

INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS



MARCH 2009

3.1—**Samilijol** (Independence Movement Day); South Korea

Marks the 1919 independence movement against Japan

3.1—**Martenitza/ Martisor**; Bulgaria, Romania

A joyous celebration marking the end of winter and arrival of spring blossoms. Its origins are in a story of Pagan times when an elderly man, named Martisor, helped a woman overcome her struggle with a mean-spirited mother-in-law by giving her a magical red and white flower. Red and white pins are given to loved ones for good health and fortune

3.1—**Heroes' Day**; Paraguay

Marks the end of the War of the Triple Alliance which was fought from 1864 to 1870 and caused more deaths than any other South American war

3.1—**Memorial Day**; Marshall Islands

Commemorates the day in 1954 when Bikini Atoll became ground zero, as the U.S. conducted the largest ever nuclear test, whose radioactive fallout spread quickly to Rongelap, an inhabited island nearby

3.1—**National Independence Day**; Bosnia-Herzegovina

Gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992

3.1—**St. David's Day**; United Kingdom

The feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales, and marks his death in 589

3.1—**Yap Day**; Micronesia

A celebration of the culture and customs of the Yapese villages

3.2—**Battle of Adowa**; Ethiopia

Commemorates the decisive battle fought at Adowa, in north central Ethiopia on this date in 1896. The Ethiopian army of Kin Menelik II defeated Italian forces, halting for the time Italy's move toward creating an African colonial empire

3.2—**Peasant's Day**; Myanmar/Burma

A day to recognize and honor the peasantry

3.2—**National Day**; Morocco

Anniversary of the day in 1956 when the Treaty of Fez was terminated and the sovereign nation was established

3.3—**Hinamatsuri** (Doll Festival); Japan

During this festival for girls, families elaborately display 15 dolls representing the emperor and empress and their court

3.3—**Declaration of Establishment of Authority of the People** (Jamahiriya); Libya

3.3—**Martyr's Day**; Malawi

A day to remember the forty people who lost their lives during an uprising against the Federation in 1959

3.3—Mother’s Day; Georgia

3.3—National Day; Bulgaria

Commemorates the date in 1878 when the Peace Treaty of San Stefano was signed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The treaty marked the revival of the Bulgarian State

3.3—Fete Du Trone; Morocco

Marks the anniversary of the King’s ascension to the throne

3.4—Casimir Pulaski Day; Poland

Honors the 1747 birthday of the patriot who led an unsuccessful uprising against foreign intervention

3.5—Arrival of First Missionaries; French Polynesia

Commemorates the landing of the first missionaries at Point Venus on Tahiti

3.5—Customs Chiefs Day; Vanuatu

3.5—National Tree Planting Day; Iran

3.5—World Book Day; International

An occasion for the celebration of books and reading

3.6—Independence Day; Ghana

Commemorates the date in 1957 when the Gold Coast became an independent member of the British Commonwealth

3.6—Maha Shivaratri (Shiva’s Night); Hindu

Honors the Lord Shiva, who, legend says, on this night danced the Tandav, believed to be a dance of creation, preservation, and destruction

3.6—Foundation Day; Norfolk Island

Commemorates the date in 1788 when Lt Philip Gidley King landed on Norfolk Island to establish the first European settlement there

3.8—International Women’s Day; International

Marks the 1857 revolt of women in New York City protesting conditions in the U.S. textile and garment industries. It acknowledges the contributions made by working women

3.8—Decoration Day; Liberia

A day when Liberians clean and decorate the graves of their ancestors as a symbol of reverence to their memories

3.8—Mother’s Day; Bulgaria

3.8—Revolution Day; Syria

Anniversary of the National Council of Revolution’s assumption of power in 1963

3.9—Baron Bliss Day; Belize

Marks the death of Henry Edward Ernest Victor Bliss, a British-born traveler who willed money to a trust fund for the benefit of the citizens of what was then the colony of British Honduras, now Belize

3.9—Purim (Feast of Lots); Israel

A Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance for the Jewish people of the ancient Persian Empire from Haman’s plot to annihilate them as recorded in the Biblical Book of Esther

3.9—Commonwealth Day; Tuvalu

An annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations held on the second Monday in March

