

Methodology

There is no unified system for encoding public holidays into law, and countries' diverse religious and social traditions – right down to the various calendars they use – make it challenging to directly compare holidays schedules from one place to the next.

This methodology outlines the criteria we used to build and refine our database of nearly 2,500 public holidays observed in 2026 across 190 member countries of the United Nations.

Holiday classification and dataset construction

Our dataset includes observances classified as “public holidays and non-working days” on [Time and Date](#) (accessed Jan. 26, 2026). Names and dates of holidays, including tentative dates for holidays based on a lunar calendar, reflect those published on Time and Date.¹ We also consulted national labor codes, government gazettes and other publications, and regional news sources to confirm national public holiday schedules.

Our analysis focuses on holidays recognized at the national level, when people typically get the day off and many schools and businesses are closed. Such holidays go by different names around the world, such as “federal holidays” in the United States and “gazetted holidays” in India. **Working holidays and cultural observances** are excluded, because they are not generally days off for the public.

We also excluded the following:

- **Optional holidays** that employees can take off at their discretion. Many secular and religious observances, especially those associated with a religious minority, are classified as optional.
- **Sector-specific holidays** that only affect certain categories of people. Examples include Bulgaria's [Revival Day](#), which is for educational institutions only, and Guatemala's [Mother's Day](#), which is for working mothers only.
- **State and local holidays** or those otherwise set at the subnational level. Conversely, national holidays excepted by a small region within a country – like Diwali in Malaysia, observed as a public holiday in [15 of its 16 states](#) – are included.
- **Partial holidays** or half days, such as [Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve](#) in Iceland.

¹ As of 2021, all UN-recognized countries have adopted the [Gregorian calendar](#) except for Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iran and Nepal. Another 18 countries officially employ a second calendar, such as a traditional lunar calendar, and set some holidays against that one instead.

Holidays on which federal offices or their equivalent are closed *are* included in the analysis. For example, Canada’s [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) is a holiday for federal public servants and federally regulated industries and is also observed in some provinces.

Limitations in accounting for regional variation

We recognize that these findings on public holidays may not exactly match the lived experience of people who live and work in the countries studied. The number of days off that people get varies by where they live and what they do for a living. And labor laws generally establish that workers are entitled to more days off than is outlined in their national public holiday schedule.

Switzerland is highlighted as an outlier in our analysis because it only sets one holiday at the federal level: Swiss National Day. But Swiss residents, depending on the canton they live in and the calendar it sets independently, will get at least eight public holidays in 2026, including Swiss National Day. Other countries that commonly set holidays at the subnational level include Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Related: [Columbus Day, Indigenous Peoples Day or just a regular Monday? It depends on where you are](#)

Limitations in accounting for holidays on weekends

In much of the world, the typical workweek is Monday to Friday, and the weekend is Saturday and Sunday, but that’s not the case everywhere. Many nations have a Friday-Saturday weekend or [some other variation](#). In general, these systems are tied to long-standing religious and cultural traditions. Who is expected to work on the weekend and who isn’t also varies by economic sector.

In some countries, weekends might take on the status of public holidays by law. For example, [in Chile](#), every Sunday is considered a public holiday. We decided not to include these generic weekend days in our counts of public holidays to allow for more balanced comparisons between countries.

But the varying legal treatment of weekends around the world introduces an additional complication. Observances that fall on a Sunday or a different statutory rest day might not be included in a country’s list of public holidays – because people are off work anyway. Easter Sunday is a common example: We found that the total number of countries that formally observe Easter Sunday as a national public holiday is far lower than the number that observe, say, Easter Monday. For this reason, we chose to deemphasize Easter Sunday in our analysis, but it is included in a

country's holiday total if it appears by name in its labor code, government gazette or similar publication establishing public holidays, often in accordance with Time and Date.

Manual data adjustments

In a few places, these counts have been adjusted to include holidays that we expect will be declared later in the year based on established precedent. In Myanmar (also called Burma), for example, the government has [announced 29 holidays](#) for 2026 and typically declares dates of observance for Diwali and Eid al-Adha later on, as these holidays are based on by lunar calendars. We adjusted Myanmar's count to 31 in anticipation of these two additional holidays, then *subtracted* the replacement workday on Saturday, Jan. 10 (refer to "Replacement workdays" section below) to arrive at a total of 30 public holidays.

Identifying substitute holidays versus multiday holidays

We exclude "substitute" or "in-lieu" holidays from our dataset – that is, nonworking days set during the work week to replace those that fall on a weekend. For example, U.S. Independence Day will be on [Saturday, July 4](#), in 2026, so the preceding Friday, July 3 will be a substitute holiday for pay and leave purposes. But we only count Independence Day once in the U.S. holiday total, on its fixed date (July 4). Availability of substitute holidays varies by country and by observance.

In contrast, some countries designate multiday public holidays in honor of certain occasions. Examples include the Jan. 1-2 New Year's holiday [in Belarus](#), the July 20-21 President's Day holiday [in Botswana](#), and multiday observances for Eid al-Fitr [in Qatar](#) and other nations. In these cases, confirmed against government publications, *all designated days* count toward the holiday total.

Multiple holidays on the same day

On the few occasions where two different public holidays fall on the same date in 2026, they are counted as one. For instance, in Romania this year, Pentecost Monday will fall on June 1, [a date that is annually reserved](#) for Children's Day. While these are distinct holidays, the net result is one day off work for Romanians.

Replacement workdays

Some countries, including Belarus, China, Hungary, Latvia, Myanmar, Russia, Uzbekistan and Vietnam, add one or more replacement workdays (usually Saturdays) back to their calendar to offset long weekends. These days count *against* those countries' holiday counts. One working Saturday, for example, cancels out one public holiday.

Geographical exclusions

This analysis includes 190 of 193 UN member nations. Because we limited the scope of our analysis in this way for feasibility, some places that make their own holiday schedule – like Greenland, Taiwan, the Palestinian territories and other self-governing entities – are not included.

The three UN members excluded from this analysis are:

- **Nepal:** One of few countries in the world that do not use the Gregorian calendar for government business. Its full holiday schedule for 2026 will not be available until closer to the end of its traditional calendar year, around March. Even considering precedent, Nepal's public holiday schedule tends to vary year to year, though it often has [more than 20](#).
- **North Korea:** Access to data on its national public holidays is limited.
- **Ukraine:** 2026 public holidays are currently suspended under martial law, amid the Russia-Ukraine war.