

February 2024

West Bloomfield Health and Rehabilitation Center

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Celebrating February

Bird Feeding Month

Spunky Old Broads Month

Women Inventors Month

Engineers Week

February 18–24

Change Your Password Day

February 1

Liberace Day

February 4

Periodic Table Day

February 7

Chinese Lunar New Year's Day

February 10

Galentine's Day

February 13

Valentine's Day

February 14

Presidents' Day

February 17

For Pete's Sake Day

February 26

Leap Day

February 29

What's for Breakfast?

February is a month that brings with it an array of breakfast-themed celebrations, making it a time for food enthusiasts to indulge in their morning cravings. Let's take a quick tour of some of these scrumptious occasions.

Hot Breakfast Month in February reminds us of the warmth and comfort that a steaming bowl of oatmeal, a plate of scrambled eggs, or a hearty breakfast burrito can bring to a chilly winter morning. It's a time to appreciate the heartiness of hot breakfast options, even if they take a bit longer to prepare.

Bagel and Lox Day (Feb. 9) caters to lovers of this classic combination. With a bagel as the sturdy base and lox (smoked salmon) as the star, this day is all about the savory and satisfying flavors that have become a breakfast staple for many.

Mardi Gras, which is French for "Fat Tuesday," marks the culmination of the festive Carnival season on February 13. While the day is famous for its lively parades and vibrant masks, it's also an opportunity to savor some delicious breakfast treats. Traditional dishes like beignets and king cakes take center stage, offering a sweet and hearty start to the day.

Fat Tuesday is also Pancake Day, an event celebrated worldwide with fluffy stacks of pancakes drizzled with syrup or piled high with fresh fruits and whipped cream. Observers relish the simple pleasure of this beloved breakfast food.

Finally, Muffin Day (Feb. 20) rounds off the month with a celebration of these handheld treats. Whether you prefer blueberry, chocolate chip, or bran muffins, be sure to indulge in a sweet or savory snack on the go.

Whether you're savoring a fluffy stack of pancakes or nibbling on a warm muffin, these celebrations remind us of the joy that breakfast can bring to our lives.

The Magic of Mardi Gras



Mardi Gras, the vibrant and exhilarating Carnival season celebrated in various parts of the world, is a spectacle of merriment, color, and

culture. It typically involves parades, masquerade balls, and the donning of elaborate costumes, offering a unique blend of tradition and modern revelry. Each year, it is a time for people to indulge in festivities and enjoy the spirit of community. In 2024, the celebration begins on January 6. It leads up to Fat Tuesday on February 13—the culmination of the Carnival season.

In 2024, Mardi Gras promises to be an exceptional experience. While the details of the celebrations vary from place to place, grand parades with intricate floats, live music, and colorful Mardi Gras beads are common features. The heart of Mardi Gras lies in its diverse cultural influences, blending elements of French, Spanish, African, and Creole heritage, which contribute to the rich tapestry of this celebration.

A tasty aspect of Mardi Gras is the king cake, a traditional pastry with a hidden figurine or token inside that brings good luck to the person who discovers it. Vivid, intricate masks and costumes add to the visual spectacle of Mardi Gras, as participants embrace anonymity and the freedom to be anyone they choose for a day.

Whether you're in New Orleans, Rio de Janeiro, or any of the other cities that celebrate Mardi Gras, the joyous atmosphere and sense of unity are universal. Partygoers let loose, enjoy the parades, savor delicious cuisine, and partake in a global festival of life and culture.

But Mardi Gras is more than just a party; it's a colorful expression of tradition, diversity, and the indomitable human spirit. Mark your calendars for Mardi Gras 2024 and prepare to join the revelry!

A Cutting-Edge Hobby

It's not an illusion or a magic trick—sword swallowing is a serious and even ancient art. On February 24, World Sword Swallowers Day, many practitioners will perform free demonstrations of their weird art form.

How does one learn to swallow a sword? Apprentices begin by putting objects of increasing size down their throats: fingers, spoons, paintbrushes, knitting needles, coat hangers, and then swords. Eventually, a swallower's esophagus is so relaxed that the sword travels down the throat and into the stomach. Today it may be a showy act for street performers and circus sideshows, but in ancient India, it was considered a demonstration of divine union with their gods, akin to walking over hot coals. Only a few dozen people worldwide currently risk this dangerous pastime. Luckily, for many, the worst injury they suffer is "sword throat."

Spreading Sunshine

Is there someone in your life who is a perpetual grouch? Are they forever grumpy? Is every day a bad day? February 16 may be your day to help them. It's Do a Grouch a Favor Day.



Hunger is a definite biological cause of grouchiness. Perhaps the best favor you can do for a grouch is bake them a treat or buy them lunch. Some people are grouchy first thing in the morning. The grouch might say they're "not a morning

person," but this grouchiness may have a biological cause. Some suffer a groggy period after waking up that is called the "sleep inertia" phase. It takes from five to 30 minutes for a person to feel awake. If someone is an interminable grouch, perhaps the biggest favor you can do for them, and yourself, is leave them alone.

Pucker Up

Valentine's Day always falls on February 14, and many may be happy to see it pass. But in the south of France, people still plant kisses until the Saturday after Valentine's Day.



The residents of Roquemaure call it the Festival of the Kiss, and kiss they do. They smooch from sunup to sundown in honor of their favorite saint, Saint Valentine. Valentine became the patron saint of love when, according to legend, on February 14 around the year 270, he was caught performing illegal marriage ceremonies for Roman soldiers and was martyred by Roman emperor Claudius II Gothicus.

In 1868, the supposed remains of Saint Valentine were purchased in Rome and transferred to Roquemaure. The French village was renowned for its winemaking, but in 1868, its vines were diseased. Villagers and winemakers believed that the arrival of Saint Valentine's remains would cure their ailing vines. Miraculously, within four years, the vineyards had recovered.

And so, during the Festival of the Kiss, Roquemaure returns to the year 1868. Residents wear costumes from that era, with some even dressing up like monks, nuns, or saints. Horses and carriages clop down the streets. Storefronts boast 19th-century decorations. A market sells traditionally fashioned items. Even the street names are rewritten, bearing the names of France's most lovesick poets and artists.

Everyone drinks wine and kisses until they can't feel their lips. The local winery is named Cave Saint Valentine and produces specialty wines for the occasion. The local post office even gets in on the fun, sealing every letter with a kiss. This is why Roquemaure is known as "La Capitale des Amoureux," the Capital of Lovers.

The Art of Being Humble

February 22 prefers not to call attention to itself. It is Be Humble Day, a day not to brag, boast, or call attention to your accomplishments. The words *humble* and *humility* come from the Latin word *humus*, which means "earth," literally the dirt beneath our feet. To be humble is to have a modest estimate of one's own worth and to never have a superior attitude over others. Humility is perhaps the greatest of virtues.

In our loud, proud, and power-driven society, humility can be viewed as a weakness. However, humility has often proven to be a leader's greatest strength. Humility comes from the self. Humility is also attractive to others, often because a good and humble leader will sacrifice personal gain for the benefit of the entire group. Humble leaders also do not create their identity from their accomplishments. Identity and accomplishment are entirely separate. This is why a humble leader will remain flexible. When their choices are criticized, they do not take it personally but rather are willing to learn from their mistakes. Taking a day to be humble may make us all stronger leaders, whatever our tasks.

Get Ready to LOL



February 8 is Laugh and Get Rich Day. If only it were that easy! Gelotology is the psychological study of laughter, and scientists are still trying to figure out just why we laugh. Laughter involves many different parts of the brain as well as the coordination of many muscles. Laughing 100 times is equal to 15 minutes of exercise on a bike. It's a total body workout, with all the physical and psychological health benefits to boot. So, while laughter may not fill our bank accounts, it certainly enriches our lives.

For the Love of Reading

While couples are courting each other with the perfect valentines on February 14, local libraries are wooing their local communities on Library Lovers' Day. Citizens have always appreciated their local libraries, but on this day, libraries show that the feeling is mutual.



Library patrons, how do your libraries love thee? Let us count the ways. One library hosted a couple that renewed their wedding vows after 40 years of marriage. Another library held a “blind date with a book” party, where borrowers were hooked up with mystery books. The staff

of another library dressed up as characters from Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, held a tea party for borrowers, and read excerpts from the book.

Why do we develop such emotional connections with books? Is it because we love learning new things? Books can teach us anything and everything, from cooking to space travel to macroeconomics. Do we love the way they inspire our imagination to take flight? We think we have only one life to live, but through books we inhabit other lives and even other worlds. Reading allows us to explore an infinite variety of paths in life. Reading is not a passive act but an intensely challenging mental act. It is as good for our brains as exercise is for our bodies. Regardless of your reason for loving books, instead of taking your loved one out to a restaurant this Valentine's Day, consider taking them to a library.

Looking for more reasons to indulge your love of literature? February 9 is Read in the Tub Day. How do you keep the pages from getting wet? Simply place a plank or caddy over the tub to rest your book and your rubber ducky on. Just remember not to take those library books into the bath with you!

February Birthdays

If you were born between February 1–18, you are an Aquarius, the Water Bearer. Aquarians are loyal and smart humanitarians who want to make a difference in the world. They are energetic, have inquisitive minds, and come up with creative solutions. Those born from February 19–29 are Pisces, the Fish. Like fish, Pisces like to go with the flow in an easygoing manner, but on the inside, they are intuitive, intensely spiritual, and deeply emotional.

Lisa Marie Presley (singer) – Feb. 1, 1968
Farrah Fawcett (actress) – Feb. 2, 1947
James Michener (author) – Feb. 3, 1907
Mary Leakey (scientist) – Feb. 6, 1913
Sarah Palin (politician) – Feb. 11, 1964
Peter Tork (guitarist) – Feb. 13, 1942
Hugh Downs (news anchor) – Feb. 14, 1921
Amy Tan (author) – Feb. 19, 1952
Julius Erving (basketball player) – Feb. 22, 1950
Cullen Jones (swimmer) – Feb. 29, 1984

Connecting the World



On February 4, 2004, the internet changed forever. Harvard freshman Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook, a website that has transformed the way people socialize and communicate. Facebook

has more than three billion active users a month. For many, staying in touch via Facebook, sharing pictures, sending messages, and commenting on friends' posts is preferable to communicating by mail, telephone, or email.

However, a scientific study in 2017 suggested that using Facebook had negative consequences. The more the study participants used Facebook, the worse they felt afterward. Users felt less satisfied with their lives and were lonelier. It seems that direct social contact may still be the best form of interaction of all.