

# EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

SLOW COOKER RECIPES

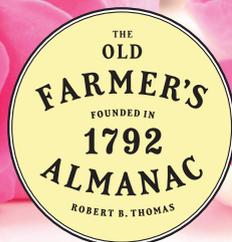
THE ALMANAC IN AMERICA

HOUSEHOLD USES FOR STALE WHITE BREAD

A ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE—OR IS IT?



FEBRUARY 2017



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Is a Rose—or Is It?

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Humor Me  
*Grins and groans from  
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See what we have  
in store for our  
March issue!



# THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

## HOLIDAYS, HISTORY, AND FOLKLORE

### ALMANAC 225TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE

The following excerpts are from the February Right-Hand Calendar Page of The 1793 [Old] Farmer's Almanac:

*Bleak o'er the plain the winds do blow,  
Hurls round and round the powder'd snow:  
Of purest white the show'r descends,  
And all its horrors winter pends.*

**February 11:**  
**G. Washington born, 1732**  
(Editor's note: This was George Washington's birth date according to the Julian calendar, which was in effect when he was born. The Gregorian calendar was adopted by Britain and her colonies in 1752, which changed Washington's birth date to February 22.)

- This is a short month, and you must improve your time.



### Moon View

February's full Moon, the **Full Snow Moon**, occurs on the 10th, at 7:33 P.M. EST.

#### Seasonal Note

February 10: A penumbral lunar eclipse will occur between 5:32 P.M. and 9:55 P.M. EST. It will be visible in North America.



TAP FOR MORE MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT THE FULL SNOW MOON

### FEBRUARY'S BIRTHSTONE: AMETHYST

- This gem is a form of quartz; it can range from a pale lilac color to a deep, rich purple.

- The name is based on a Greek myth that speaks of a nymph named Amethyst who was inadvertently turned into white stone; in remorse, the Greek god Bacchus poured wine over her to turn her a beautiful purple.



- The amethyst was thought to prevent intoxication and keep its wearer thinking sharply. It was worn by English royalty in the Middle Ages.



TAP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FEBRUARY'S BIRTHSTONE

### Folklore Fun

*It is better to see a troop of wolves than a fine February.*

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



## FEBRUARY 1: FOUND AND FAMED

On this day in 1709, two British ships spotted a signal fire on the island of Más a Tierra, thought to be uninhabited, 400 miles off the west coast of Chile. There they found, in good health, Alexander Selkirk, who had been living there in complete isolation for more than 4 years.

Selkirk, a Scot, had been sailing master on the privateer ship *Cinque Ports*, which was commanded by a reckless and violent captain. In September 1704, fearing for his life, Selkirk demanded that he be dropped off at the nearest island. Expecting to be rescued soon, he brought with him only a musket and powder, a Bible, some clothing, bedding, tobacco, and some tools.

As it turned out, he made the right decision. *Cinque Ports* sank, leaving only seven survivors, who were thrown into a Peruvian jail. However, Selkirk became master of the very vessel that had rescued him, returning to Scotland and his family to stay for some years before joining the Royal Navy. His account of his time on the island was later adapted by Daniel Defoe into the famous novel, *Robinson Crusoe*.



## FEBRUARY 10: MAKE IT CLEAR

On this day in 1967, the U.S. Constitution's 25th amendment—which clearly defines how the U.S. vice president is to take the place of a U.S. president who becomes unable to perform his or her duties—was ratified. In 1841, after the death of William Henry Harrison, many questioned the legitimacy of Vice President John Tyler's impending presidency because there was no procedure clearly laid out in the Constitution.

Six more successions took place after the deaths of presidents before John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. During the aftermath of his shooting, there were moments of chaos as rumors spread that the vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, had also been wounded, leaving no one to officially take over the presidency.

Even after it was confirmed that Johnson was unharmed, and after he was sworn into office about 2 hours later, the dire need for a concrete succession process finally came to the attention of Congress.



## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These February dates, deemed to be propitious in astrology, are based on the astrological passage of the Moon. However, consider all indicators before making any major decisions. —*Celeste Longacre*

### PERSONAL

Begin diet to lose weight: 12, 17  
 Begin diet to gain weight: 4, 27  
 Cut hair to encourage growth: 3, 4, 27  
 Cut hair to discourage growth: 14, 15  
 Have dental care: 11–13  
 Quit smoking: 12, 17  
 Wean children: 12, 17

### AROUND THE HOUSE

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 16–18  
 End projects: 25  
 Start projects: 27

### OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 21, 22  
 Go camping: 19, 20  
 Go fishing: 1–10, 26–28  
 Set posts or pour concrete: 21, 22

### IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 1, 2, 28  
 Graft or pollinate: 7, 8  
 Prune to encourage growth: 1, 2, 28  
 Prune to discourage growth: 19, 20  
 Plant aboveground crops: 7, 8, 26, 27  
 Plant belowground crops: 16, 17  
 Harvest aboveground crops: 3, 4  
 Harvest belowground crops: 11–13

### ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 16, 17  
 Castrate animals: 23–25  
 Cut hay: 1, 2, 28  
 Set eggs: 5, 6, 13, 14  
 Slaughter livestock: 16, 17  
 Wean animals: 12, 17



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the February dates shown in the Moon's Astrological Place calendar below to find the best days for the following garden tasks:

**PLANT, TRANSPLANT, AND GRAFT:** Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, or Taurus

**HARVEST:** Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Gemini, or Aquarius

**BUILD/FIX FENCES OR GARDEN BEDS:** Capricorn

**CONTROL INSECT PESTS, PLOW, AND WEED:** Aries, Gemini, Leo, Sagittarius, or Aquarius

**PRUNE:** Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius. During a waxing Moon, pruning encourages growth; during a waning Moon, it discourages growth.

### THE MOON'S ASTROLOGICAL PLACE IN FEBRUARY

**1** Aries

**2** Aries

**3** Taurus

**4** Taurus

**5** Gemini

**6** Gemini

**7** Cancer

**8** Cancer

**9** Leo

**10** Leo

**11** Virgo

**12** Virgo

**13** Virgo

**14** Libra

**15** Libra

**16** Scorpio

**17** Scorpio

**18** Scorpio

**19** Sagittarius

**20** Sagittarius

**21** Capricorn

**22** Capricorn

**23** Aquarius

**24** Aquarius

**25** Aquarius

**26** Pisces

**27** Pisces

**28** Aries



TAP FOR  
MERCURY IN  
RETROGRADE  
DATES



**APP EXTRA!**  
TAP FOR  
FEBRUARY  
MOON PHASES

## **MERCURY IN RETROGRADE**

Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion retrograde motion.

Mercury's retrograde periods can cause our plans to go awry. However, this is an excellent time to reflect on the past. Intuition is high during these periods, and coincidences can be extraordinary.

