



National Techies Day: Recognizing the Architects of the Digital World

National Techies Day, celebrated annually on October 3, honours the contributions of IT professionals and technology enthusiasts who drive innovation and digital transformation. The day recognizes the hard work, creativity, and problem-solving skills of tech experts who power industries, startups, and everyday digital experiences. Schools, colleges, and organizations often mark the occasion with workshops, coding competitions, and tech talks to inspire the next generation of innovators. Beyond the corporate world, National Techies Day celebrates the spirit of curiosity, learning, and adaptation, highlighting how technology professionals continue to shape a smarter, more connected world for everyone.

#PERSPECTIVE

Cliffs of Moher

Ireland's Wild Edge of Wonder



Rising dramatically from the roaring Atlantic Ocean, the Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland's most iconic natural landmarks, an awe-inspiring meeting of earth, sky, and sea. Stretching for about 14 kilo-

meters along the rugged west coast of County Clare, these majestic cliffs reach heights of 214 meters (702 feet) at their tallest point near O'Brien's Tower, offering unforgettable views that have stirred the souls of poets, painters, filmmakers, and adventurers alike.

Where Land Meets Legend

The Cliffs of Moher aren't just a geological marvel, they're steeped in myth and folklore. From tales of sea witches to tragic love stories, the cliffs have long inspired Irish legend. The name 'Moher' is believed to come

from an old fort called Mothar that once stood on the southernmost tip of the cliffs. Today, they stand as a UNESCO Global Geopark, not just for the awe-inspiring beauty, but for the rich layers of history and biodiversity they support.

Nature at Its Most Dramatic

Wind-swept and weathered by time, the cliffs are a living canvas of ever-changing skies, crashing waves, and shifting light. On clear days, visitors can see the Aran Islands dotting the ocean horizon, or

gaze south towards the mountains of Kerry. But the real thrill is standing on the cliff's edge (safely, of course) and watching the Atlantic surge and swirl far below. It's raw. It's wild. It's unforgettable.

A Haven for Wildlife

The Cliffs of Moher are also home to over 30,000 seabirds. Among them are puffins, razorbills, kittiwakes, and guillemots, all nesting in the craggy cliff faces and

swirling overhead in the salty air. For birdwatchers and nature lovers, the cliffs offer a front-row seat to one of the most dynamic ecosystems in Western Europe.

Plan Your Visit

- O'Brien's Tower, built in 1835, marks the highest point and serves as a perfect lookout.
- The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience blends eco-friendly design with interactive exhibits on geology, wildlife, and folklore.

- Sunset is arguably the best time to visit, the golden light pouring over the Atlantic and painting the cliffs in shades of fire and shadow is pure magic.
- Weather changes fast, so bring layers, waterproof gear, and sturdy shoes for cliff walks.

More Than a Viewpoint

To see the Cliffs of Moher is to feel both small and infinite. There's something about standing at the edge of that vast, roaring ocean that quiets the mind and stirs the spirit.

Whether you're a solo traveler seeking awe, a couple chasing Irish romance, or a family on a Celtic adventure, the Cliffs of Moher offer more than just a photo. They offer perspective.



Akbar in a drunken brawl

As vivid and veracious as the painting is, there are minor but telling differences from Abu'l Fazl's original narration. For one, the roles of dominator and submitter, somewhat evenly distributed in the text's recounting, are unambiguously delineated in the painting in favour of Akbar. Though, there is a dramatic momentum in the painting befitting its depiction of real events, Man Singh's original intervention in disarming the king is barely suggested. And while Abu'l Fazl explicitly notes the king's rage as he tackles his friend, the picture painted is far more temperate: the Raja, sporting an expression of pained disbelief, lies pinned to the ground by a distraught badshah. True to the Akbarnama, a courtier named Saiyid Mozaffar tries to encourage Akbar to release Man Singh by twisting his injured finger.



In a library in Dublin lies a 17th-century painting with a scene that will be all too familiar to any pub goer in 21-century India: a drunken brawl. In it, Mughal emperor Abu'l-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar can

be seen fighting with Man Singh, the Maharaja of Amber, surrounded by more than two dozen courtiers watching in horror as one tries to break them up.

The miniature, self-explanatory titled Akbar fights Man Singh of Amber at a drinking party (circa 1605-1606 CE), is part of an illustrated Akbarnama. How does its depiction of an ostensibly undignified episode speak to the articulation of Shahenshah Akbar's Mughal persona as patriarch and sovereign? What might be the political dynamic that the painting alludes to? And what are the interrelated Akbari codes of manliness and kingliness it reveals to us?

Before answering these questions, it is essential to understand what supposedly happened at the party from the great Mughal's biographer Abu'l Fazl.

