

THE MONTHLY GAZETTE

“December’s wintery breath is already clouding the pond, frosting the pane, obscuring summer’s memory.”

~ John Geddes, *A Familiar Rain*



Birthstone – Turquoise



Turquoise has been a valued gemstone for thousands of years. Archaeologists have discovered turquoise jewelry on the mummified bodies of queens in Egyptian tombs and in ancient burial sites in Argentina, Peru, Mexico, and South America. The Incas commonly used the stone to craft beads and figurines, while the Aztecs used it to

make pendants and ritual masks. The Chinese were carving it for decorative art over 3,000 years ago.

Native Americans called the stone *chal-cui-hui-tal*, meaning “the highest and most valued thing in the world.” They believed the stone protected them from harm. Upon seeing a crack in their turquoise stone, they would say, “The stone took it”—that is, the turquoise took the force of a blow for me.

Turquoise is also often used as a love charm. Some of Shakespeare’s characters gave the stone as a gift to earn the affection of others. In Russia, the stone is commonly used in wedding rings.

Special Days

Hanukkah Begins at Sundown
December 2

Winter Solstice
December 21

Christmas
December 25

Boxing Day (UK and Canada)
December 26

Kwanzaa Begins
December 26

New Year’s Eve
December 31

Flower of the Month – Narcissus

Narcissus, more commonly known as the daffodil, is a beautiful flower that usually blooms in springtime. Its lovely, delicate-looking white petals and yellowish-orange center make it a gardening favorite. Most believe that its name comes from the Greek myth of Narcissus, a young man who was so taken by his own reflection in a pool of water that he fell in and drowned. In this story, a daffodil sprang up from the very spot where he had sat. Since the narcissus was often used for a medicine, others believe that the name is derived from the Greek word *narke*, which means “numbness.”

Although it may seem odd that the winter month of December has a spring bloomer for its flower, it makes a lot of sense when you consider that the daffodil symbolizes rebirth—in this case, the “birth” of the new year. The Chinese believe that if you succeed in forcing a narcissus to bloom on New Year’s Day, you have secured good fortune for the whole year.



Birthday Colors

December 1–2: Cream

People born under this color are active, sporty, and competitive. They don't hold grudges and adjust easily to new situations.

December 3–12: Aqua

Aqua people can change their feelings suddenly and easily. They are truthful and generally believe in other people. They like adventure and love to travel.

December 13–22: Lime

If you were born lime, you appear calm even when you are in a stressful situation. You can get jealous (lime

green with envy), but you are devoted. You have the kind of personality that makes everyone trust and like you.

December 23: Olive

Olive people are cheerful, warm, kind, and lighthearted. They seem to get along well with friends and family.

December 24–31: Purple

Those born purple are mysterious, popular, and unselfish. They are curious and easily interested in things.



December Full Moon

Known as the cold moon, the long night moon, or the wolf moon, for Native Americans it was a symbol of coming full circle. As we reach the end of the year and look forward to the beginning of a new year, take some time this month to reflect and appreciate the past year. What are your hopes for the coming year?

December Zodiacs

Sagittarius (The Archer)
December 1–21

Capricorn (The Sea Goat)
December 22–31

December is the twelfth month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. The ancient Romans initially made December the tenth month of the year, but later, January and February were added to the calendar, making December the final month of the year. In the northern hemisphere, this month has the shortest daylight hours of the year, and it is one of the coldest months of the winter season. Also, did you know that December starts on the same day of the week as September and ends on the same day as April every year?

Around the World

How do you say *December* in different languages?

- Italian – Dicembre
- Spanish – Diciembre
- Portuguese – Dezembro
- German – Dezember
- French – Décembre

• Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Flemish, Dutch, and English – December



December Birthdays

- Bette Midler (entertainer) – December 1, 1945
- Dave Brubeck (musician) – December 6, 1920
- Eli Whitney (inventor) – December 8, 1765
- Judi Dench (actress) – December 9, 1934
- Emily Dickinson (writer) – December 10, 1830
- Rita Moreno (actress) – December 11, 1931
- Dave Clark (musician) – December 15, 1942
- Jane Austen (author) – December 16, 1775
- Ty Cobb (ballplayer) – December 18, 1886
- Barbara Billingsley (actress) – December 22, 1915
- Humphrey Bogart (actor) – December 25, 1899
- Denzel Washington (actor) – December 28, 1954
- Tiger Woods (golfer) – December 30, 1975
- Donna Summer (singer) – December 31, 1948



What's Lucky in December?

- Lucky Colors: Blue and Green
- Lucky Days: Tuesday and Saturday
- Lucky Numbers: 2 and 8
- Lucky Letters: D and R
- Lucky Animal: Reindeer