3.9—Youth Day; Zambia

Celebrated the second Monday in March

3.10—Dry Season Celebration; Myanmar/Burma

3.11—Restoration of Lithuania’s Statehood; Lithuania

Commemorates the date in 1990 when Lithuania became the first Soviet Republic to declare independence

3.12—Moshoeshoe's Day; Lesotho

Commemorates the country's founder and leader, Chief Moshoeshoe I, who sought to unify Basotho people in the mid-1800s during a time of war in southern Africa

3.12—Arbor Day; China & Taiwan

Commemorates the passing of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, China's democratic revolution forerunner, who died on this date in 1925

3.12—Independence Day; Mauritius

Independence from the United Kingdom was gained on this date in 1968

3.12—Crown Princess' Nameday; Sweden

Honors Princess Victoria Ingrid Alice Desiree, heiress apparent to the Swedish throne

3.12—Renovation Day; Gabon

Anniversary of the foundation of the Parti democratique gabonais

3.13—Revolutionary Attack on the Presidential Palace; Cuba

On this date in 1957 a group of revolutionaries made up of university students and workers got ready to carry out actions against Fulgencio Batista

3.14—Constitution Day; Andorra

3.14—White Day; Japan

A holiday celebrated in Japan one month after Valentine's Day in which the men who received "honmei-choco" (chocolate of love) on Valentine's Day return the favor by giving gifts to the women

3.14—Dita e Veres (The Summer Day); Albania

A celebration to mark the beginning of spring

3.15—Constitution Day; Belarus

Commemorates the date the constitution of a democratic, independent Belarus was adopted

3.15—J.J. Robert's Birthday; Liberia

Marks the birthday of Liberia's first and seventh president

3.16—Loco Davi (Manger du bois ritual); Haiti

3.16—St. Urho's Day; Finland

The feast day of St. Urho who is said to have chased the grasshoppers out of ancient Finland, thus saving the grape crop and the jobs of the Finnish vineyard workers. The feast is celebrated by wearing the colors Royal Purple and Nile Green

3.17—St. Patrick's Day; Ireland, U.S.

Commemorates the patron saint of Ireland, who converted the island to Christianity in 432 CE. Tradition says that St. Patrick died on this date in 461 CE. The shamrock is worn to remember its use as a symbol of the Trinity

3.17—Birthday of Bangabnadh; Bangladesh

3.18—Charshanbesuri (Last Wednesday Festival); Iran

Celebrates the return of guardian angels to earth on the eve of the last Wednesday of the Persian calendar. Bonfires are made to guide the angels while family members sing and jump over the fire

3.18—Anniversary of the Death of President Said Mohamed Cheikh; Comoros

Marks the Death of Said Mohamed Cheikh, the head of the Government of Comoros from 1962 until his death in 1970

3.18—Marien Nqouabi Day; Congo

Honors Marien Nguabi who served as military President of the Republic of the Congo from January 1, 1969 to his death on this date in 1977

3.18—Men's Day & Soldier's Day; Mongolia

3.18—National Flag & Anthem Day; Aruba

Marks the date in 1948 when, during a Netherlands-Surinam-Curacao conference in the Hague, then Aruban leader Shon A. Eman presented a petition in favor of independence

3.19—St. Joseph’s Day; International

An international festival honoring St. Joseph, in which special foods are prepared and some people reenact Mary and Joseph’s search for shelter when Mary was about to give birth to the baby Jesus. It is a weeklong festival in Valencia, Spain, called Fallas de San Jose

3.19—Battle of March; Dominican Republic

Commemorates the first major battle of the Dominican War of Independence fought on this date in 1844 at Azua de Compostela. A force of some 2,200 Dominican troops led by General Pedro Santana defeated an outnumbering force of 10,000 troops of the Haitian Army led by General Souffrand

3.20—Independence Day; Tunisia

Celebrated the day in 1956 when the country was formally recognized as independent from France

3.20—Equinox; International

In the Northern Hemisphere, spring begins today with the vernal equinox. In the Southern Hemisphere, today is the beginning of autumn. The daylight length is virtually the same everywhere on earth today – 12 hours and 8 minutes

3.20—Mawlid al-Nabi; Islamic (Muslim)

Commemorates the prophet Muhammad’s birthday ca. 570. Begins at sundown the previous day

3.20—Ostara; Celtic, Pagan

Ostara occurs on this day in the Northern Hemisphere; in the Southern Hemisphere, today is Mabon

