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## March Birthdays

In astrology, those born between March 1–20 are Pisces. Friendly and selfless, Fish are always willing to help others with their hearts on their sleeves. Aries' Rams are born between March 21–31. As the first sign of the zodiac, Aries are energetic initiators. With zeal, they jump headfirst into life, confident that they can navigate any challenges.

Audrey Scott	March 3
Carolyn Marcum	March 5
Richard Jordan	March 15
Jack Zachary	March 23
Sherry D. Bright	March 27

## *Egg-ceptional* cont. from pg. 1

When Jews sit together for the Passover seder on March 30, an egg will adorn the seder plate as a symbol of the ritual offering to the Temple in Jerusalem. For Christians, Easter is a holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so using an egg as a symbol of rebirth was a natural choice. The traditional color to dye Easter eggs is red, symbolizing the blood Jesus shed on the cross. In Macedonia, congregants bring their red eggs to Easter church services, and when the priest proclaims, "Christ is risen," it is customary to eat the egg as a ritual breaking of the Lenten fast. Elsewhere, in Iran, Persians prepare for their new year, Nowruz, by preparing their ceremonial table, the *haftseen*, with symbolic foods and objects, including painted eggs representing fertility. All over the world, people will be looking at eggs in a different light.



**Mad for Plaid Month**

**Women's History Month**

**World Compliment Day**  
March 1

**Proofreading Day**  
March 8

**Shakespeare Week**  
March 12–18

**St. Patrick's Day**  
March 17

**World Poetry Day**  
March 21

**Pencil Day**  
March 30

# Renaissance Terrace

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## Egg-ceptional Spring Traditions

With the arrival of spring on March 20 comes all the holidays and traditions associated with the end of winter: religious traditions like Passover and Easter, and Nowruz, the Persian New Year. All of these diverse celebrations share an important symbol: the egg.

For millennia, the egg has been an exalted symbol of birth, rebirth, and hope. Ancient Egyptians told stories of the sun god hatching

from an egg. Sometimes the sun was considered an egg, laid each day by Seb, a cosmic goose and god of the earth. In Hinduism, the egg represents the makeup of the universe. The shell is the heavens, the white is the air, and the yolk is the earth. In the Persian story of creation, Good and Evil are locked in an epic battle. When Evil is hurled into an abyss, Good lays an egg, which represents the universe, with Earth suspended from the

heavens as a halfway point between Good above and Evil below. Eggs have always been a symbol of the beginnings of the universe and life itself. No wonder that after the long dark of winter, with the return of the sun, eggs are revered as harbingers of life.

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## A Doll's Life

March 3 is a special day in Japan. *Hinamatsuri*, known as both Doll's Day and Girls' Day, is a day to celebrate girls and pray for their health and happiness. The most interesting part of *Hinamatsuri* is the elaborate dolls displayed on red-carpeted, stepped platforms. Families either buy a set of dolls when

their first daughter is born or receive a set handed down from generation to generation. Sets include a male and female dressed in Imperial attire, representing the emperor and empress, accompanied by three court ladies, five musicians, and other court attendants. The dolls are arranged in

order of importance from the top step down, and displays are placed in the home for all to see. This tradition has roots in an ancient belief that dolls could attract and contain bad spirits. It was once common practice for the dolls, and any ill fortune, to be tossed into rivers and streams and washed away for good.



### Notable Quotable

“Every St. Patrick’s Day every Irishman goes out to find another Irishman to make a speech to.”

~ Shane Leslie, Irish diplomat and writer



## St. Paddy’s Pastimes Debunked

The world will be draped in green on March 17, when St. Patrick’s Day celebrations take place across the globe in honor of the patron saint of Ireland. If you really want to celebrate the right way, be sure to take a look at these facts behind St. Patrick.

St. Patrick may be one of Ireland’s patron saints (along with St. Brigid and St. Columille), but he was not Irish. Evidence suggests that he was, in fact, British. By some accounts, he was born with the name Maewyn Succat in either Scotland or Wales. Yet it is important to realize that even though St. Patrick may have been born in Britain in the year 390, at the time of his birth, Britain was occupied by the Romans. Thus, it is very likely that Patrick’s family was

from Roman aristocracy. Indeed, Ireland’s precious St. Patrick may well have been Italian.

