

The Spirit of Nachi



High in the Kumano region of Japan's Kii Mountains lies Nachi, a sacred site in the Shinto religion, and the Great Waterfall of Nachi, a dazzling rush of water that cascades 133 meters. *Kumano* means "holy ground where the gods dwell," and the primeval mountain range is filled with

many religious sites and pilgrimage routes. On July 14, thousands of pilgrims and tourists climb to the beautiful waterfall for the Nachi Fire Festival, a celebration of water and fire.

According to Shinto religious beliefs, a powerful spirit, or *kami*, lives within the Nachi waterfall. Pilgrims first pay homage to the spirit with a blessing of fire. Men in white robes carry massive torches weighing over 100 pounds up and down the 133 steps (one for each meter of the waterfall's height) that lead to the sacred Nachi shrine. Fire has long been considered a purifying force, and once the steps are purified, more pilgrims robed in blue descend the stairs carrying 12 *Mikoshi*. The *Mikoshi* are 20-foot-tall vermilion shrines decorated with fans and mirrors to mimic the beauty of the waterfall. The 12 shrines symbolize the 12 Shinto deities and the 12 months of the year. These shrines are considered resting places for the spirits. Not only do the pilgrims honor the gods but the gods show them favor by blessing the pilgrims.

The Kumano region has been considered a place of healing for thousands of years. The Nachi shrine is just one of three major Shinto shrines in the area. Also close to the Nachi shrine is another sacred site, an 850-year-old camphor tree wrapped ceremoniously in straw rope and paper flags. Like the Nachi waterfall, this tree is also believed to house a Shinto *kami* spirit. A giant opening in the tree's trunk allows visitors to enter the tree and make offerings at a small altar. It is said that once inside, one can hear the beating of the tree's heart, a moving and transcendent experience.

July Birthdays

In astrology, those born between July 1–22 are Crabs of Cancer. Kind and protective, Crabs love to nurture others. While they may be emotional, they are never soft. Cancers are tenacious in their pursuit of domestic harmony. Those born between July 23–31 are Leo's Lions. Mixing strength, ambition, creativity, and a flair for the drama, it is no wonder that the king of the jungle is Leo's mascot. Whether it's in Hollywood or at home, Leos accomplish their goals.

Happy Birthday WVL Family

- Blinda E. 7/5
- Iva M. 7/7
- Shel F. 7/9
- Janet A. 7/10
- Richard D. 7/11
- Mary H. 7/12
- Alice U. 7/15
- Howard B. 7/31



Wishing a Happy Birthday to those celebrating a significant milestone in their lives. The members of the 100th Plus Club birthdays are:

- Vera G. 3/11**
- Lillian 4/11**
- Virginia C. 6/9**
- Howard B. 7/31**
- Margaret L. 8/6**
- Charles S. 9/27**

Westchester Village

Westchester Village of Lenexa Ks | 8505 Pflumm Rd. Lenexa, KS 66215 | 913-307-2000



Celebrating July

International Paramedics Month

Family Golf Month

Canada Day

July 1

World UFO Day

July 2

Independence Day (U.S.)

July 4

National Sugar Cookies Day

July 9

Tattoo Day

July 17

National Ice-Cream Day

July 19

Tell an Old Joke Day

July 24

National Cheesecake Day

July 30

The Rhythm of Early America

In 2026, the United States marks the 250th anniversary of 1776—a milestone that invites reflection, not just on historic events but on the texture of everyday life in colonial times. Long before modern conveniences, daily routines were shaped by necessity, skill, and close-knit communities.

Food, for example, was seasonal and local by default. Families relied on what they could grow, hunt, or trade. Cornmeal, beans, and salted meats were staples, while gardens supplied herbs and vegetables. Preserving food—through drying, smoking, or pickling—was essential for surviving the winter. Meals were simple but sustaining, and little went to waste.

Craftsmanship was equally central to daily life. Many households produced what they needed, from clothing to tools. Spinning wool, weaving fabric, and sewing garments were common skills, as were woodworking and blacksmithing. Objects were made to last, repaired when broken, and valued for their function as much as their form.

Community ties helped hold everything together. Neighbors shared labor during harvests, barn raisings, and other large tasks. Churches, markets, and town gatherings provided structure and connection. In a world without instant communication, relationships were built face-to-face and maintained through mutual reliance.