When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

**Mercury will be retrograde  
from April 9–May 3, August 13–  
September 5, and December 3–23.**

*–Celeste Longacre*

“Everything you need to plan your vegetable garden”



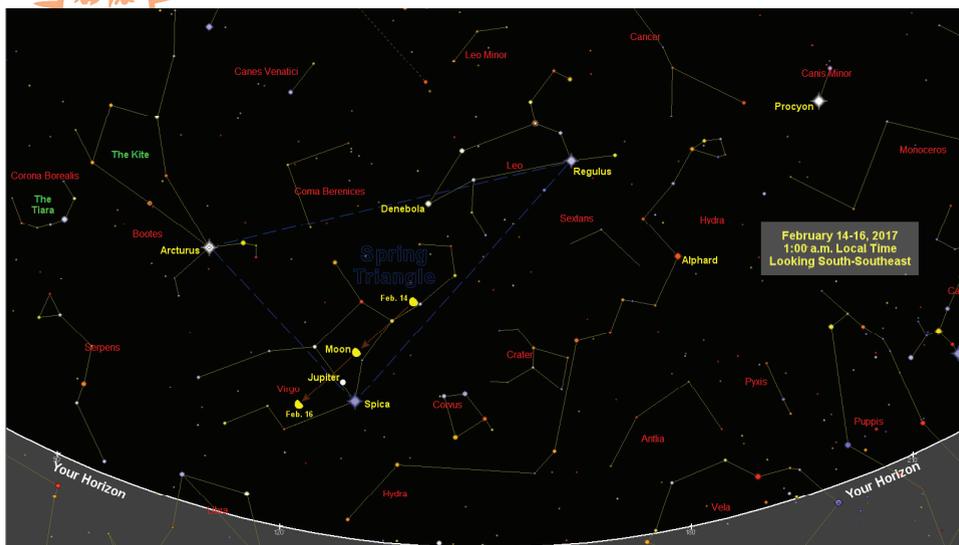
## Plan Your Garden the Easy Way

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## OUR SPEEDY MOON

**T**he night sky is always in motion. There is the daily motion caused by Earth rotating on its axis every 24 hours. There is the annual motion resulting from our planet revolving around the Sun once a year. The planets move, too, as they journey around the Sun. Mercury is the planet with the shortest “year,” zipping once around the Sun every 88 days. Neptune takes its time, with a “year” that’s 165 times the length of our year.

Then there is our speedy Moon, a world of superlatives. She (the Moon is often “she”) is by far the brightest of all nighttime celestial objects. She’s closer as well, less than a quarter million miles away. When we gaze at the Moon, it’s the same Moon looked upon by Plato, Shakespeare, and Einstein. And one more remarkable Moon fact: Human beings have actually BEEN there—something you can’t say about any other object in the sky.

The Moon revolves around Earth every 29 days or so. To accomplish this feat, she has to move fast. We don’t often

**APP EXTRA!**  
TAP TO GET  
A PRINTABLE  
FEBRUARY  
SKY MAP

**APP EXTRA!**  
TAP TO  
FOLLOW  
OHIOAN JEFF  
DETRAY’S SKY  
ADVENTURES



notice how quickly the Moon moves from night to night, but when she's close to bright planets or stars, her rapid motion becomes readily apparent. On February 14, 15, and 16, we're offered a nice opportunity to observe our speedy Moon as she races past both a bright planet and a bright star. The action takes place in the southeast sky, and you must stay up past midnight for the best view.

**I**n the first hours of February 14, find the Moon and note her location well above the planet Jupiter and the bright star Spica. Also, notice the phase (apparent shape) of the Moon—a fat “gibbous” shape but less than full.

One night later, Jupiter and Spica will remain exactly where they were, but the Moon will be much closer to them, forming a close trio of objects. The Moon will appear to have shrunk a bit, still gibbous but less so.

Just 24 hours later, on the 16th, our Moon will be below Jupiter and Spica, having zoomed past them and become even thinner. On subsequent nights, the Moon will continue to race farther down and to the left.

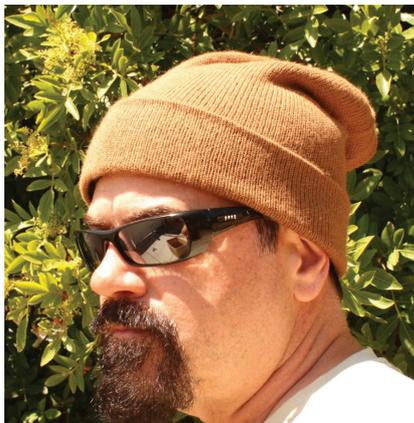
While you are enduring what may be some freezing nights of Moon watching, take consolation in the fact that spring is not far away. In fact, the aforementioned star Spica in Virgo, the Virgin, forms one corner of the so-called Spring Triangle. The other two stars in the triangle are Arcturus in Boötes, the Herdsman, and Regulus in Leo, the Lion. Over the next couple of months, the Spring Triangle will rise higher each night, and the three constellations will dominate the southern sky.

**S**tretching across much of our map is the constellation Hydra, the Water Snake. It's the largest of the 88 constellations, but the bright Moon can wash out most of its stars except for Alphard at the snake's heart. However, if you wait until the last week of February, the Moon will be new (dark from our viewpoint), and the long, sinuous body of Hydra will be easier to see.

Careful readers of Harry Potter may note that three star names on this month's map—Regulus, Arcturus, and Alphard—are also used as names of people in the books. In fact, author J. K. Rowling utilized dozens of celestial names for characters in the series.

—Jeff DeTray

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GARDENING

*A Rose Is a Rose Is a Rose—*  
**OR IS IT?**

*When it comes to roses, consider growing  
more than hybrid teas.*



**O**ften appearing in poems, songs, paintings, and literature, the rose by many a name is oh-so-sweet. Steeped in historical significance and popular for centuries, roses convey our most heartfelt sentiments—a bouquet commemorating Valentine’s Day is annual proof that the classic long-stem rose continues to impassion us.

When thinking about roses, most people envision hybrid teas, which are typically grown for their fragrance (although a surprising

number of them are fragrance-free) and for cutting. However, being susceptible to disease, the hybrid tea is arguably the “fussiest” of its genus. Many seasoned rosarians opt to grow hardier forms, such as old-fashioned and “landscape” roses.

Sometimes referred to as “heirloom” or “old garden roses,” old-fashioned roses are the predecessors of today’s roses—some even date back to the time of the Roman Empire. These are typically fragrant and offer a delicate, somewhat subtle,

beauty. A diverse and hardy group, well suited for colder climates, heirlooms include albas, bourbons, centifolias, damasks, gallicas, noisettes, and rugosas, among others.

**L**andscape” roses are shrub roses that have a strong horizontal growth habit and roots that grow along the ground—they can be thought of as short ramblers. Members of this group are ideal for mass plantings such as hedges, and, because they root themselves, they are a good choice

## GARDENING

for preventing erosion on steep slopes. An en masse planting of repeat bloomers also adds depth and a bit of drama to the landscape.

**U**nlike hybrid teas, the old-fashioned and landscape varieties are generally not plagued by the primary diseases affecting roses: black spot, powdery mildew, and rust. None of these is inherently fatal, but all can severely compromise the health of a plant and are certainly unsightly. Black spot is particularly difficult to control, and it is highly contagious from shrub to shrub. In fact, it can cause a rose to drop all of its foliage, resulting in denuded canes that can no longer photosynthesize.

However, if you simply can't resist hybrid teas, the best defense against black spot and its comrades in crime is to buy disease-resistant varieties. Rose breeders have been hybridizing for this characteristic for decades, so there is a profusion of options from which to



TAP FOR A LIST OF  
DISEASE-RESISTANT  
ROSES

## DISEASE-RESISTANT ROSES

Here are a number of roses that perform exceptionally well in most gardens:

## OLD-FASHIONED ROSES

There's a reason that the old garden roses are still grown today—they are extremely hardy and healthy and often very fragrant.

