on this day and many of them are conflicting. In general, Yom Hashoah has been observed with candle lighting, speakers, poems, prayers, and singing. Often, six candles are lighted to represent the six million. Holocaust survivors speak about their experiences or share in the readings.

Some ceremonies have people read from the Book of Names for certain lengths of time in an effort to remember those that died and to give an understanding of the huge number of victims. Sometimes these ceremonies are held in a cemetery or near a Holocaust memorial.

In Israel, the Knesset made Yom Hashoah a national public holiday in 1959 and in 1961 a law was passed that closed all public entertainment on Yom Hashoah. At ten in the morning, a siren is sounded where everyone stops what they are doing, pull over in their cars, and stand in remembrance.

In whatever form you observe Yom Hashoah, the memory of the Jewish victims will live on.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/yom-hashoah-1778162>

New Staff Interpreter Profile: Karen Coelho

Karen Coelho is the new MIS Cantonese/Mandarin-speaking interpreter of Chinese and Portuguese ancestry. She was born in Hong Kong, raised on the island of Saipan, and now lives in Sacramento, California.

She graduated from American River College with three associate degrees and a certificate in Healthcare interpreting in 2014. She officially started her professional interpreting journey on December 22nd, 2014. Since then, she worked for a few different agencies before joining the UCDH MIS team.

Karen considers joining the UCDH MIS team as her biggest accomplishment. She is thrilled to be a part of the team that assists providers and patients to bridge the linguistic and cultural barriers. "Seeing the smiles and satisfaction on their faces when they can finally understand one another is a great feeling", says Karen.

In her spare time, she enjoys working on cars with her brother and friends. She loves to modify cars and attend car show events. She also organizes and engages in fundraising events for various causes.

In Karen's own words, "Being able to join the MIS team is such an honor! I love being able to work with a group of people with the same profession and similar goals. Most importantly, everyone here is just the nicest, sweetest people".

Welcome aboard, Karen! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Davis Medical Center's Interpreting Team.