The rhythms of life 250 years ago highlight a kind of resilience that feels both distant and familiar. Colonists adapted constantly—to weather, to shortages, to uncertainty. Their resourcefulness wasn't a choice; it was a requirement. This anniversary offers a chance to consider what endures. Skills like making, mending, and sharing haven't disappeared—they've simply changed form. The same is true of community and adaptability. While the tools and technologies of daily life have evolved, the underlying values—resourcefulness, cooperation, and persistence—remain recognizable.

Need to know for the Month July

- 7/3-ALDI 1pm-VC
- 7/6-Resident council AL 1:30-ADR
- 7/6-Food Council AL 2pm-ADR
- 7/6-Resident Council HC 2:30-ACT
- 7/10-Walmart 1pm-VC
- 7/14-Resident Council IL-2:00pm-MP
- 7:15-Food Council IL-1:30pm
- 7/17-Dollar Tree-VC
- 7/24-Target 1pm-VC



Welcome to the Mix and Mingle
On Friday July 31 at 4pm in the
Independent Living Dining Room

Frontier Fever

Visitors strike gold each mid-July in Fairbanks, Alaska, during the Golden Days festival. The weeklong affair honors Felix Pedro, the young Italian immigrant who, on July 22, 1902, discovered gold in Tanana Hills, just northwest of Fairbanks. By 1908, so many prospectors, outfitters, and businesspeople had ventured to Fairbanks that it became the largest city in Alaska. Today, visitors can find a monument to Felix Pedro, donated by the Italian government, along the Steese Highway, which runs through the Tanana Hills by Pedro Creek.

Felix Pedro is such a hometown hero that during the festival you might even catch a glimpse of him with his dark moustache, flannel shirt, and wide-brimmed hat. It's more likely you've found the Felix Pedro look-alike contest. And don't miss the Grizzly Alaskan contest, awarding honors to the man with the hairiest beard, chest, and legs and the ugliest "frontier feet." The Golden Days festival offers authentic Alaskan charm worth its weight in gold.

The Great Jump

On July 20, 2006, German professor Hans Peter Niesward from the Institute for Gravitational Physics in Munich claimed that he had convinced 600 million people in the western hemisphere to celebrate World Jump Day. Everyone would jump at the same time and knock Earth into a new orbit. The result? Extended daylight hours. A more uniform climate around the world. The end of global warming. And a great big laugh. It turns out the entire holiday was a hoax. Professor Niesward was German artist Torsten Lauschmann. Of course, this hasn't stopped people from jumping on July 20. Not to fear, scientists have done the math, and 600 million jumping humans could not affect the axis or orbit of Earth, which has a mass of a whopping 13 septillion pounds.



A Better Bag

All around the world, more and more communities are considering bans on single-use plastic bags or even charging five cents for each bag used. Why is there such an outcry against using these bags so commonly found at supermarkets and convenience stores? Sadly, while a plastic bag may be used for mere minutes, it takes hundreds of years to disintegrate. The truth is that plastic bags have become one of the biggest sources of pollution in the world. With one million bags in use around the world every minute, it's no wonder that a raft of plastic garbage known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is drifting in the northern Pacific Ocean.



On July 3, people around the world will celebrate International Plastic Bag-Free Day by opting not to use plastic bags. So what are some alternatives to plastic? The most common solution is to carry your own reusable canvas bags when you go shopping. Many stores have made it easy on customers by selling cheap and reusable tote bags in the checkout line or even offering free cardboard boxes.

Perhaps the most enraging solution has been to charge five cents for the use of a plastic bag. While many customers have shown deep dissatisfaction with the policy of paying for bags at checkout, the system has been shown to decrease the use of plastic bags. Studies of Ireland's plastic bag levy, introduced in 2002, found that usage dropped by more than 90 percent almost immediately. Similar results have been seen in California, where statewide restrictions and fees led to sharp declines in single-use plastic bag consumption. By asking customers during checkout whether they have bags or would like to buy some, shoppers are less able to ignore the problems caused by plastic waste. They are reminded of their environmental impact each time they shop, and many choose to bring reusable bags.

Fun Days for the Month of July

- July 4th Party Music W/Roman Friday
- July 3 3pm-4pm HDR
- National Sugar Cookie Day July 9th at 2pm-VC
- Thursday July 16 Painting W/Andrea 3pm SFL
- National Tattoo Day Friday July 17 2pm-VC
- Thursday July 23 Music W/Ruben at 3pm-HDR
- Wednesday July 29 Betty Simon at 3pm-HDR
- Thursday July 30 National Cheesecake Day at 2pm-VC
- Friday July 31 Mix and Mingle at 4pm IDR

Come Join the Fun with The Pickled Painters on Thursday July 16 at 3:00pm SFL