*Rosa* 'Apothecary's Rose' (gallica, light red, fragrant)

R. 'Ballerina' (hybrid musk, blush)

R. 'Blanc Double de Coubert' (rugosa, white, highly fragrant)

R. 'Duchesse de Montebello' (gallica, soft pink, fragrant)

R. 'The Fairy' (polyantha, pink)

R. 'Madame Alfred Carrière' (noisette, pearl pink, highly fragrant)

## LANDSCAPE ROSES

Landscape or "shrub" roses are often overlooked in favor of hybrid teas, but they make excellent additions to a garden, as they tend to bloom throughout the growing season.

*Rosa* 'Carefree Celebration' (pink-orange, bushy habit)

R. 'Carefree Spirit' (red, glossy foliage, bushy habit)

R. 'Fire Meidiland' (red, glossy foliage, low-growing)

R. 'White Out' (white, dark green foliage, bushy habit)

## HYBRID TEAS

There's no denying the appeal of hybrid teas. Choose disease-resistant varieties even if it means sometimes sacrificing fragrance—healthy shrubs loaded with blooms are reward enough!

*Rosa* 'Auguste Renoir' (medium pink, highly fragrant)

R. 'Electron' (medium pink, highly fragrant)

R. 'Frederic Mistral' (soft pink, highly fragrant)

R. 'Love and Peace' (yellow and pink, slightly fragrant)

R. 'Olympiad' (red)

R. 'Sheer Bliss' (pearl white)

R. 'Tiffany' (medium pink, highly fragrant)

R. 'Voodoo' (multicolor yellow, peach, salmon, apricot, and red)

## GARDENING

choose. However, there is a catch: Disease-resistant roses are rarely fragrant; fragrance is a characteristic passed on from a recessive gene, which is often lost during hybridization.

Rose breeders are constantly trying to hybridize for both qualities—there are a few such roses on the market, but the majority of “bulletproof” hybrid teas are not going to perfume your garden. And that’s okay! There are other flowering shrubs up to the task.

Choose roses that you know will be healthy—they will add beauty to your garden with their glossy foliage and bright blooms. Leave fragrance to the lilacs.

**F**or those of you who are ready to diversify your garden roses, consider David Austin English roses, the Knockout family of roses, and the Carefree rose series. Robust in health and prolific bloomers, roses from these groups are sure to please. Of the

David Austins, ‘The Mayflower’, ‘Winchester Cathedral’, and ‘Graham Thomas’ are exceptional. As for Knockouts, you really can’t go wrong with any of them; The Blushing Knockout, The Double Knockout, and The Sunny Knockout are all stunners. And for those mass plantings, go with Carefree Delight or Carefree Beauty.

The truth is, once you open up your mind to the idea of a garden sans hybrid teas, there are roses as far as the eye can see (and the nose can smell)!



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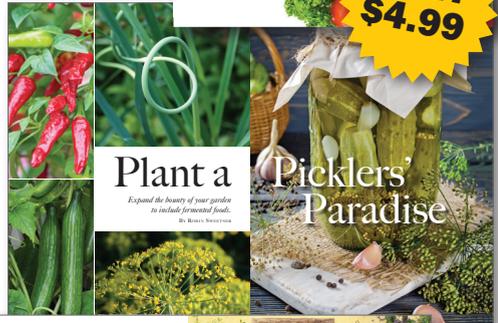
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# HOUSEHOLD USES **FOR STALE** WHITE **BREAD**

I've baked my own whole-grain bread for more than 40 years (the kind food writers call "rustic"). I don't think that I've ever bought a loaf of bread.

Yet store-bought white bread somehow occasionally puts in an appearance here, and I will say that it serves a number of surprising household uses that don't involve consuming it. Almost worth keeping a loaf on hand in the freezer.

## LIVING NATURALLY

**MAKE A POULTICE:** Soaking a piece of bread in hot milk is a renowned folk remedy for bringing an unripe boil or pimple to a head. Press any excess liquid from the bread, place it over the affected area, and cover with a clean cloth. Remove when the bread poultice gets cold. Repeat as necessary.

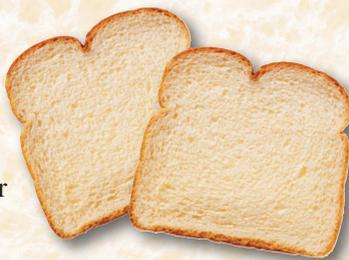
**REMOVE SPLINTERS AND STINGERS:** Soak a piece of bread in cool milk, press out the milk, apply the bread to the affected area, and bind it with an adhesive bandage strip for a few hours or overnight.

**PREVENT TEARS WHILE CUTTING ONIONS:** Spear a piece of stale bread with your knife and slide it up to the end of the blade near the handle. The bread absorbs most of the “vapors.”

**COLLECT SLIVERS OF BROKEN GLASS:** Reach for a chunk of soft bread after you’ve swept and vacuumed the big shards of a broken glass. Use the bread to

pat down the area to collect those tiny slivers that remain. Wear rubber gloves; dispose of the bread in the trash when you’ve finished.

**CLEAN A COFFEE GRINDER:** Pinch off three or four small pieces of stale bread, grind them up in your grinder, dump the crumbs, and wipe the inside of the grinder clean.



**CLEAN OILY FINGERPRINTS FROM PHOTOS:** Ball up a slice of stale bread and swipe gently.

**CLEAN SMUDGES AND CRAYON OR PENCIL MARKS FROM WALLS:** In a pinch, a ball of stale bread can work. Rub gently—one direction only.

**BUTTER CORN ON THE COB:** Spread butter on a slice of bread and rub or wrap

it around the steaming hot cob. No mess, no wasted butter.

**SOFTEN BROWN SUGAR, COOKIES, AND OTHER BAKED GOODS:** Just add a slice of bread to the sugar or baked goods and seal in a metal canister or ceramic jar.

**ALLEVIATE STRONG COOKING ODORS:** Remove the smell (and most of the taste) from scorched food by adding a slice of bread to the pot and covering it for a few minutes. Likewise, adding a piece of bread on top of broccoli, cabbage, or other strong-smelling veggies as they steam will keep the odors from escaping into the kitchen air.

