



Notable Quotable

“You want to be a bit compulsive in your art or craft or whatever you do.”

~ Steve Martin, comedian



March Horoscopes and Birthdays

In astrology, those born between March 1–20 are Pisces’ Fish. Pisces are friendly, wise, and selfless, making them compassionate friends. Their intuitive natures also make them creative artists. Those born from March 21–31 are Rams of Aries. The first sign of the zodiac, Rams are unafraid to forge ahead with passion, zeal, and confidence. Full of optimism and hope, Aries often confront problems head-on.

Ron Howard – March 1, 1954
 Desi Arnaz – March 2, 1917
 Shaquille O’Neal – March 6, 1972
 Wanda Sykes – March 7, 1964
 Bobby Fischer – March 9, 1943
 James Taylor – March 12, 1948
 Simone Biles – March 14, 1997
 Queen Latifah – March 18, 1970
 Spike Lee – March 20, 1957
 Aretha Franklin – March 25, 1942
 Mariah Carey – March 27, 1970
 Cy Young – March 29, 1867
 Warren Beatty – March 30, 1937

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millennials, are being drawn to crafting and other creative hobbies specifically because they can personalize their creations. In a world of mass-produced goods, millennials enjoy making unique items that bear their initials or display symbols or icons that are personally meaningful. And just as younger generations have started taking up crafting, the crafting industry is changing to accommodate a new generation of crafters.

The longtime craft retailer Joann recently opened a new Creator’s Studio store where young crafters gather to take classes, share ideas, and rent machines. Young crafters have also inspired technological breakthroughs in crafting. It is not uncommon for crafters to sketch designs on digital tablets or create pieces on 3D printers. No matter how newfangled the process, there is nothing is more thoughtful or special than a homemade gift.

Only the Strong Survive

Oktoberfest may be the most famous of German beer festivals, but for three weeks in March, in-the-know locals travel to Munich for *Starkbierzeit*, or “strong beer” season. While lesser known than Oktoberfest, *Starkbierzeit* still draws six million visitors. And there are no lagers on tap. “Strong beers” are brews with a minimum alcohol content of 7.5 percent, with some containing as much as 19 percent. These beers were brewed strong on purpose. Back in the 1600s, Paulaner monks

invented *Starkbier* to help them survive the fasting of Lent.

During Lent, the Paulaner monks faced a dilemma. They had to fast and were not allowed to eat food to sustain them through the day. They could drink, however. So, in 1629, the monks decided to brew a beer that was rich in nutrients and high in calories. While the brews were colloquially known as “liquid bread,” the very first beer was named *Salvator*, meaning “savior.”

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Celebrating March

Irish American Heritage Month

Women’s History Month

Optimism Month

Courageous Follower Day
 March 4

International Women’s Day
 March 8

Mothering Sunday
 March 14

St. Patrick’s Day
 March 17

World Poetry Day
 March 21

Passover
 March 27–April 4

International Laundry Folding Day
 March 30

March into the World of Crafting

Crafting is a \$44 billion industry in America, with people of all ages and backgrounds taking part in pastimes like knitting, scrapbooking, quilting, making homemade jewelry, and even reupholstering furniture. As both Craft Month and Knitting and Crochet Month, March boasts a number of crafting holidays, such as International Scrapbooking Day on March 4, Children’s Craft Day on March 14, and Worldwide Quilting Day on March 20. Whether you craft as an outlet for your creative impulses or to earn money on the side, March provides ample opportunities to create something unique. Personalization might be crafting’s most alluring attribute.

Even if two crafters follow the same pattern or set of instructions, no two people will knit the very same scarf or build identical birdhouses. Each and every handcrafted item is a unique reflection of its maker, and these personal touches are often what make handcrafted gifts so special. Crafting has long been considered the domain of older generations, yet younger generations, particularly

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That Was Awkward

If you dread embarrassment, then you won’t be looking forward to March 18, Awkward Moments Day. The day exists to remind us that no one is perfect and we all suffer embarrassments from time to time. Embarrassment is the result of self-focus. When we do something wrong—call someone by the wrong name or make a mistake in public—we tend to

focus only on our transgression. We suffer from what researchers call “empathy neglect.” We are so embarrassed that we forget that others are kind and sympathetic to us. Of course, if someone else made a mistake, we would not shame them. So why should we feel awkward or embarrassed? Today, don’t feel awkward, but instead, feel empathy.

Valencia's Fire and Fury



It often takes months for teams of artisans to create the massive ninots that make Las Fallas famous.

