

Monthly Facts

January

Birthstone – Garnet

Flower – Carnation

Sign: Capricorn – Dec. 23 – Jan. 20

Element – Earth

Attributes – Ambitious, practical, prudent

January was named for the Roman god Janus. He was the protector of gates and doorways. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking into the past and the other one looking into the future.

So this is a good month to contemplate the previous year and what we learned in order to create a better future.

In Rome, gilded nuts or coins marked the start of the new year.

In Persia, eggs, the symbol of fertility were exchanged.

In Egypt, earthenware flasks were traded.

In Scotland, silverware was exchanged for good luck.

In ancient Thailand, guns were fired to frighten off demons.

In China, firecrackers were used to stop the forces of darkness.

In early American Colonies, the sounds of pistols rang through the air.

In Italy, church bells peal.

In North America, sirens sound and party horns get played.

In Ireland, pastries called Bannocks get eaten.

In India and Pakistan, rice gets eaten for the promise of prosperity.

In Switzerland, dollops of whipped cream are eaten, symbolizing richness for the year to come.

February

Birthstone – Amethyst

Flower – Violet

Sign – Aquarius – Jan. 21 – Feb.19

Element – Air

Attributes – humanitarian, original, inventive

February was named after the Roman Februalia, which was a month long festival of purification and atonement. The Latin word februa means “to cleanse”.

So this is a good month to think about everything from the past that we do not want to take into our future.

Groundhog Day falls on February 2nd and traditionally marks the midpoint between the winter solstice and spring equinox. According to legend, if a groundhog sees its shadow on this day, there will be six more weeks of winter; if it doesn't then spring is right around the corner. France and England looked to the bear; Germany looked to the Badger.

March

Birthstone – Aquamarine

Flower – Jonquil

Sign – Pisces – Feb. 20 - March 21

Element – Water

Attributes – Imaginative, sensitive, sympathetic

March was named for the Roman god of war, Mars. Mars because this was the time of year to resume the military campaigns that had been interrupted by winter.

Daylight Saving Times happens in this month. Credit for this is often attributed to Benjamin Franklin, who suggested the idea in 1784. The Germans were the first to officially adopt the light-extending system in 1915, as a fuel-saving measure during World War I. The British switched one year later, and the United States followed in 1918.

So this is a good month to think about everything we have put off and start to make plans and goals.

April

Birthstone – Diamond

Flower – Sweet Pea

Sign – Aries – March 22-April 20

Element – Fire

Attributes – Energetic, confident, adventurous

April was named from the Latin word *aperio*, which means “to open or to bud”. This is obvious because it is the month that plants begin to grow. So this is a good month to initiate new ideas and goals.

It is also the time of Easter. The origin of the word “Easter” seems to have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon dawn goddess *Eostre*, whose feast was celebrated in Spring. Why the Easter Bunny? Because the bunny is the Egyptian symbol of fertility.

As well, Easter is a movable feast and does not have a fixed date. However, it is always on a Sunday because it celebrates Christ’s resurrection.

May

Birthstone – Emerald

Flower – Lily of the Valley

Sign – Taurus – April 21 – May 21

Element – Earth

Attributes – Security oriented, reliable, warmhearted

May was named for the Roman goddess *Maia*. *Maia* was the goddess who oversaw the growth of plants and flowers. It is also named from the Latin word *maiores*, which means ‘elders’. It was the month that elders were officially celebrated. The Greeks paid homage to *Cybele*, the mother figure of their gods. The Romans dedicated an annual spring festival to the mother of their gods.

In 1905, after her mother died, *Anna Jarvis* wished to memorialize her life and started campaigning for a national day to honor all mothers. In 1914, President *Woodrow Wilson* signed a bill designating the second Sunday in May as a legal holiday to be called “*Mothers Day*”. So this is the month to honor our mothers, whether it be ours, someone else’s or *Mother Earth*.

June

Birthstone – Pearl

Flower – Rose

Sign – Gemini – May 22 – June 22

Element – Air

Attributes – Versatile, communicative, lively

June was named for the Roman goddess Juno. Juno was the patroness of marriage and the well-being of women. This is clear because so many marriages take place in June. June is also from the Latin word juvenis, which means “young people”.

