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Better Home Living

A newsletter that is both informative and fun!

JANUARY 2024

Hello and welcome to our newsletter!

FIRST NEW MOON

The first New Moon of the year is scheduled to grace the night sky on January 17th, marking the beginning of a new lunar cycle and offering ideal conditions for stargazing and observing faint celestial objects.

Furthermore, the planetary alignment of Mars, Venus, and the crescent moon is set to create a stunning celestial triangle on the evening of January 31st.

Keep an eye out for...

One of the most anticipated events in January is the Quadrantid meteor shower, which is expected to peak on the night of January 3rd and into the early hours of January 4th. Known for its brief but intense meteor activity, the Quadrantids are often a highlight for those seeking the thrill of shooting stars streaking across the night sky.

DID YOU KNOW:

January 1, 1892: Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened, processing over 20 million new arrivals to America until its closing in 1954.

January 1, 1961: Ham, a US chimpanzee, became the first hominid launched into space and successfully recovered alive.

The practice of making New Year's resolutions, said to have begun with the Babylonians as early as 2600 B.C., is another way to reflect on the past and plan ahead.

JANUARY DATES

January is the first month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars and the first of seven months to have a length of 31 days. January was named for the Roman god Janus, known as the protector of gates and doorways, who symbolize beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking into the past, the other with the ability to see into the future.

January 1 - New Years Day

January 15 - Martin Luther King Day

January 19 - National Popcorn Day

January 20 - Feb 11 - Art Shanty Lake Harriet

January 20 - Nat'l Use your Gift Card Day

January 25 - St. Paul Winter Carnival

WHY JANUARY 1 STARTS THE NEW YEAR

In ancient Roman times the winter solstice was thought to occur on December 25. So, the New Year started on the 1st of the next month, January. The Romans consecrated this day to Janus, exchanging good wishes and gift of sweet figs and honey in Janus' honor.



CHECK OUT THE ART SHANTY PROJECT!

Weekends January 20 – February 11, 2024
At Lake Harriet this year. Since 2004, artists have been building shanties and creating interactive experiences for winter adventurers, sharing joy through the extreme winter sport of artmaking using the ice house as their start. If you haven't gone, you should check it out! A true Minnesota tradition! Always something for everyone!

<https://artshantyprojects.org/>

JANUARY TO-DO CHECKLIST

Here are some to-do's to accomplish in January:

- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Organize the sock drawer.
- Clean and organize closets.
- DIY home projects.
- Clean out tub drains.
- Explore a new hobby.
- Hire your cleaning company to clean out the refrigerator, cupboards, drawers, or closet floors.
- Remove things you no longer use.

NEW YEARS TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

In Thailand, it was once a tradition to fire guns to frighten off demons.

In Denmark, they throw plates and glasses against each others' front doors to banish bad spirits.

In the early American colonies, the sound of pistol shots rang through the air.

MAKE SURE TO EAT LUCKY FOOD

In Spain, people attempt to eat 12 grapes during these 12 strokes of midnight! Tradition says that if they succeed before the chimes stop, they will have good luck for all 12 months of the coming year.

-In the southern US, black-eyed peas and pork foretell good fortune.

-In Scotland—where Hogmanay is celebrated—Scots also hold bonfire ceremonies where people parade while swinging giant fireballs on poles!

-Eating any ring-shaped treat (such as a doughnut) symbolizes “coming full circle” and leads to good fortune. In Dutch homes, fritters called *olie bollen* are served.

-The Irish enjoy pastries called *bannocks*.

-In India and Pakistan, rice promises prosperity.

-Apples dipped in honey are a Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) tradition.

-In Swiss homes, dollops of whipped cream, symbolizing the richness of the year to come, are dropped on the floors—and allowed to remain there!

<https://www.almanac.com/content/when-new-years-day>

DANGEROUS COOKBOOKS

Cookbooks are a bio-hazard says a UK food safety expert, quoted in The Sun newspaper. Richard Conroy says cooks run the risk of food poisoning every time they open a cookbook and flip through the pages. Conroy says cookbooks are routinely splattered

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SELF-CARE?

The psychological benefits of self-care are numerous and impactful, contributing to overall mental well-being and resilience. Engaging in self-care practices has been clinically proven to have a positive impact on mental health and can enhance emotional and psychological wellness and reduce or eliminate anxiety and depression.

One can better equip themselves to adapt to changes, build strong relationships, and recover from setbacks and can contribute to a greater sense of well-being and confidence along with self-worth, increased optimism, and a positive outlook on life.

Practicing self-care is not selfish. It is critical in maintaining overall wellness.

By consciously engaging in self-care practices, individuals can cultivate resilience and emotional well-being, contributing to a healthier and more fulfilling life. Use your free time from not doing housecleaning, because of Kristi Klean, to treat yourself to self-care. Go ahead and book that massage for your self.

HONEY APPLE DIP

Enjoy this traditional snack that has been passed down through generations to celebrate Rosh Hashanah. It will bring sweetness and abundance in the coming year! The first known mention of apples and honey being eaten on Rosh Hashanah comes from the 14th-century legal work *Arba'ah Turim*, which states that German Jews ate apples and honey in order to bring sweetness into the New Year.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup non-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1/4 cup apple butter
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Instructions:

In a bowl, mix together the non-fat yogurt, apple butter, honey, cinnamon, and vanilla extract until well combined. Serve the honey apple dip alongside sliced apples for a delightful and healthy snack.

with small amounts of food, then they are stored on shelves where they grow bacteria. Even phones and tablets can become contaminated he says.

According to a 2013 study by a UK watchdog group, kitchen electronics were found to have high levels of *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria. Cooks should routinely disinfect their electronics and wash hands while using cookbooks.