

August 2026

Pleasant Valley Views

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Celebrating August

Read a Romance Month

Golf Month

Family Fun Month

Root Beer Float Day

August 6

Purple Heart Day

August 7

Bargain Hunting Week

August 10–16

Vinyl Record Day

August 12

Social Security Day

August 14

Senior Citizens Day

August 21

Kiss and Make Up Day

August 25

**Rainbow Bridge
Remembrance Day**

August 28

Eat Outside Day

August 31

Squeeze the Day

August is peak citrus season in more ways than one. While most citrus fruits are harvested in cooler months, their appeal hits full stride in late summer, when heat calls for bright flavors and cold drinks. Lemons, limes, oranges, and grapefruit show up everywhere this time of year—not just in produce bins, but in menus, recipes, and even a few quirky holidays.

The science behind that appeal is simple: Citrus delivers acidity, aroma, and a quick hit of refreshment. A squeeze of lemon can sharpen iced tea, balance grilled foods, or lift a simple glass of water. Limes do the same for marinades and summer desserts, while oranges and grapefruit bring a mix of sweetness and bite that works well chilled. There's also a practical side to citrus in summer. Lemon and lime juices are widely used in food safety and preservation, from keeping sliced fruit from browning to adding acidity that helps control bacterial growth in certain dishes.

August's food calendar leans into that versatility. National Creamsicle Day on August 14 highlights the long-running pairing of orange and vanilla, a combination that dates back to early 20th-century soda fountain culture. The next day, National Lemon Meringue Pie Day celebrates a dessert that balances tart citrus curd with sweet topping—a contrast that has kept it popular for generations. Later in the month, National Lemon Juice Day (August 29) and National Grapefruit Juice Day (August 31) shift the focus to drinks, where citrus continues to dominate.

Citrus has become a quiet trend driver in beverages. Sparkling lemonades, lime-forward mocktails, and grapefruit-infused sodas have all gained ground as alternatives to heavier drinks. Even classic lemonade—arguably the season's signature citrus drink—has seen variations with herbs, berries, and reduced sugar.

In a season defined by heat, citrus stands out for doing exactly what people want: cutting through it. Whether it's a cold glass of lemonade, a slice of pie, or a simple wedge on the rim of a glass, citrus continues to earn its place as one of summer's most reliable flavors.

The Duchess Who Wasn't

Many of us are familiar with the work of the 19th-century Irish writer Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, although we may not even know it. After all, she was the one who first coined the phrase “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” in her book *Molly Bawn*. Perhaps the reason she is not well known is because she first began writing anonymously and later wrote under the pen name “The Duchess.” In honor of this writer and the many others who write under pseudonyms, August 27 is The Duchess Who Wasn't Day.



Hungerford may not have been a real-life duchess, but she was quite a success story. Historical accounts show that she was a master at balancing work and family. In addition to raising six children, she also wrote nearly 60 novels and collections of short stories, as well as newspaper articles. Her fiction was typical of the Victorian time period: light and romantic, entertaining and intensely popular in Ireland, England, and abroad in America. Indeed, Ireland's foremost man of letters, James Joyce, even referenced Hungerford by name in his masterwork *Ulysses*.

What compels a writer to use a pseudonym? Early female authors sometimes wrote as men in order to have their work equally judged. Some use pseudonyms to write fiction (such as crime or horror) that may be less sophisticated or serious than the award-winning literary type. Most of all, writers use pseudonyms to place some distance from earlier work. For example, J. K. Rowling, the world famous writer of the *Harry Potter* children's novels about wizards and magic, wrote a series of new books using the name Robert Galbraith. Why? To find a new adult audience. Agatha Christie, that master of mystery and suspense, wrote under the name Mary Westmacott when she turned to writing romance novels. Perhaps the most famous pseudonym of all is Mark Twain. Before Samuel Langhorne Clemens took the name Mark Twain, he also wrote under the names Josh and Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass. But truly, the more famous one becomes, the harder it is to remain anonymous.

