

The Year of the Tiger



February 1 rings in China's Year of the Tiger. In one myth, the Jade Emperor dictated that the order of the Chinese zodiac would correspond to the order in which the animals arrived at his birthday party. Diligent Ox departed early and arrived first. Tiger, so quick and competitive, arrived second. When the Jade Emperor noticed that Rat had hitched a ride atop Ox and jumped down to reveal himself, clever Rat was reordered first to arrive, with Ox second. Tiger had to accept his place as third.

Just as Tiger was content with becoming third, in life Tigers never give up despite setbacks. They are considered courageous and adventurous, kind and benevolent, and, of course, competitive. Rich in emotion and imagination, art is a common calling for those born in the Year of the Tiger. They are also seen as the guardians of children. For this reason, babies and kids often wear tiger-themed clothes for protection against evil spirits. Women born in the Year of the Tiger are often considered to be great mothers.

The Chinese New Year marks a wonderful new beginning with high hopes for good fortune and prosperity. For this reason, one should never utter anything negative. To speak negative words such as *poor*, *pain*, *break*, or *sick* might jinx your entire year! Likewise, try not to break anything. Doing so might shatter your connection to prosperity. If a plate or bowl is dropped and broken, one should wrap it in red paper, the color of good fortune and happiness. It is traditional to sweep and clean before the new year, removing all bad luck from the house. However, once the new year arrives, sweeping is bad luck. Any type of cleaning or removing garbage might inadvertently remove good luck from the home.

One of the most important traditions is to gift red envelopes of money. This "money to anchor the year" is a means of wishing someone an entire year of good fortune. The elderly give such tokens to the young and vice versa. The middle-aged must honor both the old and young. How much do you give? How much is a year of prosperity worth?

February Birthdays

In astrology, those born from February 1–18 are the Water Bearers of Aquarius. Just as water gives life to the land and its creatures, Aquarians are the humanitarians of the zodiac. Their heightened compassion and empathy compel them to help those in need. Those born from February 19–28 are Pisces' Fish. Pisces are sympathetic and selfless, making them compassionate friends. Their intuitive nature also make Fish creative and expressive artists.

Norman Rockwell (artist) – February 3, 1894
 Rosa Parks (activist) – February 4, 1913
 Bob Marley (musician) – February 6, 1945
 Chris Rock (comedian) – February 7, 1965
 Laura Dern (actress) – February 10, 1967
 Jennifer Aniston (actress) – February 11, 1969
 L.L. Bean (outdoorsman) – February 13, 1873
 Michael Jordan (athlete) – February 17, 1963
 Ansel Adams (photographer) – February 20, 1902
 Jordan Peele (producer) – February 21, 1979
 Rashida Jones (actress) – February 25, 1976

Celebrating February

Worldwide Renaissance of the Heart Month
Women Inventors Month
Black History Month

Chinese New Year:
Year of the Tiger February 1

Groundhog Day February 2

Winter Olympics Begin February 4

Read in the Bathtub Day February 9

Valentine's Day February 14

World Day for Social Justice February 20

Presidents' Day (U.S.) February 21

Digital Learning Day February 22

Tooth Fairy Day February 28

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Seeing Red

Red hearts. Red roses. Red lipstick kisses. These are all popular symbols of Valentine's Day. While there is no record of St. Valentine ever wearing red, the holiday that bears his name is full of the color. The color red appears again on February 4 for Wear Red Day. Today, red symbolizes love, beauty, power, and passion, but humans have been fascinated by the color for millennia.

After black and white, red is the first color of the spectrum that babies can identify. Perhaps our adoration of the color comes from this strong first impression. Speaking of firsts, 40,000 years ago, prehistoric humans painted their bodies in red clay. Burial rites included covering the dead in red powder to ward off evil spirits. Prehistoric cave paintings discovered across the globe from Asia to Africa and Australia were all made with red ochre. Our Stone Age ancestors certainly thought red possessed power.

