

Easter finds origins from Hebrew lunar calendar

Determining Easter has always been an exercise, and the best place to begin is with the Jewish calendar.

Contrary to any beliefs Christians hold, it does not find its roots in the Bible. In the Lunar calendar, the new moon is the first day of the new month while the full moon is in the middle or the 14th day of the month.

Therefore, the Israelites followed the Old Testament instruction to celebrate the Passover on the full moon of the first month as per Deuteronomy 16:1. "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

Abib means sprouting or budding, and is the first month of spring. Abib is the only month of the year named by God in the



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The Sky's the Limit

books of Moses.

For centuries the Jewish calendar has been based on 235 cycles of the moon's phases, which are nearly equal to 19 solar years.

This means that every 19 years, the moon's phases will recur on the same dates of the solar year.

Today, most are not aware the lunar cycle is directly associated in celebrating the Easter long weekend, yet the spring season in the northern hemisphere that accompanies it resonates directly with the new life offered in

the holiday meaning.

Sky watch

Set your clock ahead at 2 a.m. Sunday, March 13 for Daylight Savings Time.

On Sunday, March 20 spring arrives at 5:02 a.m., and at sunrise look southeast-east to catch Venus next to Neptune coming up before sunrise at 6:30 a.m.

On Wednesday, March 23, the Penumbral Lunar Eclipse starts at 3:39 a.m. in the southwest until it sets at about 6:30 a.m.

Did you catch the Zodiacal Lights last month? It's a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. The best time to see it is from Friday, March 25 for two weeks in the west after the evening twilight.

Public events

Check out our stargazing event courtesy of the

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary chapter) starting at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 11. A brief indoor presentation on "Easter and astronomy" will be followed by observing through our resident 11-inch telescope. All are welcome to this free event. Refreshments are provided. Come early as space fills up by show time. Experts are on hand the second Friday of each month to explain the heavens, teach telescoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky. For further information, phone Vulcan Tourism at 403-485-2994 or visit www.vulcantourism.com.

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