Bubble Breakthrough

What do penicillin, the microwave, potato chips, and bubble gum all have in common? They were invented by accident. Walter Diemer was an accountant for the Fleer Chewing Gum Company in Philadelphia. When he wasn't working on the books, he spent his free time mixing new recipes for bubble gum. The problem was that current gums were too sticky and would break apart too easily. He wanted to invent a gum that was less sticky and could be blown into a perfect bubble. In 1928, Diemer mixed a successful batch but failed to write down the recipe. He spent four months trying to duplicate it. Then, in August of that year, he succeeded. The only food coloring available at the factory was pink, so that became the color of Diemer's 300-pound batch of bubble gum. Pink has been the standard color ever since. When he brought the first 100 pieces to a candy store, he priced his gum at one penny apiece and sold out in one day. To help sell his gum, Diemer taught store owners how to blow bubbles so they could teach their customers. The Fleer Chewing Gum Company called Diemer's gum “Dubble Bubble,” and in the first year of production, it earned \$1.5 million.

Hidden in Plain Sight



If you believe that one person's trash is another person's treasure, then you'll be happy to hear that the second Saturday in August is Garage Sale Day. Some lucky folks do find rare treasures at garage sales. In 1989, a man bought an ugly painting for four dollars at a flea market because he liked the frame. Imagine his surprise when under the painting he found an original printed copy of the Declaration of Independence that sold for \$2.4 million in 1991. Then there's the story of the scrap metal dealer who found a Russian Fabergé egg, which was one of only 50 created as an Easter gift for Alexander III's wife, Empress Maria Feodorovna. Valued at more than \$30 million, that is one valuable “nest egg.”

When Earth Roared

August brings two very ominous anniversaries: the cataclysmic volcanic eruptions of Mount Vesuvius in Italy and Krakatoa in Indonesia.



The eruption of Mount Vesuvius might be the most famous in history. On August 24 in the year AD 79, the volcano began to erupt. Two authors, an uncle and nephew, described the events firsthand. Pliny the Elder, living across the bay from Vesuvius, noticed a cloud of ash spewing from the mountaintop. He sent ships to investigate, but they turned back due to a rain of flaming rocks. Pliny the Elder himself ventured closer to investigate. Sadly, he died the next day, likely from inhaling toxic gases.

Pliny the Elder's 18-year-old nephew, Pliny the Younger, also witnessed the eruption. He described people climbing over waves of ash to escape. He also wrote of how a larger eruption the next day devastated the region. Ash mixed with rain created a sort of concrete that blanketed the town of Pompeii, perfectly preserving its contents for hundreds of years.

Rumblings began on the uninhabited island of Krakatoa as early as May 20, 1883. Over the next weeks, the rumblings grew until the eruption began on August 26. The volcano exploded at 1 p.m., sending ash 20 miles into the air. The next morning, four massive eruptions occurred, the last of which produced the loudest sound ever recorded on Earth. The sound waves ruptured the eardrums of sailors 40 miles away. The blast itself was heard 3,000 miles away.

Enormous flocs of volcanic rock plunged into the ocean, triggering massive tsunamis that wiped out hundreds of nearby coastal villages. Waves reached as far away as South America. So much gas was pumped into the atmosphere that global temperatures dropped over 2°F. Weather patterns did not normalize until 1888. Krakatoa left no doubt that volcanic eruptions are some of nature's most awesome events.

The Great Chicken Dash

It's that time of year again. Every August, plucky competitors converge at the Barley Mow Inn in Bonsall in Derbyshire, England, for the World Hen Racing Championship. While the race in Bonsall has been a community mainstay for 35 years, hen racing as a festive and lighthearted competition between local villages has endured for over a century.

Bonsall hosts a 22-yard track. Hens are given three minutes to cross the finish line. Dozens of hens compete in various heats. Don't have a hen? Rentals are available for those who want to join in the fun. The more serious types are known to train their chickens. These days, organizers typically discourage anything that could stress the hens. The event leans more toward gentle encouragement, like calling the birds or using food, rather than loud, chaotic tactics, like banging pots and pans. These strategies have proven effective, and close finishes are not uncommon in modern races. Organizers proudly note the event's enduring popularity.

