ARBiT
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Celebrating Men: Contributions, Challenges, and Well-Being

International Men's Day, celebrated annually on November 19, is dedicated to recognizing the contributions, achievements, and well-being of men across the globe. The day highlights positive male role models and encourages men to lead healthy, responsible, and balanced lives. It also addresses issues that affect men disproportionately, such as mental health, workplace safety, and gender-based stereotypes, fostering awareness and dialogue. Beyond focusing on men's challenges, the day promotes equality, inclusivity, and respectful relationships, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between genders. International Men's Day serves as a reminder to celebrate men's roles in families, communities, and society at large.

राष्ट्रदूत
THURSDAY
19 November 2026
A-B

#MEDICINE

Aben Ali
The African Physician Who Saved the Future King of France

Aben Ali was said to have acquired medical knowledge in the scholarly world of West Africa, with some accounts connecting his education to Sankore in Timbuktu



In the spring of 1419, a remarkable encounter between African medical knowledge and the French royal court is said to have taken place in Toulouse, France. At its centre was Aben Ali, a physician of African origin whose story has survived through historical research and later accounts of medieval African-European contact.

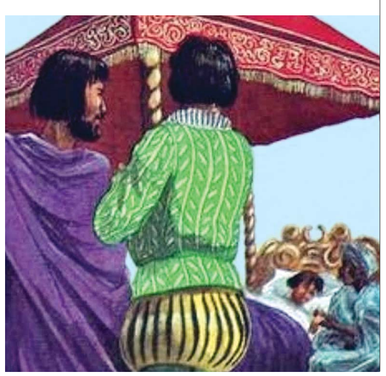
The future Charles VII, then the heir to the French throne, was travelling through southern France when he reportedly fell seriously ill in Toulouse. The kingdom was already experiencing the turmoil of the Hundred Years' War, and the health of the young prince carried considerable political significance. His death could have further complicated the struggle over the French succession.

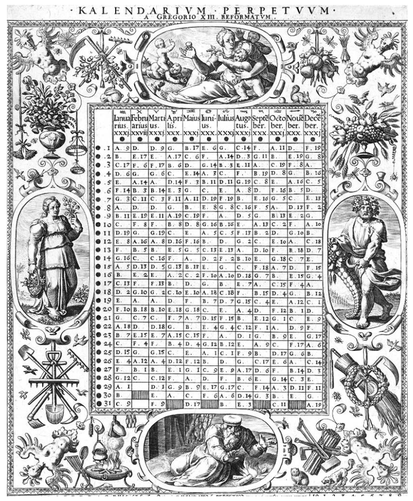
According to accounts of the episode, the physicians attending the prince were unable to restore his health. In desperation, Aben Ali was called upon to treat him. The African physician was associated with Anselme d'Isalguier, a French traveller who had reportedly returned from West Africa with his family and attendants.

Aben Ali was said to have acquired medical knowledge in the scholarly world of West Africa, with some accounts connecting his education to Sankore in Timbuktu. The city was an important centre of Islamic learning, where scholarship drew upon Arabic texts and intellectual traditions circulating across North and West Africa.

The story claims that Aben Ali successfully treated the prince, who left Toulouse five days after his arrival. Some later accounts describe this as a remarkable recovery following the failure of other physicians. They also claim that the grateful heir rewarded Aben Ali with a substantial sum of gold.

Aben Ali's story raises an important question about how history remembers scientific achievement. Medieval Europe was not isolated from the medical knowledge of Africa and the wider Islamic world. Scholars, merchants and travellers carried books, remedies and ideas across regions, creating connections that modern accounts of European history sometimes overlook.