The festival of Las Fallas in Valencia, Spain, is one of Europe's wildest spectacles. Valencians greet the arrival of spring on March 19 with music, humor, religious ecstasy, and a massive bonfire.

The very first Las Fallas celebrations were held by carpenters on the Feast Day of St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters, on March 19. Carpenters would create pyres out of *parots*, which were the wooden scaffolds used to hold the lamps during the darkness of winter. Over time, these parots were dressed in rags and made to resemble local characters. They were lit to both honor St. Joseph and welcome the light of spring. Today, *Las Fallas* refers to not only the festival but also to the fires lit to welcome spring and the massive effigies that are eventually burned on the festival's final day.



Patrick was an atheist during his youth but rediscovered his faith after he was enslaved in Ireland by pirates.

St. Patrick's Day Sins

The very first St. Patrick's Day parade was held in Boston in 1737, and it seems as if we've been wearing green and eating corned beef and cabbage on March 17 ever since. But some of the most beloved St. Patrick's Day traditions are not traditional at all. For example, the Irish don't eat corned beef. It was Irish Americans who began eating beef in the 19th century. In Ireland, Irish bacon or lamb stew is the dish of choice on the holiday. Long before green was

Today's festival of Las Fallas lasts for five days from March 15–19, but the excitement starts to build from the very first of the month. Starting on March 1, booming fireworks shows known as *mascleta* are set off at two o'clock each day. The parots of centuries past have evolved into *ninots*, enormous works of art, satirical floats that lampoon politicians and celebrities. On the morning of March 16, the ninots are put on display all over the city, and prizes are awarded to the best ones. After days on public display, *la Crema* begins on March 19, and all the ninots of Las Fallas are burned. Around ten o'clock, smaller neighborhood floats are set on fire throughout the city. Not until well past midnight is the largest fire set at the city square. Ninots stuffed with fireworks explode with raucous fury, starting a deafening inferno that burns until the dawn.

the color of the Emerald Isle, St. Patrick was associated with the color blue. In 1783, sky blue was the color of the Order of St. Patrick. As the political divide grew between Britain and Ireland, the Irish adopted the color green as a symbol of independence. Perhaps most shocking of all, St. Patrick's real name wasn't Patrick at all, but Maewyn Succat. Nor was he from Ireland but born in Britain under the rule of the Romans. Was St. Maewyn Italian?

Healing by Color



The technical term for using color and light to heal is chromatherapy.

March is Color Therapy Month, a month to recognize that colors have the capacity to heal. The notion that colors have the power to heal dates all the way back to ancient Egypt, where sun-activated solariums constructed with multicolored glass panes were used for therapeutic purposes. Colors evoke different responses. Some colors are stimulating,

others soothing. Colors can influence decision-making, mood, appetite, emotions, and energy levels. The goal of color therapy is to use color and light in ways that ease stress and promote well-being. While some are skeptical, others point to how light therapy is already used to combat seasonal affective disorder. Blue light also treats jaundice in newborns.

No Passport Required

If you've been putting off your dream vacation, March 30, Virtual Vacation Day, offers the chance to visit white sandy beaches, ancient city squares, and luxurious hotels all from the comfort of your computer desk. A virtual vacation means you do not have to spend thousands of dollars or take time off work. Technological advances also make virtual "traveling" more immersive than ever before: it is possible to feel as if you really are standing at the top of Mount Everest, gliding through the canals of Venice, or even blasting off to outer space.



The first VR headset was patented in 1962 by cinematographer Morton Heilig.

Virtual Vacation Day was conceived by noted travel writer Terrance Zepke in 2016. She realized how lucky she was to be able to travel the world and knew that many others did not enjoy the same opportunities. She created Virtual Vacation Day to inspire anyone with an internet connection to explore the wonders of the world. Websites like EarthCam offer free access to live webcams of

Costa Rican volcanoes, Caribbean beaches, and European street corners. Many museums offer virtual tours of their collections, which can easily be accessed via Google Arts and Culture. You can even take a virtual train ride through the Alps or the Rockies. Maybe you'd like to ride the Hogwarts Express from the Harry Potter novels? All aboard Scotland's Jacobite Steam Train as it crosses the Glenfinnan Viaduct!

For a truly immersive experience, don a virtual reality (VR) headset, which provides 360-degree views and realistic sounds of your surroundings. Some of the most beloved names in travel and exploration, such as National Geographic, offer their footage to make the experience feel as lifelike as possible. Other companies, such as ecosphere, Alcove, Flyover Zone, and Escape Now VR, offer virtual access to many of the globe's most important sights and cities. You can even snap a virtual photo as a souvenir!