Rolling Through History



One of the more striking holidays in August is Bowling Day, which falls on the second Saturday of the month. It's easy to see why more than 60 million people go bowling each year—it appeals to all ages and genders, and evidence suggests that it has been played for thousands of years. British anthropologist Sir Flinders Petrie, upon excavating a tomb in Egypt, discovered a set of children's toys that dates to 3200 BC and looks like a bowling set. A form of bowling was so popular in 14th-century England that King Edward III outlawed the game so that troops would better focus on training. Bowling even debuted as a demonstration sport during the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, though it has not yet been included in the Olympic program.

Turn Up the Strange



New York City composer Patrick Grant founded International Strange Music Day, celebrated on August 24. As a composer of music that combines very different styles and rhythms, he founded the holiday as a way to urge people to listen to music they have never

heard before. Grant believes that diverse musical interests can lessen prejudice and instill harmony and understanding. Not merely an individual artistic expression, music can bring communities together. Dr. Thomas Currie of the University of Exeter says that music is a kind of “social glue.”

Dr. Currie’s explanation clearly resonates with the throat singers of Central Asia. The Tuva people are trained from childhood to use the folds of the throat as a sort of echo chamber. This cultural singing is an important part of Tuvan identity. As hunters and herders who live on the vast plains, the Tuva people incorporate sounds from the natural world, such as animals, howling wind, and gurgling streams, into their songs.

Another collaborative type of music is Gamelan from Indonesia. Gamelan is actually a percussion ensemble, where various members strike different instruments of a large musical apparatus, including gongs, drums, xylophone, and metallophone. Other members play the bamboo flute, bow or pluck strings, or even sing. The bright and metallic sound is uniquely rich and complex. Gamelan is traditionally considered sacred, with each instrument guided by spirits.

But what of strange music that comes from no instrument at all? In 2008, people in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Canada, the U.S., and the UK claimed to hear strange trumpeting sounds coming from the air above. Some found the noise annoying. Others found it scary. Scientists speculate that these sounds came from distant industrial or construction noise carried by the atmosphere or from natural sources, such as small earthquakes or waves striking cliffs. It seems Earth itself celebrates International Strange Music Day.

August Birthdays

In astrology, those born between August 1 and 22 are Leo’s Lions. Mixing strength, ambition, creativity, and a flair for the dramatic, it is no wonder that the king of the jungle is Leo’s mascot. Whether it’s in Hollywood or in the home, Leos accomplish their goals. Those born between August 23 and 31 are Virgos. Virginal Virgos are considered shy, pure of spirit, and self-sufficient. They take incredible pride in their work, show diligent habits, and are well respected in their circles.

Herman Melville (novelist) – August 1, 1819
Barack Obama (president) – August 4, 1961
Lucille Ball (comedienne) – August 6, 1911
Dustin Hoffman (actor) – August 8, 1937
Danielle Steel (novelist) – August 14, 1947
Roberto Clemente (athlete) – August 18, 1934
Gene Kelly (actor) – August 23, 1912
Mother Teresa (saint) – August 26, 1910
Ingrid Bergman (actress) – August 29, 1915

Where Buses Beat the Jam



On August 20, 1989, stage two of the O-Bahn Busway opened in Adelaide, South Australia. This rapid-transit bus system was Australia’s ingenious response to fighting traffic congestion in the fast-growing region.

First opened in March 1986, the O-Bahn is a cross between a railway and a busway. Instead of a train track, buses run on a dedicated concrete guideway. Specially outfitted O-Bahn buses move from city streets into tunnels that lead to the busway, where they carry more than 35,000 passengers per day unimpeded at up to 55 mph over the nearly eight-mile length. Each year, drivers keen to avoid traffic attempt to drive their cars onto the O-Bahn, but the track’s design prevents ordinary cars from navigating it. They have to be removed from the track by crane.