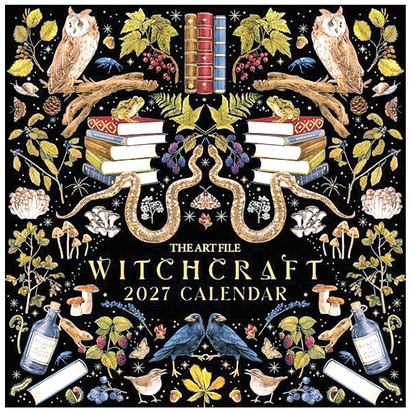


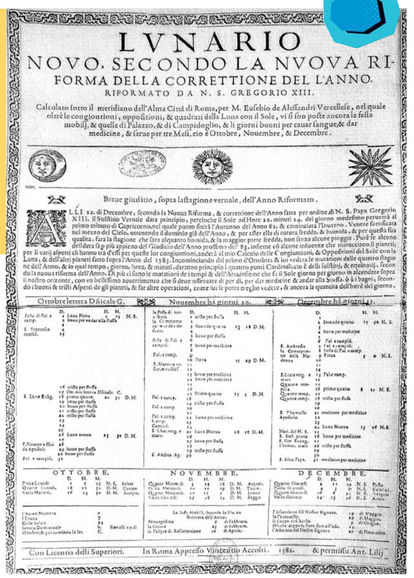
Why Does a Year Have Only 12 Months?



The superstition surrounding 13 and Friday the 13th adds another cultural dimension, although there is no evidence that fear of the number alone caused the proposal's failure. Friday's English name is associated with the Germanic goddess Frigg, while the number 13 has acquired different meanings across cultures.

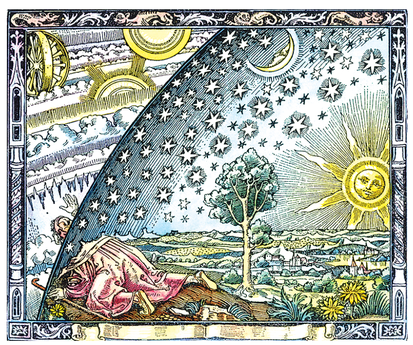


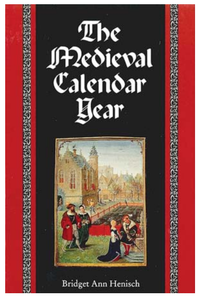


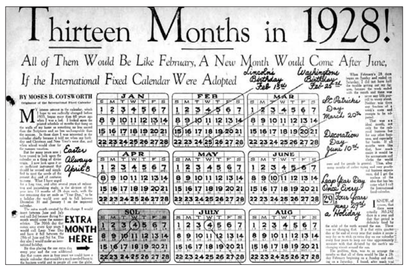


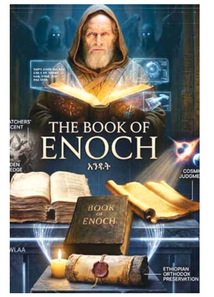


#TIME











● Bulbul Joshi

A year has 12 months, but the Moon completes approximately 12.37 cycles of its phases during a solar year. So, why does our calendar have 12 months instead of 12? The answer lies in a fascinating history of astronomy, ancient traditions, religious beliefs and political decisions that shaped the way humanity measures time.

A lunar month, measured from one new Moon to the next, lasts approximately 29.53 days. Twelve lunar months total around 354 days, about 11 days shorter than a solar year of 365.24 days. Thirteen lunar months, however, exceed the length of a solar year. Neither arrangement fits perfectly without adjustments. Yet, the idea of a 13-month calendar has repeatedly attracted attention because it offers an appealing alternative to our uneven months.

Before Kings, People Watched the Moon

Long before organised calendars, people observed the Moon to track the passage of time. Its changing phases provided a visible rhythm for marking nights, seasons and important events.

An intriguing prehistoric carving found at Laussel in France depicts a female figure holding a horn marked with 13 lines. Dating to the Upper Palaeolithic period, the carving has inspired interpretations connecting the markings with lunar cycles and fertility. However, its original meaning remains uncertain, and there is no conclusive evidence that it represents a 13-month calendar.

Nevertheless, the carving reflects humanity's enduring fascination with celestial patterns and the desire to organise time through observation.

