

Cultural Celebrations: **October**



What's on in October?

October is a month rich in cultural, spiritual, and seasonal significance. In the WSÁNEĆ calendar, October is known as PEKELANEW, "the Moon That Turns the Leaves White," marking the first frosts, the turning of leaves, and the start of deer hunting and canoe building traditions. Across Canada and around the world, October is also a time to celebrate heritage, including Latin American Heritage Month, Canadian Islamic History Month, and German Heritage Month, recognizing the contributions of diverse communities.

The month is filled with important religious and cultural observances, from Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Dussehra, to Diwali and Halloween, and Canadian Thanksgiving, each marked by unique traditions, stories, and foods. Together, these celebrations and seasonal markers highlight October as a time of reflection, remembrance, cultural connection, and community.

Heritage Months:

- **Latin American Heritage Month:** Celebrates the cultures and contributions of Latin Americans and acknowledges their role in Canada.
- **Canadian Islamic History Month:** Recognizes the diverse and significant role of Muslim communities in Canadian society.
- **German Heritage Month:** Honors the historical and cultural contributions of German communities in Canada.

PEKELANEW - The Moon That Turns the Leaves White

The WSÁNEĆ people are a Central Coast Salish Peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat First Nations. The WSÁNEĆ calendar, or, 13 Moons of WSÁNEĆ, divides the year into 13 moons, with the name of each moon reflecting seasonal or environmental changes, and traditional activities that occur during this time. In the calendar, October equates to PEKELANEW, which means, 'the Moon That Turns the Leaves White'.

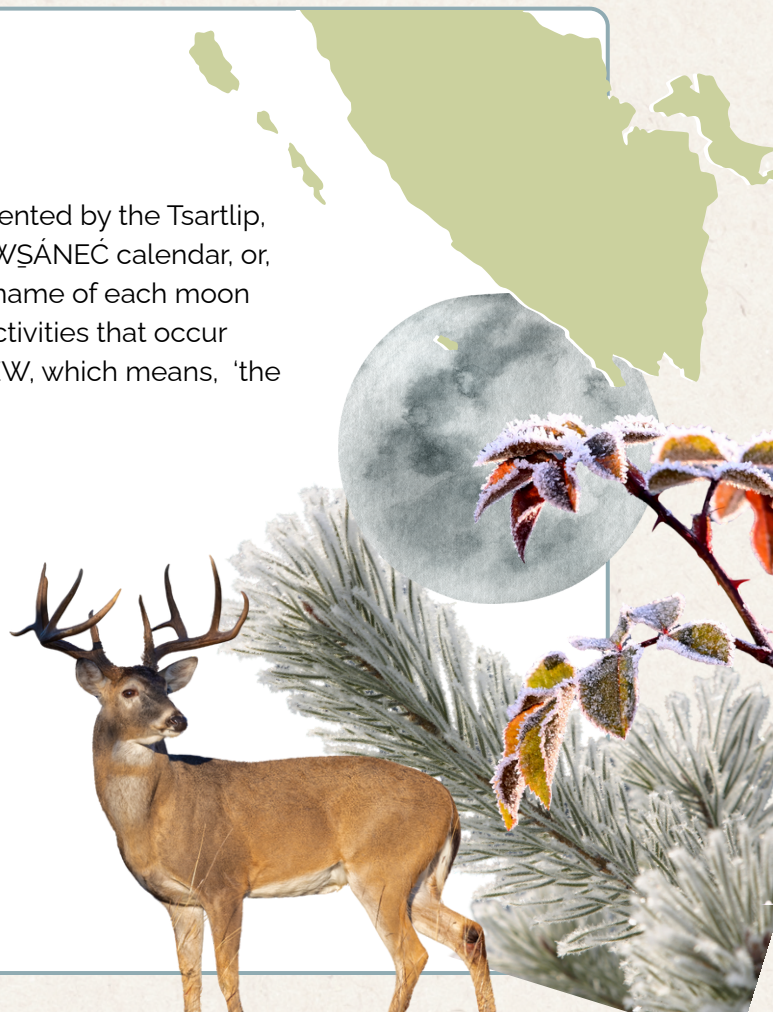
This name refers to the fact that the first frosts are brought by the moon during this month, during which leaves turn white. During this time, deer hunting is a common activity – deer are in their rutting season, so not as cautious as usual, making them easier to hunt. Canoe building is also commonly carried out during the colder months.

Source:

[!\[\]\(4b7a79268f6ba26c1471d4232fffa85a_img.jpg\) Learn about PEKELANEW - WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council](#)

Resources:

[!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2_img.jpg\) 13 Moons of the WSÁNEĆ](#)



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Latin American Heritage Month

Latin American Heritage Month is a celebration that recognizes the the culture, history and people of Latin American descent. The Latin American community in Canada is diverse, with individuals originating from various countries, including Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Brazil, Venezuela, and Chile. Latin Americans make up approximately 3.3% of the Canadian population.