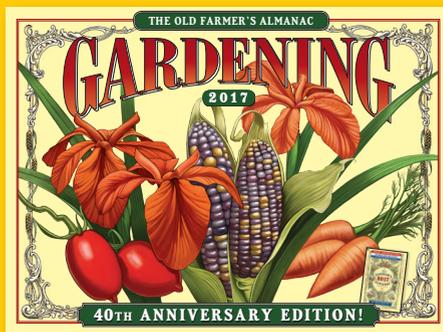
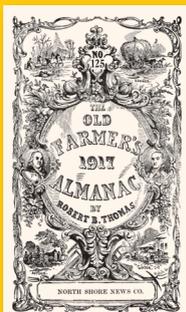
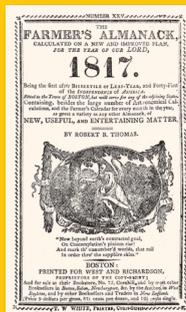
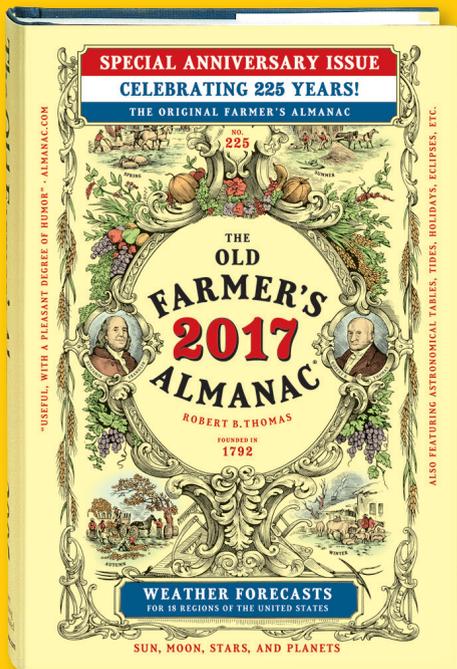
**REMOVE GREASE:** When cooking greasy foods, add a chunk or two of bread to the pan or broiler pan to absorb the grease.

—Margaret Boyles



TAP TO READ MORE OF MARGARET BOYLES'S POSTS IN HER “LIVING NATURALLY” BLOG

# SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



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FOOD

# Slow Cooker Recipes

Forget about fast food—slow food is where it's at! Using a slow cooker allows you to have home-style meals even with a busy schedule. If you haven't discovered the joy of slow cooking yet, try these recipes and find out what you've been missing.

FOOD

# Beef Burgundy



 TAP FOR  
RECIPE



SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

## BEEF BURGUNDY

2 pounds boneless beef chuck, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1/3 cup all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup olive oil  
2 beef bouillon cubes  
2 cups hot water  
1/2 pound small white onions  
4 carrots, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1-1/2 cups burgundy wine  
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste  
2 teaspoons sugar  
1 bay leaf  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter  
1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced  
egg noodles or rice (optional)

Coat beef with flour.

In a pot over high heat, warm olive oil. Add meat and brown quickly. Transfer meat to a slow cooker.

Dissolve bouillon cubes in the hot water and add to slow cooker. Add onions, carrots, garlic, burgundy, tomato paste, sugar, bay leaf, and thyme. Stir gently. Cover and cook on low for 5 to 7 hours.

Just before serving, melt butter in a pan over medium heat and cook mushrooms until golden. Add to slow cooker. Remove bay leaf.

Serve over egg noodles or rice, if desired.

**Makes 4 to 6 servings.**

FOOD



TAP FOR  
RECIPE

# Creamy Chicken Tacos

PHOTO: SARAH PERREULT

## CREAMY CHICKEN TACOS

3 boneless chicken breast halves (about 1-1/2 pounds)

1 container (10 or 12 ounces) cream cheese

1 packet taco seasoning

1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained and rinsed

1 can (14.5 ounces) fire-roasted tomatoes with chiles

taco shells

lettuce, for topping (optional)

shredded cheese, for topping (optional)

Place chicken in slow cooker.

In a bowl, completely mix together cream cheese and taco seasoning. Add to slow cooker on top of chicken. Add black beans and tomatoes. Cover and cook on low for 5 to 7 hours.

Remove chicken and shred with two forks. Ladle out some of the juice from the slow cooker. Return chicken to slow cooker and stir.

Serve in hard or soft taco shells with lettuce, cheese, or other taco toppings, if desired.

**Makes 4 to 6 servings.**



SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

FOOD

 TAP FOR RECIPE

# Jambalaya

## JAMBALAYA

2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

1 cup chopped green pepper

1/2 cup freshly chopped parsley

2 tablespoons minced garlic

1 bay leaf

1 can (15 ounces) diced tomatoes

5 pounds skinless chicken thighs

1 pound smoked sausage, sliced lengthwise, then cut crosswise into half-moon pieces

1 pound chicken Andouille sausage, sliced lengthwise, then cut crosswise into half-moon pieces

2-1/4 cups long-grain rice

1 tablespoon freshly chopped thyme

1 teaspoon kosher salt

freshly ground black pepper, to taste

hot sauce, to taste

1 pound raw, peeled, and deveined shrimp

Spray slow cooker with nonstick spray.

In a bowl, mix onions, celery, peppers, parsley, garlic, bay leaf, and tomatoes.

Spread onion mixture over bottom of slow cooker. Tuck chicken thighs into the mixture. Top with chopped sausages. Add 1/2 cup of water, cover, and cook on high for 4 hours.

Remove cover and stir in rice, thyme, salt, black pepper, and hot sauce. Cover and cook for an additional 50 minutes, adding shrimp for the last 15 minutes.

**Makes 10 to 12 servings.**

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

# Raisin Bread Pudding

 TAP FOR  
RECIPE

## RAISIN BREAD PUDDING

4 cups roughly cut-up cubes of cinnamon swirl raisin bread

4 eggs, well beaten

2 cups milk

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Generously butter slow cooker. Put bread cubes into it.

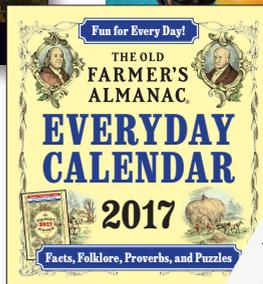
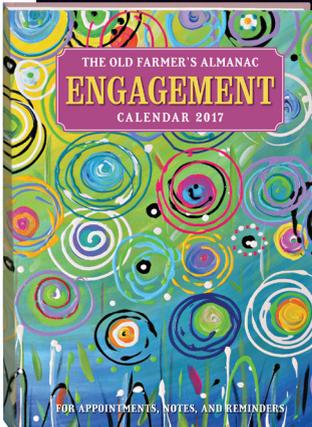
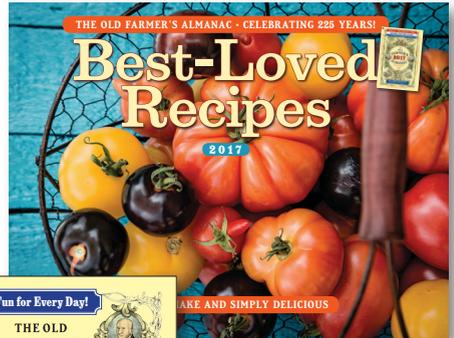
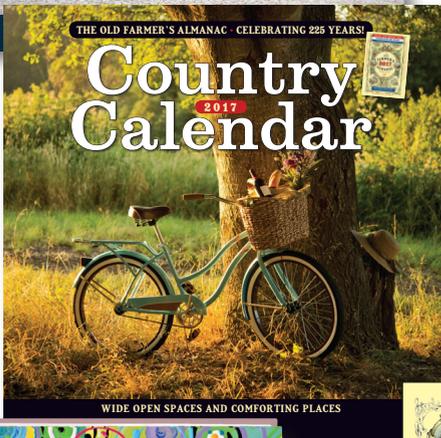
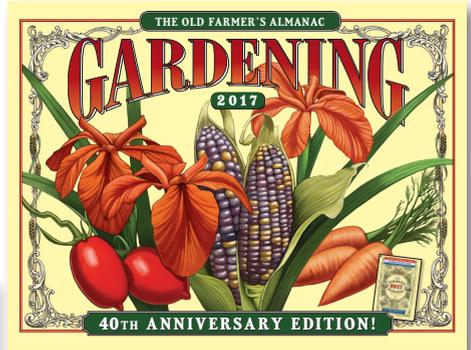
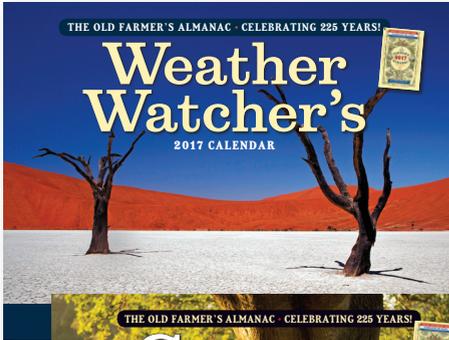
In a bowl, combine eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla, nutmeg, and cinnamon and stir together well. Pour the egg mixture over the bread. Stir together. Cover and cook on high for 2 to 2-1/2 hours.