How Rome Gave Us 12 Months

The modern calendar has deep roots in ancient Rome. According to traditional accounts, the earliest Roman calendar contained 10 months, beginning with March. Martius was the first month of the old Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war. This was because it was during this month that all military campaigns took place. Our month of March.

Aprilis derived from *aperire* (Aperta), which means open because it is when the flowers bloom. And the month of Aphrodite, goddess of love. Our month of April.

Maius dedicated to Maia, one of the oldest goddesses of Rome (May).

Junio dedicated to the Etruscan goddess Juno, goddess of marriage (June).

The remaining months of the year acquired its name based on numerical order.

At first, two months were ignored. About 61 days, as you can see, if you count the months described above. The ignored months were in the winter. During the period that occupied these months was a festival period waiting for the spring. A significant gap in the seasons was present with the passage of time. The solution to this problem was achieved with Numa Pompilius, adding the remaining two months: Januarius and Februarius, as the two missing winter months.

Januarius dedicated to Jano god of gates, at the beginning of the year (January).

Februarius dedicated to Pluto (Februus), the god of hell, of the dead (February).

The names September, October, November and December preserve traces of this earlier numbering system: their Latin roots mean seven, eight, nine and ten respectively.

January and February were subsequently incorporated into the Roman calendar, changing the positions of the numbered months.

Politics also influenced the calendar. Quintilis was renamed July in honour of Julius Caesar, while Sextilis became August after Emperor Augustus. These names remain part of everyday life, demonstrating how decisions made by rulers can survive for centuries.

Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar in 45 BCE, establishing a 365-day year with an additional day every fourth year. However, the calendar slightly overestimated the solar year, causing the dates to drift gradually away from the seasons.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar, correcting this drift through a revised leap-year system. The calendar gradually spread across countries and eventually became the world's principal civil calendar.

Double Dating

Between 1582 and 1752, not only were two calendars in use in Europe (and in European colonies), but two different starts of the year were in use in England. Although the "Legal" year began on March 25, the use of the Gregorian calendar by other European countries led to January 1 becoming commonly celebrated as "New Year's Day" and given as the first day of the year in almanacs.

To avoid misinterpretation, both the "Old Style" and "New Style" year was often used in English and colonial records for dates falling between the new New Year (January 1) and old New Year (March 25), a system known as "double dating." Such dates are usually identified by a slash mark [/] breaking the "Old Style" and "New Style" year, for example, March 19, 1631/2. Occasionally, writers would express the double date with a hyphen, for example, March 19, 1631-32. In general, double dating was more common in civil than church and ecclesiastical records.

Changes of 1752

In accordance with a 1750 act of Parliament, England and its colonies changed calendars in 1752. By that time, the discrepancy between a solar year and the Julian Calendar had grown by an additional day, so that the calendar used in England and its colonies was 11 days out-of-sync with the Gregorian Calendar in use in most other parts of Europe.

England's calendar change included three major components. The Julian Calendar was replaced by the Gregorian Calendar, changing the formula for calculating leap years. The beginning of the legal new year was moved from March 25 to January 1. Finally, 11 days were dropped from the month of September 1752.

The changeover involved a series of steps:

1. December 31, 1750 was followed by January 1, 1750. (Under the "Old Style" calendar, December was the 10th month and January the 11th.)
2. March 24, 1750 was followed by March 25, 1751. (March 25 was the first day of the "Old Style" year.)
3. December 31, 1751 was followed by January 1, 1752. (The switch from March 25 to January 1 as the first day of the year.)
4. September 2, 1752 was followed by September 14, 1752. (Drop of 11 days to conform to the Gregorian calendar.)

Which Calendar Is It?

Out of context, it is sometimes hard to determine whether information in colonial records was entered "Old Style" or "New Style."

In the Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, "A Corte at New Towne [Hartford] 27 Decr. 1636" is immediately followed by a court held "21 Febr. 1636," which is followed, in turn, by "A Cort att Hartford, Marsh 28th, 1637." Although it first appear that the February session was entered out of sequence, the arrangement is actually correct. Under the "Old Style" calendar and legal new year, 1636 began on March 25. December 1636 was followed by January 1636 and February 1636, and 1636 continued through March 24.

