

heritage day

24 SEPTEMBER

Heritage Day is meant to be a joyous occasion celebrating all that's beautiful about South Africa's diversity. Heritage can include: culture, wildlife, monuments, artwork, literature, music, languages and culinary traditions to name a few. There is great beauty in diverse people celebrating what makes them unique, yet united.

This day had a few name changes in it's history:

- Shaka Zulu day - commemorating King Shaka's ability to unite people – celebrated on the presumed date of his death (24 Sept 1828).
- Heritage Day – (named in 1995) celebrating the vast diversity of heritages in South Africa and marking the beauty of culture in SA after democracy in 1994.
- Braai Day – (named in 2007) because cooking around a fire is common in the South African culture. Tutu said, "This is a unifying force in a divided country. When we all gather round one fire ... it's a fantastic thing."

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Why do we remember this day?

In an address marking Heritage Day in 1996, President Mandela stated: "When our first democratically-elected government decided to make Heritage Day one of our national days, we did so because we knew that our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation. We did so knowing that the struggles against the injustice and inequities of the past are part of our national identity; they are part of our culture. We knew that, if indeed our nation has to rise like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes of division and conflict, we had to acknowledge those whose selfless efforts and talents were dedicated to this goal of non-racial democracy."

As Christ-followers, what can we do on this day?

In-person gathering options:

- Invite people of other heritages over to your house for a Braai & ask each family to bring a dish that represents their heritage. During the meal, have people share what the dish means to them and when/for what occasion they would typically make it.
- Visit a heritage site in Cape Town. Before going, google the history of that place and what was significant about what happened there.

Virtual activities:

- Send a message to someone of another heritage and ask them how you can know more about their culture. You could send a message something like this: "Hi friend. I'm wanting to celebrate Heritage Day/Month by learning about other cultures. What's a book, article, movie/documentary that I could dig into to learn more about your heritage?" After learning more, open a conversation with that same person around what you learned or observed.
- Dig into your own heritage. What can you pass down to younger generations that will help them understand their heritage in a new way?
- Learn common phrases of a South African language you don't know.