This month is often celebrated with traditional foods that vary across regions; such as tacos, empanadas, arepas, tamales, ceviche, and feijoada, offering a delicious way to experience cultural heritage and share it with the wider community.

Resources & Recipes:

[!\[\]\(a870788d6ed9b8fd294b7654a8c8526b_img.jpg\) 22 dishes from Latin America to try](#)



Canadian Islamic Heritage Month

October is recognized as Islamic Heritage Month in Canada, a time to honour the history, culture, and traditions of Muslim communities. Celebrations often highlight art, music, and storytelling, as well as the diverse foods that are central to Islamic cultures.

From community feasts to cooking demonstrations, the month invites Canadians to learn, share, and connect through the flavours and traditions that shape Muslim life in Canada.

German Heritage Month

German Heritage Month is celebrated in October to recognize the contributions of Canadians of German descent to the country's culture, society, and economy. It highlights German traditions, language, arts, and community life, celebrating the rich heritage that German Canadians bring to the multicultural fabric of Canada. Food connection: German cuisine is an important part of the heritage, with foods such as sausages (bratwurst), schnitzel, pretzels, sauerkraut, breads, and traditional desserts like strudel or Black Forest cake. Sharing these dishes is a way to honor traditions, bring communities together, and celebrate cultural identity.

Resources & Recipes:

[!\[\]\(f1c5da15572e3e09d343161be98f508d_img.jpg\) Traditional German Recipes](#)



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Yom Kippur *October 1st(sundown) to October 2nd (sundown) –*

What is Yom Kippur?

Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, observed with fasting, prayer, and reflection. It is a time to seek forgiveness, reconcile with others, and focus on spiritual growth. In Canada, it holds deep significance for Jewish communities, with many synagogues offering special services and accommodations made in schools and workplaces, reflecting the country's cultural diversity and commitment to religious freedom.

Yom Kippur and Food

Fasting is central to Yom Kippur, lasting about 25 hours from sunset to nightfall the next day. Families share a light pre-fast meal (Seudat Mafseket) and later gather for Break-Fast, often featuring dairy dishes, bagels, fruits, and pastries - traditions that strengthen both spiritual practice and cultural connection.

Resources & Recipes:

[10 things to know about Yom Kipper](#)



Dussehra *October 2nd*

Dussehra, also known as Vijayadashami, is a major Hindu festival celebrated across India and by Hindu communities worldwide. It marks the victory of good over evil, commemorating the triumph of Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana and the goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura. The festival typically involves vibrant processions, dramatic reenactments of the Ramayana (called Ramlila), the burning of Ravana effigies, and prayers and rituals at temples.

Dussehra and Food

Food plays an important role in Dussehra celebrations, as families and communities come together to prepare and enjoy special dishes. Traditional sweets and snacks, such as ladoos, jalebis, kheer, and samosas, are often made to mark the festival, symbolizing joy and prosperity. Many people also prepare feasts with seasonal fruits, vegetables, and savory dishes to share with family, friends, and neighbors.

Resources & Recipes:

[Why do we celebrate Dussehra?](#)



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Canadian Thanksgiving **October 17th - October 22nd**

Canadian Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday in October and is a time to give thanks for the harvest and the blessings of the past year. Rooted in both Indigenous harvest traditions and European settler practices, it often brings family and friends together to share a meal. A traditional Thanksgiving table in Canada includes turkey, stuffing, potatoes, seasonal vegetables, and pumpkin pie, reflecting the country's autumn harvest. Unlike the U.S., Canadian Thanksgiving is more closely tied to the changing seasons and the celebration of local food.

Resources & Recipes:

[!\[\]\(23d9fc146e83b5c3013cfa32c784f8d5_img.jpg\) Traditional Foods Served at Canadian Thanksgiving](#)



Diwali **October 17th - October 22nd**

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, marked by traditions like lighting lamps, decorating homes, exchanging gifts, and sharing festive meals. Food plays a central role, with families preparing sweets such as ladoos, barfis, and jalebis, along with savory dishes and snacks made from spices, lentils, and nuts. Sharing these foods symbolizes joy, prosperity, and togetherness, making food an essential expression of the festival's spirit.

Resources & Recipes:

[!\[\]\(dd161862f9164df98f62b726e9846241_img.jpg\) Diwali - Dates, Traditions & Recipes](#)



Halloween **October 31st**

Halloween, celebrated on October 31st, is a popular festival in Canada and many other countries. It has roots in ancient Celtic traditions, particularly the festival of Samhain, when people believed the boundary between the living and the dead was thin. Today, Halloween is celebrated with costumes, trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, haunted houses, and festive decorations. While it has become a largely secular and commercial holiday, it also serves as a cultural celebration that brings communities together through creativity, play, and shared experiences.

Halloween is known for costumes, trick-or-treating, and spooky fun - but food is at the heart of the celebration. From candy and chocolate to pumpkin treats and baked goodies, sharing seasonal foods brings communities together and adds a festive flavor to the holiday.