3.20—Legba Zaou; Haiti

A Voodoo celebration that honors Papa Legba with the sacrifice of a black goat

3.20—Petroleum Day; Iran

3.21—Benito Juarez’s Birthday; Mexico

Commemorates the birth in 1806 of the first Mexican president of Indian descent. He is a symbol of liberation and of Mexican resistance to foreign intervention

3.21—International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; International

A day to promote efforts to eradicate racial discrimination worldwide and also to remember the killing of 69 protesters against racial injustice in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960

3.21—Noruz (New Year); Iran

The New Year festival and celebration of the spring equinox. The awakening of natural life and also the coronation of Jamshid, a mythical king, are celebrated. Observed in many countries and by many religions

3.21—Human Rights Day; South Africa

On this day in 1960 the police killed 69 people at Sharpeville who were participating in a protest against the pass laws

3.21—Independence Day; Namibia

Independence from South African mandate in 1990

3.21—Mother’s Day; Egypt & Syria

3.21—National Tree Planting Day; Lesotho

3.21—Youth Day; Tunisia

3.22—Emancipation Day; Puerto Rico

Commemorates the abolition of slavery in 1873

3.22—Holi (Festival of Color); Hindu, Sikh

Celebration of spring throughout Northern India that is a time of fun followed by relaxation. During the morning, brightly colored powder and water are thrown at passerby and the afternoon is spent relaxing in a river or bath

3.22—Arab League Day; Syria

Marks the date in 1945 when a meeting in Cairo ratified the agreement by Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, and Palestine to form the League of Arab States

3.22—Mothering Sunday; United Kingdom

The U.K’s equivalent of Mother’s Day. Originally this holiday was a time for churchgoers to return to their home or “mother” church which became an occasion for family reunions

3.22—Nauryz Meyrami; Kazakhstan

A Kazakh folk celebration of the vernal equinox and the symbolic renewal of nature

3.23—Pakistan Day; Pakistan

Commemorates the anniversary of Pakistan Resolution passed on this date in 1940

3.24—Covenant Day; Northern Marianas

The Covenant is a political document that establishes the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and its unique relationship with the U.S. The importance of this document is acknowledged on this date

3.24—National Tree Planting Day; Uganda

3.25—Independence Day; Greece

A celebration of independence from the Ottomans in 1829

3.25—Anniversary of the Arengo; San Marino

Commemorates the date of the country's first democratic elections

3.25—Commemoration Day of Victims of the Communist Terror; Latvia

On this day in 1949, a total of 43,000 people were deported from Latvia to Serbia

3.25—Waffle Day; Sweden

Coinciding with the start of spring in Sweden and the feast of Annunciation it is customary on this day for families to make waffles

3.25—Lady Day; United Kingdom

The traditional name of the Feast of Annunciation of the Virgin Mary which falls 9 months before Christmas

3.26—Swadhinata Dibash (Independence Day); Bangladesh

Commemorates the declaration of the state of Bangladesh in 1971 and the start of the Liberation War with Pakistan

3.26—Day of Democracy (Martyr's Day); Mali

3.27—Armed Forces Day; Myanmar/Burma

Commemorates the day in 1945 when the Myanmar army rose up against Japanese occupation forces

3.27—Evacuation Day (Victory Day); Angola

3.29—Boganda Day; Central African Republic

Marks the anniversary of the 1959 death of Barthelemy Boganda, the country's first president

3.29—Memorial Day; Madagascar

An occasion dedicated to those who died in the 1947 rebellion by the Malagasy nationalists

3.29—Youth Day; Taiwan

A time when young people are reminded of the heroic accomplishments and sacrifices of the nation's martyrs

3.30—Birthday of Sultan of Kelantan; Malaysia**3.30—Spiritual Baptist Liberation Shouter Day**; Trinidad & Tobago

An annual holiday celebrated to commemorate the repeal in 1951 of the 1917 Shouter Prohibition Ordinance that prohibited the activities of the Shouter or Spiritual Baptist faith

3.31—Culture Day (Pohnpei); Micronesia

A day to celebrate the culture of Pohnpei and Pohnpeians

3.31—Freedom Day; Malta

Commemorates the closure of British military bases in Malta on this date in 1979

3.31—Transfer Day; US Virgin Islands

Commemorates the day in 1917 when the Danish West Indies were formally ceded to the U.S. by Denmark