During his campaign to conquer Surat in 1573, the emperor was at a drinking party engaged in conversation with his courtiers. A group of Rajput noblemen boasted that their bravery was such that feuds were settled by both the warring rivals running towards a double-headed spear. Apparently inspired, likely drunk (Abu'l Fazl evasively proposes existential melancholia), the unrivalled Akbar attached his sword's hilt to a wall and prepared to race towards it to his death in a bid to prove that he is no less valiant than a Rajput. A shocked silence followed this turn of events, the courtiers contemplating the end of the Mughal Empire from a suicidal stab. At the last minute, Akbar's close friend Amber's Raja Man Singh ran towards him and dislodged the

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sword, nicking the badshah's hand. Furious, Akbar tackled his longtime boon companion to the ground 'and squeezes him.'

This vaguely ridiculous episode is rendered in the miniature made 25 years later by the artist Dawlat for the latter of the two known illustrated versions of Akbar's biography.

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The tweaking of details to favour Akbar in propaganda painting is unsurprising. In his 1917 book, *Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542-1605*, Irish civil servant and historian Vincent Arthur Smith noted that in general, 'the uncritical panegyrics of Akbar make no mention of his drunken bouts.' Smith reiterates Abu'l Fazl's report that the brawl took place whilst Surat was being besieged and won from the commander Hamzaban, an erstwhile servant of Humayun. This background provides a broader sociopolitical context within which to read the painting,

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according to art historian Dipanwita Donda, researcher at Max Weber Stiftung, New Delhi, whose doctoral dissertation at Jawaharlal Nehru University looked at portraits of Akbar. Over email, she weighs in on the general dynamic the painting referenced: "The two men of power, Akbar and Man Singh, both leading their men in battle against Hamzaban, were keen to exhibit their courage and dominance. Both men were sovereigns, each with their own fields of influence. While Man Singh was in the service of the Mughal emperor, he was also the Raja of Amber and had his own sphere of dominance in his own kingdom. He was no less equal to Akbar in terms of stature, power, masculinity, dominance and courage."

**Masculine virtue**  
A drunken scuffle between the two, friends, men, kings, in life is transformed into a theatre of masculinity and sovereignty in art. This was on brand for Akbar the patron. In the catalogue for the 1965 Festival of India's exhibition *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, curators Michael Brand and Glenn D Lowry assert that "Akbar desired

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to create and codify... a new pictorial language in which ideas would be given a formal representation, or set of signs, as effective as the letter in the fields of writing..." One of these ideas was the co-constitutive elaboration of manliness and divine kingship in accordance with akhlaq, the cultivation of virtue through practices enshrined in Greek and Persian ethical digests circulating in early modern north India. In her essay, *Kingdom, Household and Body History: Gender and Imperial Service*, historian Rosalind O'Hanlon argues that to construct a Hindustani idiom of manhood, Akbar 'drew on a careful selection of akhlaqi themes to construct a socially inclusive model of masculine virtue which transcended law and religion, caste and region, and the possibilities for moral and human perfection in all three of the homologous worlds that men inhabited as governors: the individual body, the

This tension is evident in the painting based on the incident. Akbar is the patriarch of the party, who must tend to his 'household of men' comprising his symbolic children, his courtiers. A sword lies to the right of the skirmishing protagonists, its curvature rhyming with the shape of the crowd, a phallic symbol of the emperor's martial masculinity, the shahenshah literally holds court.

household and the kingdom.' In the manner of the popular moral guides, in the Akbarnama, Akbar is portrayed by his chief publicist Abu'l Fazl as the ultimate akhlaqi exercising control over his empire, his court household and his own person: the insan-i-kamil or perfect man. One vector of north Indian or Hindustani masculinity which the emperor performed along, posits O'Hanlon, was that of the martial or warrior type. Combining his akhlaqi self-fashioning with both the Indo-Muslim figure of the self-immolating martyr and the honour-bound Rajput self-sacrificer, Akbar was the 'disciplined military servant, who could put the defence of wider imperial interests above that of his own individual or group honour.' At the same time, O'Hanlon underscores that these martial qualities were to be detached from scenes of explicit, physical combat



and presented within the self-controlled equilibrium of the insan-i-kamil mode. But surely the badshah had imperfect urges. Specifically referencing his tussle with Man Singh, O'Hanlon says, "There may have remained moments, however, in which Akbar felt the tension between these highly controlled expressions of physical courage and spiritual power, and the simpler Rajput ideals of direct personal sacrifice."

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Models of kingship

Dawlat's interpretation of the Akbarnama episode not only engages with syncretic imperial norms of masculine virtue, it may also have revised certain aspects of the actual event to comply with acceptable and aspirational models of kingship. The all-too-human intoxicated anger that Abu'l Fazl observed in the original account has been transformed in Dawlat's painting into an expression of regal dismay. At the bottom of the painting are two figures, outside the enclosure of the palace, curious to behold the king is not available for public consumption even as the viewer is made privy to these goings-on, evoking a feeling of being let in on the secret life of the god-like emperor. Through the exploration of the inextricable codes of manliness and kingliness, the painting gives us insight into Akbar's world and also how it was conceived and constructed. And just maybe, we catch a glimpse of the individual wearing the taj. Getting drunk and committing regrettable actions? Shahenshahs, they're just like us.

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Akbar fights Man Singh of Amber at a drinking party, from Akbarnama, by Abu'l - Fazl.