Pudding is done when knife inserted into center comes out clean.

**Makes 6 to 8 servings.**

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

# Loaded with fun, facts, lore, and more! 2017 Almanac Calendars



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ANNIVERSARY

# THE ALMANAC IN AMERICA

*Editor's note: In celebration of this Almanac's 225th anniversary, we hope you enjoy throughout this year occasional excerpts from the book *America and Her Almanacs* (Little Brown and Company, 1970), a history of the genre by Robb Sagendorph (1900–70), the 11th editor and owner of *The Old Farmer's Almanac* from 1938 to 1970.*

## ANNIVERSARY

**I**n all my years of experience in publishing *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, holding one up before a friend or visitor has never failed to produce a smile. Exactly why this is, I do not know. However, as almanacs are of so ancient an origin, I believe that when 20th-century man sees one, the sight tickles something in his funny bone or awakens some pleasant experience from the subconscious, hence, the smile.

Ancient origin? Yes,

one must start at least as early as 3000 B.C., with the pyramids of Egypt, Latin America, and the South Seas. The word “almanac” is apparently of Arabic descent and means a timetable of the skies or, in other words, “calendar of the heavens.” One can safely say that in most of the countries of the world, the almanac was the first publication. This was only natural, for mankind has always lived by the Sun and Moon and stars and planets and has needed some sort of a calendar of the

heavens as a guide. When one could see the Pleiades, for example, through the opening at the end of one of the long halls of a pyramid, it would be spring.

**T**here has been no history of almanacs [in world culture]; to do so would take many, many volumes. (One of the first printed almanacs appeared in 1473 under the imprimatur of German astronomer Regiomontanus.) I've had to content myself with American almanacs. However,

**THE WORD “ALMANAC” IS APPARENTLY OF ARABIC DESCENT AND MEANS “CALENDAR OF THE HEAVENS.”**



## ANNIVERSARY

even American almanacs are too large a subject to cover completely in a single volume. Not included in my research, therefore, are a large number of “newspaper Almanacs,” such as *The World Almanac*, *The Reader’s Digest Almanac*, and the *Information Please Almanac*. They contain a vast amount of statistical information. I call them newspaper almanacs because there are many almanacs of this kind

published for local consumption.

Indeed, the number of different almanacs published at various times in America continues to astonish me. One Milton Drake of New York City, for example, worked for some 25 years just to list the titles! His bibliography “includes some 14,000 entries and represents the almanac holdings of 558 institutions, 36 state libraries, 38 state university libraries, 39 state historical societies, the public libraries of the 10

largest cities, and 37 of the libraries of the 50 largest cities. Also represented are the Library of Congress, American Antiquarian Society, Boston Athenaeum, and many of the great university libraries. More than 40 leading private almanac collections are included. Libraries in all 50 states are included.”

**T**racing the lineage of that vast number of old American almanacs known collectively as the

**THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ALMANACS PUBLISHED  
AT VARIOUS TIMES IN AMERICA IS ASTONISHING.**



## ANNIVERSARY

“farmer’s almanacs” has been no easy task. But at least these old almanacs, once on the road, seldom changed format. One may differ slightly from another, but once an editor had introduced himself and his almanac to the public, he pretty much had to stay with the contents and arrangements of his first edition.

**A**s near as I can discover, the distribution of almanacs in colonial America was largely conducted through

country peddlers and bookshops. Often, a printing establishment would have its own bookshop. If it printed an almanac, naturally it would be on sale there. I have no way of knowing how many copies of any given early almanacs—even of *The Old Farmer’s Almanac*—were sold in a year’s time. I think there is a rumor of “never less than 50,000,” but I could not—nor would anyone else—be able to prove it.

I am inclined to believe that since most

of the early almanacs were printed on one sheet of paper—eight pages on one side, eight on the other—that a first run comprised from 3,000 to 5,000 copies. When these were exhausted, perhaps two or three more editions would bring the total to 10,000.

The peddlers did not produce great circulation for the almanacs. Their progress from house to house was slow. They stayed for hours at each house trading off pins and pens,

**ONCE AN EDITOR HAD INTRODUCED HIMSELF AND HIS ALMANAC TO THE PUBLIC, HE PRETTY MUCH HAD TO STAY WITH THE CONTENTS OF HIS FIRST EDITION.**



thread, pots and pans and brooms, almanacs and Bibles, clocks, or what have you for cash or produce which, carried back to the city, they could sell for cash.

A great many of the bookstores, particularly after about 1800, had their own names printed on the front covers of the almanacs that they sold in their shops. This practice sometimes led to editions that would be localized by extra advertisements and text wrapped around the original almanac.

As for publicity for these early editions,

my studies indicate that before 1850, there were very few paid advertisements of any kind. There were announcements of horses and cattle for sale, ships wanting cargoes, stage schedules, and land opportunities. But they were more notices than they were advertisements— simply listings of what was available. I do not recall seeing any paid advertisements for almanacs in any of the old newspapers of that era. Once in a while, however, in a weekly publication like the *New England Farmer*, there would be what we today would call

an unpaid-for reading notice. This one for *The Old Farmer's Almanac* appeared on December 28, 1842:

### THE FARMER'S ALMANAC FOR 1843.

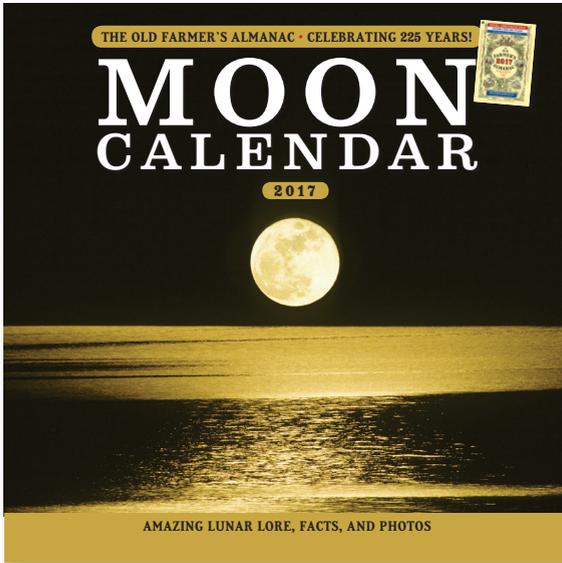
BY ROBERT B. THOMAS.  
*Once more our trusted and valued chronicler of what has been or is to be, in the risings and settings of the Sun, in the waxings and wanings, and the comings up and goings down of the Moon, in the ebbing and flowing of tides, &c., &c.—once more he has sent out his work and we wish him an extensive sale.*

*To be continued . . .*

**BEFORE 1850, THERE WERE VERY FEW PAID  
ADVERTISEMENTS OF ANY KIND.**



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# WEATHER FORECASTS

WHEN WRENS ARE SEEN IN WINTER, EXPECT SNOW.



## HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

Over the years, we have refined and enhanced this formula with state-of-the-art technology and modern scientific calculations. We employ three scientific disciplines to make our long-range predictions: solar science, the study of sunspots and other solar activity; climatology, the study of prevailing weather patterns; and meteorology, the study of the atmosphere. We predict weather trends and events by comparing solar patterns and historical weather conditions with current solar activity.

Our forecasts emphasize temperature and precipitation deviations from averages, or normals. These are based on 30-year statistical averages prepared by government meteorological agencies and updated every 10 years. Most-recent tabulations span the period 1981 through 2010.

We believe that nothing in the universe happens haphazardly, that there is a cause-and-effect pattern to all phenomena. However, although neither we nor any other forecasters have as yet gained sufficient insight into the mysteries of the universe to predict the weather with total accuracy, our results are almost always very close to our traditional claim of 80 percent.

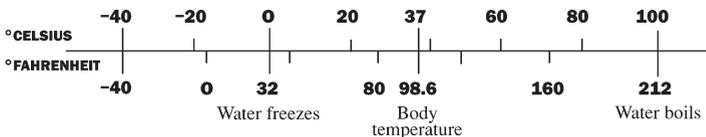


TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY

### CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE

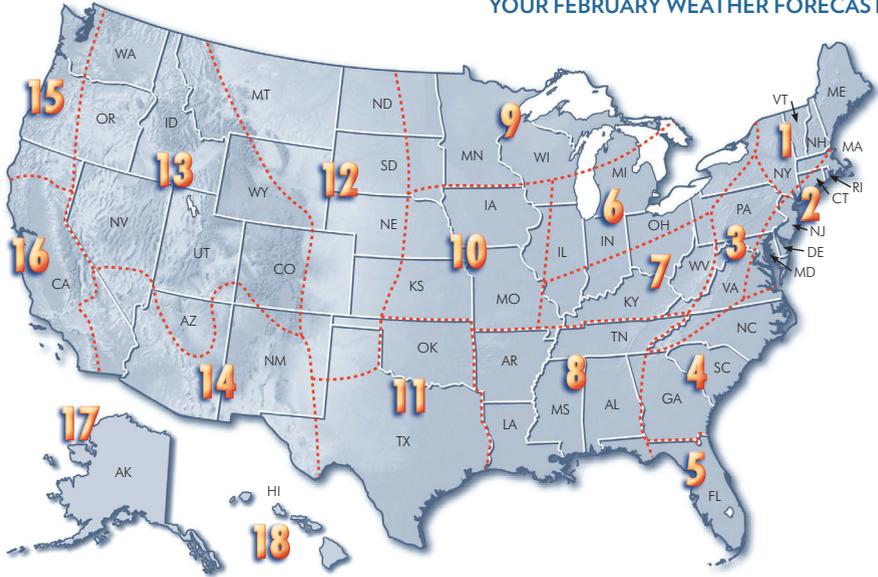




# WEATHER FORECASTS

## MAP OF U.S. WEATHER REGIONS

CHECK YOUR REGION TO SEE YOUR FEBRUARY WEATHER FORECAST.



## MAP OF CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS





## WEATHER FORECASTS

WHEN WRENS ARE SEEN IN WINTER, EXPECT SNOW.

### U.S. FORECASTS FEBRUARY 2017

#### REGION 1: **NORTHEAST**

---

Temp. 20° (3° below avg.); precip. 3.5" (1" above avg.). 1–4 Sunny, cold. 5–10 Showers, mild. 11–17 Blizzard, then sunny, bitter cold. 18–21 Snow, then sunny, mild. 22–25 Snowy, cold north; showers, mild south. 26–28 Snow showers, cold.

#### REGION 2: **ATLANTIC CORRIDOR**

---

Temp. 34° (1° below avg. north, 1° above south); precip. 5" (3" above avg. north, 1" above south). 1–4 Sunny, very cold. 5–9 Rain, then sunny. 10–15 Snowstorm, then sunny, cold. 16–19 Snow to rain. 20–23 Sunny, warm. 24–28 Rain, then sunny, cold.

#### REGION 3: **APPALACHIANS**

---

Temp. 29° (1° below avg.); precip. 3" (0.5" above avg.). 1–4 Sunny, cold. 5–8 Rainy, mild. 9–10 Flurries, cold. 11–15 Snowstorm, then flurries, cold. 16–19 Snow showers north, snow to rain south. 20–23 Sunny, mild. 24–28 Rain to snow, then sunny, cold.

#### REGION 4: **SOUTHEAST**

---

Temp. 46° (avg.); precip. 3" (1" below avg.). 1–4 Sunny, cold. 5–8 Rain, then sunny, mild. 9–12 Rainy periods, snow inland; cold. 13–18 Sunny; cold, then mild. 19–24 Rainy periods, turning mild. 25–28 Showers, cool.

#### REGION 5: **FLORIDA**

---

Temp. 61° (avg.); precip. 2.5" (avg.). 1–4 Rainy periods, cool. 5–11 A few showers, seasonable. 12–18 Sunny; cool, then warm. 19–25 A few showers, mild. 26–28 Rainy periods, cool.



## WEATHER FORECASTS

### REGION 6: LOWER LAKES

---

Temp. 28° (1° above avg.); precip. 2.5" (2" above avg. east, 1" below west). 1–4 Snow showers, very cold. 5–8 Snow to rain, then showers, mild. 9–10 Flurries, cold. 11–13 Snowstorm east, flurries west; cold. 14–19 Snowy periods, cold. 20–23 Showers, mild. 24–28 Rain to snow.

### REGION 7: OHIO VALLEY

---

Temp. 33° (1° below avg.); precip. 4" (1" above avg.). 1–4 Snow showers, very cold. 5–8 Snow to rain, turning mild. 9–13 Snowstorm, then flurries, cold. 14–20 Rain and snow showers. 21–23 Sunny, warm. 24–28 Rain to snow, then snow showers, cold.

### REGION 8: DEEP SOUTH

---

Temp. 49° (2° above avg.); precip. 4" (1" below avg.). 1–3 Sunny, cold. 4–11 Rainy periods, seasonable. 12–19 Sunny, then rainy, turning warm. 20–22 Sunny, warm. 23–25 T-storms, then sunny, cold. 26–28 Showers, cold.

### REGION 9: UPPER MIDWEST

---

Temp. 9° (3° below avg.); precip. 1.5" (0.5" above avg.). 1–6 Sunny, turning mild. 7–9 Flurries, cold. 10–20 Snow, then flurries, cold. 21–28 Snowy periods, very cold.