The "Warwick Patent" is dated the "Nineteenth day of March in the Seventh/ yeare of ye reigne of our Sovergne Lord Charles by ye grace of God/ Kinge of England Scotland Ffrance and/ Ireland defender of ye ffaith &c Anno Dom/ 1631." Although not double dated, the historical context indicates that the date as recorded was "Old Style." If double dated, it would have been recorded as March 19, 1631/2; if recorded "New Style," it would be March 19, 1632.

John and Joane Carrington, accused of "familiarity with Sathan the great Enemye of God and mankinde," were indicted by Connecticut's Particular Court on "6 March 1650/1." In his "diary" or notebook, Matthew Grant records that they were executed "mar. 19.50." Although, Grant did not employ the double date, had he done so it would have been recorded as March 19, 1650/1.

Although current historical scholarship calls for retention of Old Style dates in transcriptions, historians and genealogists need to be aware that some people living at the time converted the date of an event, such as a birthday, from Old Style to New Style. George Washington, for example, was born on February 11, 1731 under the Julian Calendar, but afterwards recognized the date February 22, 1732 to reflect the Gregorian Calendar.

The Ancient Vision of a 364-Day Year

An alternative system appears in the Book of Enoch, an ancient Jewish religious text excluded from most biblical canons but regarded as scripture in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo tradition.

In its astronomical passages, the angel Uriel describes a 364-day year, equivalent to exactly 52 weeks. This arrangement allowed dates and festivals to maintain consistent positions within the weekly cycle.

Although the text does not simply prescribe 13 months of 28 days, its emphasis on a mathematically ordered year echoes the appeal of calendar reform. Thirteen months of 28 days would total 364 days, with one additional day required to complete an ordinary solar year.

Such a calendar would make every month exactly four weeks long, simplifying comparisons between months and annual planning.

When Kodak Adopted 13 Months

The idea came surprisingly close to becoming a practical alternative in the 20th century. British accountant Moses B. Cotsworth developed the International Fixed Calendar, which divided the year into 13 months of 28 days each. The additional month, called Sol, was placed between June and July.

Every month would begin on Sunday and end on Saturday, with dates falling on the same weekdays each year. An extra day outside the regular monthly sequence would complete the year.

George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak, supported the system, seeing its advantages for accounting and business administration. Kodak adopted the calendar internally in 1928 and continued using it until 1989.

In 1931, the League of Nations considered calendar reform at Geneva. However, the proposal encountered religious objections, practical difficulties and resistance to changing established international systems. The League did not recommend its adoption, and the familiar calendar remained in place.

Why the 13th Month Never Returned

The additional day posed a significant problem for religious communities that required an uninterrupted seven-day weekly cycle. Changing the calendar would also have affected contracts, holidays, financial records and international coordination.

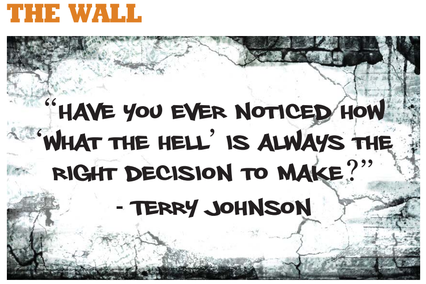
The superstition surrounding 13 and Friday the 13th adds another cultural dimension, although there is no evidence that fear of the number alone caused the proposal's failure. Friday's English name is associated with the Germanic goddess Frigg, while the number 13 has acquired different meanings across cultures.

Ultimately, our calendar survived because it became an established system shared by governments, businesses and religious institutions.

The Moon continues its cycles regardless of how humanity counts them. Our 12-month calendar is not a perfect reflection of lunar time; it is a practical arrangement shaped by history. From prehistoric carvings to Roman emperors and Kodak's unusual experiment, the story of the calendar reveals that timekeeping is both an astronomical challenge and a human convention. The heavens provide the cycles, but civilisation decides how to divide them.

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THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

