

THE MONTHLY GAZETTE

"The crisp path through the field in this December snow, in the deep dark, where we trod the buried grass like ghosts on dry toast."

~ Dylan Thomas



Bird of the Month – Raven



European and North American literature often portrays the large, black raven as a harbinger of doom. Yet native and ancient cultures revered ravens and considered them messengers of the gods. Larger than their close cousin the crow, ravens are adaptable and intelligent. Ravens can live in almost any

habitat and scavenge a range of foods, including fish, meat, seeds, fruit, and scraps from garbage dumpsters.

Like parrots, ravens can mimic sounds including wolves, foxes, car engines, other birds, and even human speech. They also gesture to one another with their beaks and actively play. They have been spotted sliding down snowy rooftops for fun and turning pinecones into toys to bat around with each other. Before finding their lifelong mate, teenage ravens hang out in "gangs" until they settle down in one territory with their chosen partner.

Special Days

Winter Solstice
December 21

Hanukkah Begins at Sundown
December 22

Christmas
December 25

Boxing Day (UK and Canada)
December 26

Kwanzaa Begins
December 26

New Year's Eve
December 31

Birthstone – Turquoise

December's birthstone is the turquoise. Although found all over the world, it gets its name because it was prevalent in ancient Turkish culture. Turquoise was traded at Turkish bazaars to Venetian merchants, who brought it to Europe. The Aztecs mined turquoise in an area now known as New Mexico, and a significant amount of turquoise today comes from Arizona, California, and Nevada. The stones are most commonly pale blue with veins of brown or black running through them, but they can also be dark blue or green.



Flower – Daffodil

Narcissus, more commonly known as the daffodil, is a beautiful flower that usually blooms in springtime. Its lovely, delicate white petals and yellowish orange center make it a gardening favorite. Most believe 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."



Birthday Animals

December 1–16: Dog

You are a very loyal person who values having a small but close-knit group of friends over having many acquaintances. You are a hard worker, and your humble and down-to-earth attitude make you easy to get along with. Your friends treasure your honesty and sincerity.

December 17–25: Monkey

Always the center of attention, you love to keep the people around you entertained. Though at heart you want things done the right way, you hate to be kept waiting and can sometimes be impatient. Some say you

have a “sixth sense” that often saves you from falling into traps or making the wrong choice.

December 25–31: Dove

You are happy-go-lucky. No matter what life throws your way, your upbeat attitude never wavers. Though you lead your friends into fun and new adventures, you are no fair-weather friend; you are also an exceptionally good listener in the bad times, consoling and lifting the spirits of those around you.



December Lore

- Forest animals can speak and understand humans on Christmas Eve.
- If snow falls on Christmas Day, Easter will be green, warm, and sunny.
- For some, December 28 is the unluckiest day of the year.

December Zodiacs

Sagittarius (The Archer)
December 1–21

Capricorn (The Sea Goat)
December 22–31

December is the month with the shortest daylight hours of the year in the northern hemisphere and the longest daylight hours of the year in the southern hemisphere. Its name comes from the Latin word *decem*, which means “ten.” That’s because the Roman year began in March, making December the 10th month of the Roman year. When January and February were added to the calendar, December became the 12th month.

Old New Year’s Eve Traditions

In Brazil and Argentina, the color underwear you wear on New Year’s Eve indicates your hopeful prediction for the upcoming year: yellow, you’ll become richer; red, you’ll find love; white, you’ll find peace. In Denmark, people celebrate by throwing their old dishes at the doors of their friends’ homes. A front stoop littered with broken plates suggests the person inside has a lot of friends.

What’s Lucky in December?

Lucky Letter: A

Lucky Plant: Olive

Lucky Day: Thursday

Lucky Color: Blue-green

Lucky Animal: Reindeer



December Birthdays

Richard Pryor (comedian) – December 1, 1940

Bette Midler (entertainer) – December 1, 1945

Gianni Versace (designer) – December 2, 1946

Jianwen (emperor of China) – December 5, 1377

Ira Gershwin (lyricist) – December 6, 1896

Dame Judi Dench (actress) – December 9, 1934

Emily Dickinson (writer) – December 10, 1830

Dick Van Dyke (actor) – December 13, 1925

Patty Duke (entertainer) – December 14, 1946

Edith Piaf (singer) – December 19, 1915

Diane Sawyer (journalist) – December 22, 1945

Ava Gardner (actress) – December 24, 1922

Steve Allen (entertainer) – December 26, 1921

Denzel Washington (actor) – December 28, 1954