So this is a good month to think of our feminine side, whether we be man or woman. It is also the time to focus on our inner child and have some fun.

June is also the time of the summer solstice. The word solstice comes from the Latin words for sun and to stand still. Some believe that Stonehenge, which was built in 2500 BCE in England, was built to help establish when the solstice would occur. The summer solstice is the longest day of the year and takes place in the Northern Hemisphere, when the sun appears to rise and set, stops and reverses direction.

July

Birthstone – Ruby

Flower – Larkspur

Sign – Cancer – June 23 – July 22

Element – Water

Attributes – Protective, sympathetic, loving

July was named to honor the Roman dictator Julius Caesar (100 BC-44BC). In 46 BC, Julius Caesar made one of his greatest contributions to history. He developed the Julian calendar, the precursor to the Gregorian calendar that we use today.

So this is a good month to experience our empowerment and birth something we had not tried before. It is a ‘timely’ month.

It is also the month of the commemorations of the Declaration of Independence by delegates from 13 colonies in 1776. Oddly enough, on July 4, 1826, exactly 50 years after the Declaration of Independence, both Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both passed away.

August

Birthstone – Peridot

Flower – Gladiolus

Sign – Leo – July 23 – Aug. 23

Element – Fire

Attributes – Broadminded, expansive, enthusiastic

August was named to honor the first Roman emperor Augustus Caesar (63 BC-14AD). He was the grandnephew of Julius Caesar.

So this is a month to honor the noble side of ourselves. It is a time to think about the King or Queen within our own nature.

August is an important month because it has been declared National Awareness Month.

September

Birthstone – Sapphire

Flower – Aster

Sign – Virgo – Aug. 24- Sept. 23

Element – Earth

Attributes – Intelligent, analytical, organized

September was named from the Latin word septem. Septem means seven. Therefore, in the early Roman calendar, September was the seventh month. This was the month considered to be the beginning of the winter.

So this is a month to ready ourselves for what is about to come. It is a time for protection and consciousness.

October

Birthstone – Opal

Flower – Marigold

Sign – Libra – Sept. 24- Oct. 23

Element – Air

Attributes – Diplomatic, peace maker, idealistic

October was named from the Latin word octo. Octo means eight. Therefore, in the early Roman calendar, October was the eighth month. October is commonly associated with the season of autumn in the Northern hemisphere and with spring in the Southern Hemisphere.

So this is a month to prepare for what is to come. It is important to take the time to predict what we might see in the near future. And if one lives in the Southern hemisphere, it is time to “spring’ forward.

November

Birthstone – Topaz

Flower – Chrysanthemum

Sign – Scorpio – Oct. 24- Nov. 22

Element – Water

Attributes – Emotional, Intuitive, Passionate

November was named from the Latin word novem. Novem means nine. Therefore, in the early Roman calendar, November was the ninth month.

This is the month of gratitude. In 1789, President George Washington called on the people to acknowledge God for giving them an opportunity to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness. He did this by devoting a day of thanks and prayer, which is always the last Thursday of November. It is now a federal holiday.

December

Birthstone – Turquoise

Flower – Narcissus

Sign – Sagittarius – Nov. 23 -Dec. 22

Element – Fire

Attributes – Philosophical, intellectual, loves freedom

December was named from the Latin word decem. Decem means ten. Therefore, in the early Roman calendar, December was the tenth month.

This is the month of the winter solstice. The word solstice comes from the Latin words for sun and to stand still. It is also the shortest day of the year and takes place in the Southern Hemisphere, when the sun appears to rise and set, stops and reverses direction.

So this is the month to stay quiet and contemplate what will en-‘lighten’ your life for the following year.

December is also the month of Christmas. However, the ancient Romans gave gifts on the first day of January and the practice spread throughout the Roman Empire. Eventually, Christians moved the custom to December 25th.

The first retail Christmas tree was established in 1851 by a Pennsylvanian named Mark Carr, who hauled the trees from the Catskill Mountains to New York City.

The first president to set up a Christmas tree in the White House was Franklin Pierce.

The first president to send the official Christmas cards from the White House was Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The first department store Santa Claus was James Edgar, who in 1890 would wander about his store in Boston dressed as Santa Claus talking to the children.