But don’t trade in Irish green for Italy’s tricolor green, white, and red just yet. The true color of Ireland might be blue. Knights of the Most Illustrious Order of Saint Patrick, a society of Irish knights founded by King George III in 1783, wore a light blue color known as St. Patrick’s blue. The Irish president flies a blue flag with a harp. So when did green become the color of Ireland? During the Great Irish Rebellion of 1641, Irishmen flew a green flag against King James. Green became the color of Irish nationalism during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, a notion promulgated in the ballad “The Wearing of the Green.”

### A Slice of Pi

When one measures a circular object, it always turns out that its circumference, or the length around, is a little more than three times its width across—3.1415926 to be exact. This number, known as pi, actually goes on forever, but for the purposes of celebration, Pi Day is held on March 14, or 3/14, each year. The first Pi Day was organized in 1988 by physicist Larry Shaw, who

worked at the San Francisco Exploratorium. The original celebration consisted of museum staff walking around in a circle and eating pies. Celebrations have evolved since then, including competitions to see who can recite the most digits of pi and Albert Einstein look-alike contests, thanks to that famous scientist’s birthday also falling on March 14.

### Making History, I Presume

David Livingstone may have been a Scottish missionary and physician, but he is most famous for his explorations of Africa during the 19th century. Livingstone’s travels made him an international celebrity, and when he disappeared in 1866 on a search for the source of the Nile River, many feared him dead. American journalist and adventurer Henry Morton Stanley mounted an expedition to find him and departed the island of Zanzibar off Africa’s eastern coast on March 21, 1871. Eight months later, Stanley arrived in the village of Ujiji on the shore of Lake Tanganyika. It was there that Stanley saw a bearded white man and said, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” Stanley’s presumptuous words became as famous as the old explorer himself.

## The Colors of Devotion

March 1 and 2 bring India’s most famous Hindu holiday, Holi, which is known as the “festival of love” or the “festival of color,” but it is really a festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil. Hindu scriptures tell of the arrogant Demon King Hiranyakashyap, whose own son, Prahlad, refused to worship him in favor of Vishnu. The Demon King called on his sister Holika to sit with Prahlad atop a burning pyre. Thanks to Prahlad’s prayers to Vishnu, he survived, but Holika, who thought herself immune to the

fire, was consumed. It is through this story we learn how the virtues of goodness, faith, and devotion are used to conquer forces of evil. This story is so important that before this holiday was called Holi, it was called Holika after the Demon King’s sister.

The first day of Holi sees the ritual burning of pyres, with celebrants daring to race through the flames, hoping to emerge as unscathed as Prahlad. The fire purifies the spirit, proving one’s devotion and reaffirming the triumph of good over evil.

The second day of Holi is also steeped in Hindu mythology. The supreme deity Krishna fell in love with the goddess Radha but was concerned that they would be a poor match because his skin was blue. Krishna’s mother advised him to paint her face in order to erase their differences. Like Krishna, celebrants joyfully paint each other by throwing rainbows of colorful powder, erasing any and all notions of caste or ethnicity. During this celebration, it becomes nearly impossible to recognize others, so all are loved with equal devotion.



### Notable Quotable

“Beware the ides of March.”

~ the soothsayer from William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*

### The Hindu Pantheon

Can you match these Hindu deities to their manifestations?

- |              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Saraswati | A. God of wisdom, luck, and success |
| 2. Brahma    | B. Goddess of love and devotion     |
| 3. Parvati   | C. Goddess of art and music         |
| 4. Lakshmi   | D. God of creation of the universe  |
| 5. Ganesh    | E. Goddess of wealth and prosperity |

ANSWERS: 1.C; 2.D; 3.B; 4.E; 5.A

## Don’t Fear the Ides

It was William Shakespeare, via his play *Julius Caesar*, who warned that the Ides of March, on March 15, were cursed. Indeed, while Caesar was murdered by a group of political conspirators on March 15, the Ides of any month are not

particularly evil or ignominious. The words *Ides*, *Kalends*, and *Nones* are terms used to describe any month’s phases of the moon. *Ides* simply means the first full moon of the month, so in reality the Ides of March technically takes place

this year on March 31. Likewise, the *Kalends* marks the month’s first new moon, which is on March 17, and the *Nones* is the moon’s first quarter, on March 24. Far from cursed, March’s Ides were particularly joyful because they also heralded the new year.