#BREAK THE MOULD

Bananas Are Not Only Cavendish

Beyond the Cavendish: Unique and Exotic Banana Varieties You Should Know

When most people think of bananas, they picture the standard yellow Cavendish found in every grocery store. But the banana family is far more diverse than many realize.

Across the tropics, dozens of lesser-known varieties flourish, each with distinct colors, shapes, flavours, and cultural significance. Here are five of the most unique banana cultivars that break the mold of the everyday banana.

1. Blue Java Banana (Ice Cream Banana)



- **Scientific name:** Musa acuminata × balbisiana (ABB Group)
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia, popular in Hawaii and Central America
- **Flavor profile:** Vanilla ice cream-like taste
- **Color:** Blueish-silver peel when unripe, pale yellow when ripe

The Blue Java banana, often

called the Ice Cream banana, is famous for its creamy, soft texture and sweet, vanilla flavour, earning it its delicious nickname. The plant is hardy and wind-resistant, capable of growing in cooler climates than most bananas. It thrives in well-drained soil and is often used in smoothies or eaten fresh when ripe.

2. Red Giant Banana (Red Dacca)



- **Scientific name:** Musa acuminata
- **Origin:** India, Southeast Asia, Australia
- **Flavor profile:** Sweet with a hint of raspberry
- **Color:** Deep red or maroon peel with creamy to light pink flesh

The Red Giant Banana, also known as 'Red Dacca', is

strikingly colourful and packs a nutritional punch. It's richer in vitamin C and beta-carotene compared to yellow bananas. The fruit is shorter and plumper, with a unique flavor that blends sweetness with subtle berry notes. The vibrant red skin makes it an ornamental favourite in gardens.

3. Praying Hands Banana



- **Scientific name:** Musa balbisiana hybrid
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia
- **Flavor profile:** Mild and starchy when cooked
- **Color:** Green ripening to yellow

One of the most unusual-looking banana varieties, the

Praying Hands banana features a cluster of fruits that grow in fused pairs, resembling hands clasped in prayer. This banana is often used in cooking due to its dense, starchy texture. It's typically eaten fried, boiled, or baked, more like a plantain than a dessert banana.

4. Rhino Horn Banana (African Rhino Horn)



- **Scientific name:** Musa acuminata × balbisiana (AAB Group)
- **Origin:** Africa
- **Flavor profile:** Sweet and tart
- **Color:** Yellow skin with occasional red or pink blotches

The Rhino Horn banana earns its name from the extreme length and curve of its fruit, some growing up to 2 feet long! Native to Africa, it's both ornamental and edible. The plant itself can reach up to 20 feet in height, making it one of the tallest banana varieties. The fruit is versatile: sweet enough to eat fresh but firm enough for cooking.

5. Thousand Finger Banana

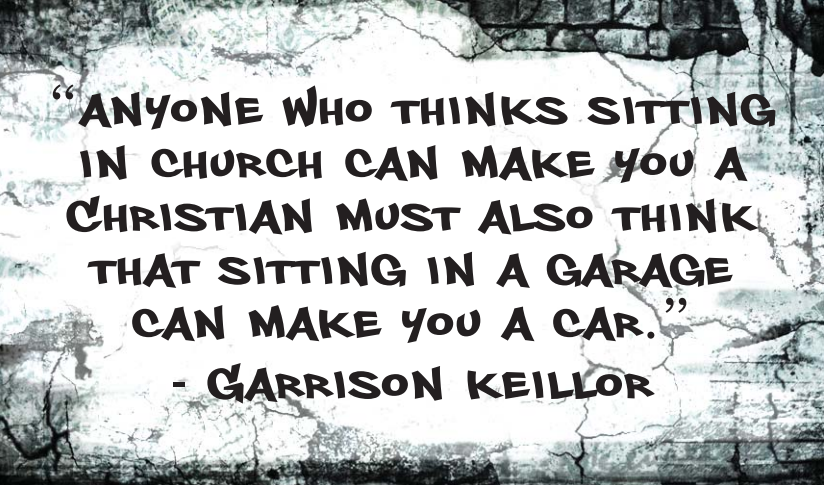
- **Scientific name:** Musa acuminata
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia
- **Flavor profile:** Sweet and tangy
- **Color:** Yellow peel, thin and easy to peel

True to its name, the Thousand Finger banana produces massive clusters containing hundreds, sometimes over a thousand tiny bananas. Each individual fruit is only a few inches long, making them perfect for snacking. Despite their size, they're packed with flavour and grow in long, cascading bunches that are a marvel to behold.

These unique banana varieties not only offer diverse flavours and appearances, but they also provide critical biodiversity in a world heavily reliant on a single cultivar (Cavendish). As disease threats like Panama Disease continue to endanger commercial banana crops, these exotic and resilient types are becoming increasingly important for global food security and ecological balance.

Whether you're a backyard grower, a tropical fruit enthusiast, or just curious about bananas beyond the grocery aisle, exploring these rare varieties offers a glimpse into the rich diversity of the banana world. The next time you think of bananas, remember: there's a whole spectrum out there, red, blue, horned, praying, and fingered, waiting to be discovered.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman