

How to Check if a Date is a Holiday in Excel

Authored by
stats writer

January 1, 2026

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2026). *How to Check if a Date is a Holiday in Excel*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=110402>

In Excel, the process of verifying whether a specific date falls on a holiday requires a precise and dynamic formula. This functionality is essential for tasks ranging from scheduling project timelines to calculating accurate payroll, ensuring that non-working days are correctly accounted for. To achieve this, you typically begin by compiling a definitive list of all relevant holidays, usually stored in a dedicated, separate range or sheet within your workbook. The core technique involves synthesizing several powerful logical and lookup functions--such as the IF function, along with robust lookup mechanisms like MATCH and ISNUMBER--to create a unified conditional statement. This comprehensive formula is designed to interrogate the date list against the holiday list. If a match is successfully identified, the formula will return a designated value, typically indicating **TRUE** or "Holiday," whereas a lack of a match results in **FALSE** or "Not a Holiday," providing immediate clarity regarding the date's status.

Understanding the Power of Conditional Formulas

To implement this critical scheduling feature, we leverage the logical capabilities inherent in Excel. While more complex methods involving MATCH and ISNUMBER offer high precision, a straightforward approach for basic holiday checking relies on the combination of the IF function and the COUNTIF function. The underlying logic is simple: if the count of the target date within the list of holidays is greater than zero (i.e., it exists in the list), then the condition is met.

You can use the following concise formula in Excel to check if a given date is a holiday:

=IF(OR(COUNTIF(A2,\$D\$2:\$D\$9)), Holiday", "Not a Holiday")

This particular formula is designed to check if the specific date located in cell **A2** matches any date within the predefined holiday range. The use of OR function in this context, while strictly redundant when only one condition (the COUNTIF result) is being evaluated, signals a logical check that is true if the count is anything other than zero.

Crucial Note on Setup: This formula operates under the strict assumption that the dates designated as holidays are meticulously cataloged and listed in the contiguous range spanning from **D2 to D9**. If your holiday list is located elsewhere, you must adjust the absolute reference within the formula accordingly to ensure accurate results.

Step-by-Step Example: How to Check if Date is a Holiday in Excel

To fully illustrate the practical application of this conditional check, let us consider a common scenario. Suppose you maintain a list of scheduled project dates in **Column A**, representing the dates you need to analyze. Simultaneously, you have compiled your company's official list of non-working holidays in **Column D**. The objective is to populate **Column B** with a clear indicator of

whether the corresponding date in Column A is recognized as a holiday.

A visual representation of this setup is necessary before applying the function. We have the individual dates requiring verification in the first column and the static reference list of holidays in the final column, as shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date			Holidays	
2	1/3/2023			1/16/2023	
3	1/15/2023			2/20/2023	
4	1/20/2023			5/29/2023	
5	5/29/2023			7/4/2023	
6	6/1/2024			9/4/2023	
7	7/4/2023			11/10/2023	
8	8/12/2023			11/23/2023	
9	11/23/2023			12/25/2023	
10	12/3/2023				
11	12/25/2023				
12	12/28/2023				
13					
14					
15					
16					

Our goal is now to systematically check if each date in Column A exists within the holiday reference defined by the range D2:D9. This systematic check guarantees that no critical scheduling conflict goes unnoticed.

Applying the COUNTIF Logic

To initiate the process, we begin by placing the formula in the first analysis cell, which is **B2**. This cell will evaluate the date in **A2**. The structure of the formula leverages the robust functionality of COUNTIF function to determine if the date in question is present in the holiday list. If COUNTIF returns a value greater than zero, the IF function knows to return the "Holiday" designation.

We will type the following specific formula into cell **B2** to execute this initial check:

=IF(OR(COUNTIF(A2,\$D\$2:\$D\$9)), Holiday", "Not a Holiday")

Once the formula is entered and confirmed in **B2**, we must ensure its efficient application across

the entire dataset. This is accomplished by utilizing Excel's powerful drag-and-fill feature. We click and drag the fill handle (the small square at the bottom right corner of the cell) down through each subsequent cell in **Column B**.

Interpreting the Automated Results

The use of the absolute reference (the dollar signs: **\$D\$2:\$D\$9**) is vital here; it ensures that even as the formula is dragged down, the reference range for the holidays remains fixed and does not shift. If relative referencing were used, the formula would quickly break as it moved past the defined holiday list.

Upon successfully dragging the formula down, **Column B** is instantly populated with results, providing a comprehensive assessment of the status of every corresponding date in **Column A**. The results clearly delineate which dates are confirmed holidays and which are standard working days, drastically simplifying scheduling and data analysis.

B2		=IF(OR(COUNTIF(A2,\$D\$2:\$D\$9)), "Holiday", "Not a Holiday")						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Date	Holiday?		Holidays				
2	1/3/2023	Not a Holiday		1/16/2023				
3	1/15/2023	Not a Holiday		2/20/2023				
4	1/20/2023	Not a Holiday		5/29/2023				
5	5/29/2023	Holiday		7/4/2023				
6	6/1/2024	Not a Holiday		9/4/2023				
7	7/4/2023	Holiday		11/10/2023				
8	8/12/2023	Not a Holiday		11/23/2023				
9	11/23/2023	Holiday		12/25/2023				
10	12/3/2023	Not a Holiday						
11	12/25/2023	Holiday						
12	12/28/2023	Not a Holiday						
13								
14								
15								
16								

As clearly demonstrated in the resulting table, **Column B** now serves as the authoritative status column, explicitly reporting whether each corresponding date in **Column A** is a designated holiday or not a holiday. This automation eliminates the need for manual cross-referencing against a static list.

Customizing the Output Values

A significant advantage of using the IF function is the complete control it grants over the output values. While our initial example was set up to return the verbose strings "Holiday" or "Not a Holiday," these strings can be easily substituted with simpler, numerical, or coded values depending on the requirements of your final report or subsequent formulas.

For example, if you require a simple binary output for use in downstream calculations or dashboards, you might prefer to use "Yes" and "No" or even the numerical values 1 and 0. This simplification often enhances clarity, especially when the results column is highly condensed.

If simplicity is preferred, you could instead type the following modified formula into cell **B2**, maintaining the integrity of the COUNTIF function:

```
=IF(OR(COUNTIF(A2,$D$2:$D$9)), "Yes", "No")
```

Visualizing the Binary Output

After applying this revised formula and dragging it down **Column B**, the resulting table will now display the streamlined binary indicators. This compact format is particularly useful for large datasets where space is at a premium or when the results must feed directly into another calculation that relies on Boolean logic or simple categorical text.

B2		=IF(OR(COUNTIF(A2,\$D\$2:\$D\$9)), "Yes", "No")					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1	Date	Holiday?		Holidays			
2	1/3/2023	No		1/16/2023			
3	1/15/2023	No		2/20/2023			
4	1/20/2023	No		5/29/2023			
5	5/29/2023	Yes		7/4/2023			
6	6/1/2024	No		9/4/2023			
7	7/4/2023	Yes		11/10/2023			
8	8/12/2023	No		11/23/2023			
9	11/23/2023	Yes		12/25/2023			
10	12/3/2023	No					
11	12/25/2023	Yes					
12	12/28/2023	No					
13							
14							

The formula now efficiently returns either "Yes" or "No" to explicitly indicate whether or not the corresponding date in **Column A** is officially designated as a holiday, showcasing the versatility of conditional formatting within Excel.

Best Practices for Maintaining Holiday Lists

For professional data management, it is crucial to employ several best practices when managing holiday lists in Excel. Relying on simple range references like D2:D9 can be fragile if rows or columns are inserted.

Use Named Ranges: Instead of using cell addresses (\$D\$2:\$D\$9), define a name for your holiday list (e.g., **HolidayList**). This makes the formula significantly easier to read and maintain, as you only need to update the definition of the named range, not every instance of the formula.

Expand the Range: Always define your holiday list range to be slightly larger than necessary. For instance, if you currently have 8 holidays, you might set the range to D2:D50. This preemptively accommodates future additions without requiring immediate formula updates across your workbook.

Separate Sheets: Store critical reference data, such as holidays, on a separate sheet designated solely for lookup purposes. This centralizes the data, protects it from accidental modification during daily work, and clearly separates raw data from calculated outputs.

Alternative Advanced Methods

While the COUNTIF function is excellent for a straightforward presence check, professionals often utilize the combination of ISNUMBER and MATCH, nested within an IF function, especially when dealing with large, unsorted datasets. The MATCH function attempts to find the position of the date within the holiday list. If it finds a match, it returns a number; otherwise, it returns an error value (#N/A). The ISNUMBER function then tests the result of MATCH. If ISNUMBER returns TRUE (meaning a match was found), the IF function returns the desired holiday output.

While slightly more verbose, this alternative structure is often considered the most standard and robust method for performing accurate lookups in complex spreadsheets, providing a reliable foundation for all date-based conditional checks. This mastery of conditional logic is essential for any advanced Excel user.