When did red specifically earn its association with love? Many historians point to the ancient Greeks. Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, fell in love with Adonis. When Adonis was killed by a wild boar, Aphrodite rushed to his aid and was stuck by the thorn of a white rose. The goddess' blood fell on the white petals, turning them red. In this manner, the red rose came to symbolize Aphrodite's love for Adonis, and both the color red and the red rose became symbols of Aphrodite herself, as well as love, beauty, and passion.

This myth also demonstrates the mixed symbolism presented by the color red: the heart and blood, passion and anger, allure and danger, love and war. Cultures all over the world use red to different effects. Chinese brides wear red wedding dresses to symbolize love and good fortune. Catholic cardinals wear red robes symbolizing the blood of Jesus Christ. American drivers are warned to "STOP" with red stop signs and lights. In February, red might inspire romance or inflame passion, but on Halloween, it accompanies gruesome horrors. Good or bad, the color red has long asserted power over the human psyche.

Edward Allen 1st

Eddie Cunningham 4th

Jeanette Williams 7th

Juliana Zacarro 8th

Yvonne Burton 9th

Dee Kruger 14th

Clarence Walker 19th

Thomas James 20th

Gertie Baylor 23rd

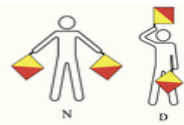
Jessie Moorer 24th

David Courtad 25th

Geneva Smith-Green 27th

A Picture of Peace

The threat of nuclear war was very real during the Cold War of the 1950s. Protestors against Britain's testing of hydrogen bombs formed the Direct Action Committee (DAC) Against Nuclear War. Adopting the nonviolent protest principles of Gandhi, the DAC conducted many forms of civil disobedience, including a 52-mile march from London to the atomic weapons research center in Aldermaston. Participants in the Aldermaston march carried signs bearing a unique symbol, a nuclear disarmament (ND) logo that is now known around the world as the peace sign.



The DAC enlisted artist Gerald Holtom to design a recognizable logo for the march, which he completed on February 21, 1958.

Holtom incorporated letters from the flag semaphore alphabet, combining the downward diagonals of the *N* and the straight vertical line of the *D* within a circle representing the globe. Holtom was also inspired by Francisco Goya's painting *The Third of May 1808*, which depicts a peasant with his arms upraised before a firing squad. Holtom admitted that the threat of nuclear war had caused him "deep despair. I drew myself... with hands palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya's peasant." Holtom's design was a success, and it soon became the symbol of the United Kingdom's campaign for nuclear disarmament.

In 1960, the logo came to represent something more universal. An American student from the University of Chicago named Phillip Altbach traveled to England to meet with British peace groups as a representative of the Student Peace Union (SPU). When Altbach saw Holtom's logo, he decided to use it as the symbol of the SPU. During America's tumultuous cultural upheaval during the '60s and '70s, Holtom's logo was transformed into a universally recognized sign of peace. Holtom never trademarked his design, allowing it to be used freely by anyone. His one regret, however, was its connotation of despair. Holtom wanted to invert the symbol and point the diagonal lines upward to represent the tree of life and inspire eternal optimism.

Brownies in Focus

Brownie photographers get ready! February 1 is International Brownie Camera Day. Some call Eastman Kodak's Brownie "the camera that started popular photography." George Eastman asked Frank Brownell, his camera designer and manufacturer, to develop the least expensive design possible for a camera, one that could be marketed to children so that photography as a hobby could take off. Brownell called his design the "Brownie" after the mischievous, fairy-like sprites conceived by Canadian author and illustrator Palmer Cox.

The camera was first introduced in February 1900 as a leatherette-covered cardboard-box camera with a lens at one end and film on the other. The first Brownie, known as the No. 1 Brownie, was marketed to children and sold for \$1, about \$31 today. The idea proved ingenious, with over 150,000 Brownie cameras sold in their first year. They were so ubiquitous that soldiers took them overseas to war. Many iconic wartime photographs were snapped with the Brownie. The last official Brownie was made in 1986.