### REGION 10: HEARTLAND

---

Temp. 31.5° (2° below avg. north, 3° above south); precip. 0.5" (1" below avg.). 1–4 Snow showers, very cold. 5–10 Snow showers north, showers south. 11–14 Sunny. 15–19 Rain and snow showers, cold. 20–22 Sunny, turning warm. 23–28 Rain to snow, then sunny, cold.

### REGION 11: TEXAS-OKLAHOMA

---

Temp. 53° (3° above avg.); precip. 1" (1" below avg.). 1–4 Rain to snow north, rain south; cold. 5–14 Sunny, turning warm. 15–21 Showers, then sunny, mild. 22–28 Sunny north, showers south; cool, then warm.



## WEATHER FORECASTS

### REGION 12: HIGH PLAINS

---

Temp. 29.5° (2° below avg. north, 5° above south); precip. 0.5" (0.5" above avg. north, 0.5" below south). 1–6 Sunny, mild. 7–15 Flurries north, sunny south; mild. 16–22 Snow showers, cold north; sunny, mild south. 23–28 Snow, then sunny, cold.

### REGION 13: INTERMOUNTAIN

---

Temp. 39° (5° above avg.); precip. 1" (0.5" below avg.). 1–3 Flurries, cold. 4–21 Rain and snow showers north, sunny south; turning mild. 22–28 Snow showers, cool north; sunny, mild south.

### REGION 14: DESERT SOUTHWEST

---

Temp. 56° (5° above avg.); precip. 0.2" (0.3" below avg.). 1–6 A few rain and snow showers east, sunny west; cold. 7–14 Sunny, turning warm. 15–28 Isolated showers, then sunny, warm.

### REGION 15: PACIFIC NORTHWEST

---

Temp. 44.5° (1° below avg. north, 2° above south); precip. 8" (3" above avg.). 1–12 Rainy periods, turning mild. 13–19 Showers, cool. 20–22 Heavy rain, mild. 23–28 Rainy periods, cool.

### REGION 16: PACIFIC SOUTHWEST

---

Temp. 57° (2° above avg.); precip. 1" (2" below avg.). 1–2 Showers north, sunny south; mild. 3–13 Sunny, seasonable. 14–24 Showers north, sunny south; seasonable. 25–28 Sunny, mild.

### REGION 17: ALASKA

---

Temp. -11° N, 34° S (3° above avg.); precip. 0.2" N, 2.5" S (avg. north, 1.5" below south). 1–4 Flurries, mild. 5–11 Snow showers, cold. 12–21 Snow showers, quite mild N+C; clear, cold S. 22–28 Snow showers; cold N, mild S.

**KEY:** Panhandle (P), Aleutians (A), north (N), central (C), south (S), west-central (WC), east-central (EC), south-central (SC), elsewhere (EW)



## CANADIAN WEATHER FORECASTS

### REGION 18: HAWAII

---

Temp. 72° (1° below avg.); precip. 2" (avg.). 1–2 Heavy rain E, scattered showers C+W. 3–10 A few showers, cool. 11–18 A few t-storms, cool. 19–21 Sunny, cool. 22–28 Scattered showers; warm, then cool.

**KEY:** east (E), central (C), west (W)

A FEBRUARY SPRING IS NOT WORTH A PIN.

## CANADIAN FORECASTS FEBRUARY 2017

### REGION 1: ATLANTIC CANADA

---

Temp. –4.5°C (1°C below avg.); precip. 140mm (70mm above avg.). 1–6 Flurries, cold. 7–13 Heavy rain, then flurries. 14–17 Rain to snow, turning frigid. 18–23 Snowy periods, some heavy. 24–28 Rain to heavy snow, then flurries, cold.

### REGION 2: SOUTHERN QUEBEC

---

Temp. –11.5°C (2°C below avg.); precip. 110mm (50mm above avg.). 1–5 Sunny, turning mild. 6–9 Rain and snow showers, mild. 10–14 Snowstorm, turning cold. 15–23 Snow showers, very cold, then mild. 24–28 Rain to heavy snow, then flurries, cold.

### RÉGION 2: QUÉBEC DU SUD

---

Temp. –11,5°C (2°C en-dessous de la moy.); précip. 110mm (50mm au-dessus de la moy.). 1–5 Ensoleillé, devenant doux. 6–9 Pluie et chutes de neige, doux. 10–14 Tempête de neige, devenant froid. 15–23 Chutes de neige, très froid, puis doux. 24–28 Pluie voire fortes chutes de neige, puis rafales, froid.



## CANADIAN WEATHER FORECASTS

### REGION 3: SOUTHERN ONTARIO

---

Temp.  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $3^{\circ}\text{C}$  below avg.); precip. 75mm (30mm above avg.). 1–4 Flurries, cold. 5–9 Snowy periods, milder. 10–21 Snowy periods, cold. 22–24 Rain and snow east, snowstorm west. 25–28 Snow showers, very cold.

### REGION 4: THE PRAIRIES

---

Temp.  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $6^{\circ}\text{C}$  below avg.); precip. 25mm (10mm above avg.). 1–7 Snow showers, turning mild. 8–12 Snowstorm east, flurries west; turning cold. 13–28 Snowy periods, frigid.

### REGION 5: SOUTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

---

Temp.  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $1^{\circ}\text{C}$  below avg.); precip. 135mm (25mm above avg.). 1–10 Rainy periods coast, flurries inland; mild. 11–15 Snow north, rain south, then sunny, cold. 16–20 Showers coast, flurries inland; cold. 21–28 Rainy periods coast; snow, then flurries inland; cold.

### REGION 6: YUKON

---

Temp.  $-24^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $5^{\circ}\text{C}$  below avg.); precip. 20mm (avg.). 1–10 Flurries, mild. 11–16 Clear, frigid. 17–28 Flurries, cold.

### REGION 7: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

---

Temp.  $-29^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $3^{\circ}\text{C}$  below avg.); precip. 11mm (avg.). 1–4 Snow showers, milder. 5–10 Clear, very cold. 11–16 Flurries, very cold. 17–18 Clear, milder. 19–28 A few flurries, very cold.



THE BLIZZARD OF '78 PILED UP CARS ON ROUTE 128 IN NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, OUTSIDE BOSTON.

## FEBRUARY BLIZZARDS

**W**ith our forecast of a blizzard in many spots this February, I thought that it might be interesting to look at a few of the more memorable February blizzards.

The one I most remember was in February of 1972. I was near Ithaca, New York, where it snowed heavily between around 9:00 A.M. until about 1:00 P.M., leaving an accumulation of 29 inches during the 5 hours or so that it snowed. Helping to push cars that were stuck in the snow that afternoon, I felt cold for perhaps the first time in my life, as

my metabolism began its downward slope to where I have to carefully watch my weight today.

Another memorable storm for me was the Blizzard of '78, on February 6–7, 1978. At the height of the storm, I drove to my workplace on the shore of the Hudson River in Ossining, New York. The snow was falling so heavily that my windshield wipers could not keep up with it, and I had to periodically pull over to clean my windshield. When I got to work, I found that it was closed due to the storm. I immediately started my



**THE “MEGALOPOLITAN BLIZZARD”  
DUMPED 22 INCHES OF SNOW ON  
STATEN ISLAND AND LEFT HUNDREDS  
OF CARS STRANDED ON THE STATEN  
ISLAND EXPRESSWAY.**

return trip home, under even worse conditions.

