



NHS

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International

UK PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

UK public holidays and celebrations

The UK observes a collection of public holidays, sometimes called 'bank holidays', that are steeped in history, tradition, and various cultural influences. From the iconic celebrations of Christmas and New Year's Day to the solemn commemorations of Remembrance Day and Easter, these holidays play a vital role in the lives of the British people.

For International Healthcare Professionals, understanding these public holidays is not only beneficial for integration into the local culture but also helpful for planning your work schedules and personal lives.

In this document, we will explore the major UK public holidays and other significant dates in the UK calendar, their significance, and the various ways in which they are celebrated across the nation.

Please note: This document does not include all significant holidays





Public holidays in 2024

1st January - New Year's Day

29th March – Good Friday

1st April – Easter Monday

6th May – Early May Bank Holiday

27th May - Spring Bank Holiday

26th August – Summer Bank Holiday

25th December – Christmas Day

26th December – Boxing Day

Please note: these dates may change each year and can vary if you live and/or work in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

1st January New Years Day

New Year's Eve, in the UK, is traditionally a normal working day whereas New Year's Day was made a public holiday in 1974.

Celebrations begin on New Year's Eve and may go on well into New Year's Day. Many people in the UK celebrate with fireworks, parties, singing and dancing to ring out the old year and welcome in the new.





13th February – **Shrove Tuesday**

In the UK, Ireland and parts of the Commonwealth, Shrove Tuesday is also known as Pancake Day or Pancake Tuesday.

It is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Lent, known as the 40 days leading up to Easter, was traditionally a time of fasting, as many people like to eat pancakes as a meal.

March 17th

St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day observes the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. This holiday has evolved into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music and dancing.

For England, Scotland and Wales, St Patrick's Day is not a public holiday although some people still attend special events around the date.





29th March

Good Friday

Good Friday is the Friday before Easter Sunday. It is an important holiday in the Christian religion as it commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

Although not everyone in the UK celebrates this day, it gives people the chance to spend time with loved ones and enjoy the long weekend.

1st April

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is a religious Christian holiday that is observed globally to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and while holidays like Christmas have fixed dates, the date for Easter changes from year to year.

Modern celebrations include decorating eggs and holding Easter egg hunts, during which eggs are hidden for children (and playful adults) to find.





6th May

Early May Bank Holiday

Early May Bank Holiday is a bank holiday in the United Kingdom and is celebrated on the first Monday of May every year. This year it will be celebrated on May 6.

This holiday is also known as May Day in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

27th May

Spring Bank Holiday

The Spring Public Holiday is a national public holiday in the United Kingdom. It is celebrated on the last Monday in May.

Spring Public Holiday is a great opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and the blooming flowers.





26th August **Summer Bank Holiday**

Taking place on the last Monday in August, the Late Summer Bank Holiday in the UK is a public holiday that was originally introduced as a way to give workers an extra day off at the end of the summer season, and it is still celebrated in this way today.

31st October Halloween

Halloween celebrations in the United Kingdom include parties where guests are often expected to arrive in a costume to reflect the day's theme. Other people gather together to watch horror films, either at home or at a cinema.

Some children go trick-or-treating. This means that they dress up and go to other peoples' houses, knocking on the door for treat of sweets or a snack. Those who do not give out a treat may be tricked with a joke instead.

Halloween has its origins in pagan festivals in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Many stores and businesses see Halloween as a chance to promote products with a Halloween theme.





5th November

Guy Fawkes Night

Guy Fawkes Night, also known as Guy Fawkes Day, Bonfire Night and Fireworks Night, is an annual event observed on 5th November, primarily in England, involving bonfires and fireworks displays.

On the day, people remember the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when Guy Fawkes and fellow Catholic conspirators attempted to blow up Parliament and assassinate James I of England.

10th November **Remembrance Day**

Remembrance Sunday is a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War in 1919 to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty.





25th December Christmas Day

In the UK, many celebrate Christmas day. From the Christian origins of the holiday, this day marks the birth of Jesus Christ.

Traditionally, Christmas in the UK is a family event. It is said that Father Christmas visits during the night of Christmas Eve, and leaves gifts in big socks (called Christmas stockings) which children hang up on Christmas Eve, beside the fire, at the end of the bed or around the tree.

26th December

Boxing Day

Boxing Day is a holiday celebrated after Christmas Day.

Boxing Day is also known as Saint Stephen's Day, which is a Christian festival that commemorates the first martyr of Christianity, who was known for serving the poor.





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We look forward to welcoming
you in the UK soon.