Ukulele Lore



February 2 is World Play Your Ukulele Day. In many elementary schools, the ukulele has become the instrument of choice for teaching music. Perhaps this is due to the uke's affordability and versatility, but it is also due to the fun that comes with strumming! The ukulele is most often associated with Hawaii thanks to Joao Fernandes, who immigrated to Hawaii from the Portuguese island of Madeira in 1879. Upon arrival, Fernandes leaped from his ship to the dock and began to strum a tune on his *braguinha*, a small, four-stringed guitar. Other Madeirans soon set up shop making the instruments. The word *ukulele* meant "cat flea." It was first used in 1906 to describe the way uke players strummed the instrument, with their fingers jumping all over the strings.

Winter in Beijing

A mere six months after the close of Tokyo's Summer Olympics, the Opening Ceremonies of the Winter Olympics are set to start on February 4 in Beijing, China. Tokyo's games have been hailed a success despite their being held during the COVID pandemic. The amazing athletic feats of the competitors remained the focus, not the mostly empty stadiums or COVID-related protocols. Beijing will allow Chinese fans into stadiums and has asked all organizers and participants to abide by a "closed bubble" system. China certainly appears ready to take the torch from Tokyo.

Beijing will host popular events like figure skating, speed skating, hockey, and curling. Many of the venues built for Beijing's 2008 Summer Olympic Games have been repurposed for the Winter Games. For example, the National Aquatics Center, popularly known as the "Water Cube," was transformed into the "Ice Cube." The Olympic pool that saw Michael Phelps win eight gold medals is now the curling rink.



The picturesque village of Yanqing is just a 40-minute high-speed train ride from Beijing. This quiet vacation destination for city dwellers and tourists wishing to see the popular Badaling section of the Great Wall of China will get a dose of alpine skiing, bobsled, luge, and skeleton during the Olympics. As one of the top female skiers in the world, American Mikaela Shiffrin hopes to compete in every possible alpine skiing event at Beijing 2022.

Zhangjiakou is another popular ski spot located in the mountains 120 miles northwest of Beijing. Several new venues have been built to host cross-country skiing competitions, biathlon, snowboarding, and ski jumping. China has also built a new high-speed rail line to the area along with the world's first flexible DC power grid. The cutting-edge grid utilizes local wind and solar energy. But the most electric energy will be in the arenas. Host nation China has high hopes to top the medal count, but Norway is expected to win a record 44 medals.

Running with the Devil

February of 1855 brought heavy snowfall to South Devon, England. It also brought a terrible mystery. Residents awoke on February 9 to discover a disturbing trail of hoof-like prints in the snow traveling a distance of perhaps 100 miles, according to local reports. The trail traveled over houses, rivers, and haystacks, climbed atop snow-covered roofs and high walls. Some even claimed to find the tracks leading out of drainpipes. While many could not fathom their origin, religious leaders declared that the tracks were left by the cloven hooves of Satan himself. Indeed, the incident has earned the name the "Devil's Footprints."

Many have dismissed the tracks as a hoax. Other investigators have developed several theories. One theory suggests that an experimental, low-flying balloon made the marks. Other theories suggest that the prints were made by hopping wood mice, a rogue kangaroo, and a badger. Curiously, this 1855 incident is not unique. A newspaper report from 1840 mentions similar strange and unknown animal prints left in the snow in Scotland.

Polynesian Culture Clash



Easter Island's Tapati Rapa Nui Festival is one of the island's most important cultural events. With the arrival of February, locals quit their work, dress in traditional garb, and prepare for the spectacular. Competition is central to the celebration. Two candidates are nominated for Queen of the Festival. The potential queens then create their teams, reminiscent of the warring clans of old. The teams then compete in a traditional triathlon: rowing, running around a lake carrying bunches of bananas, and swimming across a river. But the most exciting tradition is the Haka Pei, where men race at breakneck speeds down a hill on sleds made of banana trunks. The winning clan crowns their queen, and all competitive grudges are forgotten with a night of feasting and dancing.