That 1978 storm is considered one of the worst blizzards in U.S. history, as it brought then-record snowfall to places from Atlantic City to Boston and caused nearly \$2 billion in damage (in current dollars).

Another of the worst blizzards—sometimes called the “Megalopolitan Blizzard”—occurred on February 10-12, 1983, burying an area from Virginia to southern New England in 20 or more inches of snow and bringing thundersnow to areas from Washington, D.C., and Baltimore to Philadelphia.

A more recent memorable blizzard was the February 1-2, 2011, “Snowpocalypse.” This storm brought heavy, blowing snow from northern Texas to New England and eastern Canada. Hardest hit was Chicago, whose 21.2 inches of snow, whipped by winds as high as 60 miles per hour, fell just short of its all-time record of 23 inches. Blizzard conditions affected many other large cities along the storm’s path, including El Paso, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, St. Louis, Des Moines, Milwaukee, Detroit, Indianapolis, Dayton, Cleveland, New York City, and Boston.

Although it is the month of some



THE “SNOWPOCALYPSE” OF 2011 SHUT DOWN THESE VEHICLES, INCLUDING A SNOWPLOW, ON CHICAGO’S LAKE SHORE DRIVE.

of the greatest blizzards, February is the driest overall in terms of monthly total precipitation, which consists of rain plus melted snow and ice.

There are two reasons for this. First, the air is colder in winter, and since cold air can not hold as much water vapor as warm air, there is less moisture available and less potential for precipitation in winter. Second, February is the shortest month, which means that it has fewer days in which precipitation can occur.

Despite its overall dryness, February is a time when some of the largest snowfalls and worst

blizzards have occurred. The reasons for this are again twofold: First, by early February, the ground has hit its coldest temperature, making adjacent air colder and thus snow more likely in the presence of moisture. Second, as the days have grown longer since the winter solstice around December 21, a greater potential has developed for warmer air to the south to lift moisture into the atmosphere, bringing heavier snow amounts than in December and January.

—Michael Steinberg, Old Farmer’s Almanac meteorologist

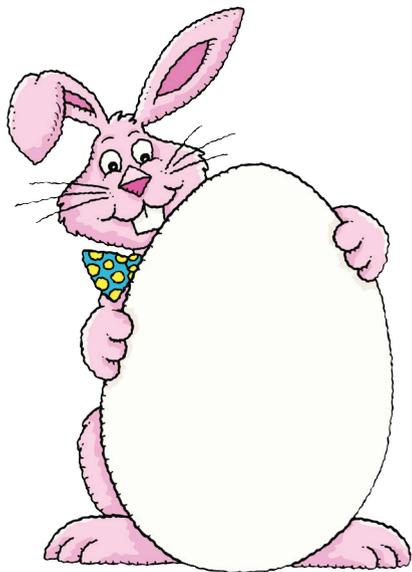


# HUMOR ME

## GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC

### Actual Excerpts From Church Bulletins

- “This evening there will be a meeting in the north and south ends of this church. The children may be baptized at both ends.”
- “Thursday at 7:00 P.M. there will be a meeting of the Mothers’ Club. All those wishing to become little mothers, please meet with the minister at 7:00 P.M.”
- “Tuesday at 7:00 P.M. there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk, please come early.”
- “Wednesday, the Ladies’ Aid Society will meet and Mrs. Johnson will sing ‘Put Me in My Little Bed’ accompanied by the minister.”
- “Sunday being Easter, will Mrs. Thomas please come forward and lay an egg on the altar?”
- “The service will close with



‘Little Drops of Water.’ If some lady will quietly start, the rest of the congregation will follow.”

### 19th-Century Nonsense: Punship

When Lord Howe, who was at one time a great favorite in the British Navy, became unpopular, he was lamenting the circumstances to a friend, who replied, “Ah, my dear Lord, I always thought that yours was a fleeting popularity.”



## HIS ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED

Johnson: "I saw Matt this morning."  
Jackson: "Ah-ha!"  
Johnson: "Yes, and I had a great mind to speak to him—he owes me \$50."  
Jackson: "I hear he has been sick. How was he looking?"  
Johnson: "Well, he was looking the other way when I met him."



## THE RULE

A man who had climbed up a chestnut tree had by carelessness missed his hold of one of the boughs and fell to the ground with such violence as to break one of his ribs. A neighbor coming to his

assistance remarked to him dryly that had he followed "the rule" in such cases, he would have avoided this accident.

"What rule do you mean?"  
"This," replied the philosopher. "Never come down a place faster than you can go up."

## CUTTING THROUGH THE FOG IN NORTH DAKOTA

As reported many years ago in the *Bismarck Tribune*, state senator I. E. Solberg had the obvious solution to a ticklish problem: "What we ought to do now, obviously, is suspend all activity until we can hold a plebiscite to select a panel that will appoint a commission authorized to hire a new team of experts to restudy the feasibility of compiling an index of all the committees that have in the past inventoried and cataloged the various studies aimed at finding out what happened to all the policies that were scrapped when new policies were decided on by somebody else. Once that's out of the way, I think we could go full steam ahead with some preliminary plans for a new study with federal funds of why nothing can be done right now."

“Curtains of white  
and green light draped  
over us. It seemed  
like we could reach up  
and touch the folds.”

—Nancy V., Ventura, CA,  
about a Bob Berman trip

## See the Northern Lights with *The Old Farmer's Almanac!*

Join us in Alaska to see the aurora borealis from February 26–March 3, 2017.  
Led by the Almanac's astronomy editor, Bob Berman,  
this 6-day, 5-night adventure promises to be the trip of a lifetime.

**By night, behold the blazing and magical curtains of light. By day, tour Alaska!**

Highlights include:

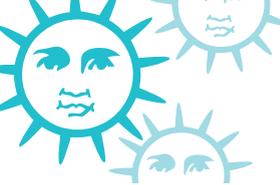
- accommodations, most meals
- luxury bus transport in Alaska
- Museum of the North,  
University of Alaska Fairbanks
- World Ice Art Championships
- dog sledding
- hot springs pool
- astronomy lectures
- photography tutorial
- optional train tour
- and much, much more!



**Space is limited! For details and reservations, call 845-901-7049.**

**LEARN MORE**

Ice Sculpture photo: FairbanksMike



# WHAT'S NEXT



## GARDENING

The hows and whys of community gardening



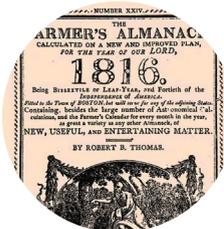
## CALENDAR

Full Worm Moon, vernal equinox, March's birthstone, Alaska trivia, 1793 Almanac tidbits



## LIVING NATURALLY

Put your wood ashes to good use



## ANNIVERSARY

Excerpts from early Almanacs



## FOOD

First-day-of-spring recipes for fresh-picked goodness



## ASTROLOGY

Best Days to Do Things

Plus: Weather Update • U.S. and Canadian Weather Forecasts • Explore with our Sky Map • Gardening by the Moon's Sign • Humor • and much more in the March *EXTRA!*

**CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 225TH YEAR!**