



Notable Quotable

"Life is a combination of magic and pasta."

~ *Federico Fellini, Italian film director*



October Horoscopes and Birthdays

In astrology, those born from October 1–23 balance the scales of Libra. Libras are peaceful and fair, and value balance and symmetry. For this reason, they often champion equality. Those born from October 24–31 are Scorpions of Scorpio. Scorpions are passionate, dedicated, and resourceful. Scorpions may seem intimidating, but they are just no-nonsense people who value honesty and loyalty above all else.

Julie Andrews – Oct. 1, 1935
Chubby Checker – Oct. 3, 1941
Chevy Chase – Oct. 8, 1943
Henry Heinz – Oct. 11, 1844
Penny Marshall – Oct. 15, 1943
Pele – Oct. 23, 1940
Minnie Pearl – Oct. 25, 1912
Jonas Salk – Oct. 28, 1914
John Candy – Oct. 31, 1950

Whispering Oak Place Birthdays

James D. – October 8
Patricia W. - October 17
Marian D. – October 23

Mission ImPASTable *cont. from pg. 1*

Written records show that by the fifth century, Arabs were eating *itriyah*, a dough made of flour and water that could be rolled thin, cut into strips, dried, and reconstituted with water. Arab traders traveling the famed Silk Road could easily pack and store this nutritious staple. As the Arabs expanded westward into the Mediterranean, going so far as to conquer Sicily and southern Italy around the year 900, they likely

introduced their version of pasta to the region.

But it was in Italy that pasta became both a mass-produced food staple and an art form. Southern Italy's dry, sunny climate was conducive to the growing of hard durum wheat and allowed for the proper drying of long strands of pasta. Today, Italy is synonymous with pasta and we all eat well because of it.

Don't Be Scared

Each October, scarecrows begin to appear in and around the village of Pietrebais in Belgium. In some years, hundreds of scarecrows appear. In others, a scant dozen or fewer. No one knows why or how the tradition began 21 years ago in the year 2000, but it is a tradition that has continued ever since.

In the 1500s, it was common for farmers to hire guards to protect their crops from animal pests and thieves. The guards sometimes slept in the fields in straw huts or

stood watch on wooden platforms. But as farms grew, farmers could no longer afford to employ vast numbers of guards. They began instead to use human-like watchers. These first scarecrows were erected in the spring, topped with animal skulls or fashioned out of rotting vegetables, or hung on crosses in the image of Christ's crucifixion. They served one purpose: to scare pests like crows away from valuable crops. It seems that these scarecrows have earned a spooky reputation ever since.

Whispering Oak Place

October 2021

Celebrating October

Country Music Month

Stamp Collecting Month

International Coffee Day
October 1

World Space Week
October 4–10

World Teachers Day
October 5

Columbus Day & Indigenous Peoples' Day
October 11

Wear Something Gaudy Day
October 17

World Origami Days
October 24–November 11

All Hallows' Eve or Halloween
October 31

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Mission ImPASTable

In 1995, pasta producers from all over the world convened in Rome for the first World Pasta Congress. It was decided that October 25 would be designated World Pasta Day, a day to celebrate the versatility and sheer deliciousness of this global food.

In 2005, archaeologists unearthed 4,000-year-old noodles from a site in China, confirming the belief that the Chinese likely invented the first pastas made of grain and water. These noodles were not like the dried, flour-based pastas we find at grocery stores today, but were made of millet, a grain more like rice than wheat. Does this discovery prove that the Italian

merchant Marco Polo brought pasta from China to Italy in 1295? Not quite. While it is very likely that Marco Polo brought Chinese noodles and all kinds of Chinese artifacts back to Italy, pasta was already a common staple in and around the Mediterranean long before Marco Polo's travels east.

Historians think it is far more likely that Italy's famous pastas originated in the Middle East.

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Turn of the Tide

In Cornwall, in the United Kingdom, October 31 brings the holiday of Allantide. Like Halloween, Allantide is believed to be a day when the barrier between the living and the dead is lifted. For this reason, Allantide is a day when people seek the advice of fortune tellers who can commune with the spirits. Walnuts thrown into fires confirm the fidelity of spouses. Molten lead cast into water hardens into

a shape that foretells future employment. Thanks to its proximity to the harvest season, Allantide also boasts several harvest traditions. It is common to visit an Allan Market and buy a bright red Allan apple to gift to children. Not sleeping with the Allan apple under your pillow brings back luck. Another tradition more reminiscent of Halloween is the carving of jack-o'-lanterns out of turnips.

Bigfoot's Big Moment



The FBI ran an analysis on hairs supposedly belonging to Bigfoot.

In 1958, a northern California newspaper published a letter in which local loggers described finding massive 16-inch-long footprints in the California wilderness. The loggers called the unknown creature who had left the prints “Big Foot,” and readers of the newspaper became instantly fascinated with the story. As the story of Big Foot spread to newspapers across the country, a legend was born. It wasn’t until October 20, 1967, that the Bigfoot legend reached a fever pitch.

Two rodeo cowboys from Yakima, Washington, Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin, ventured into the northern California wilderness hoping to capture hard evidence of the creature. Patterson had long held a fascination with Bigfoot and had spent much of the previous decade interviewing Bigfoot believers, compiling

their stories, and mapping the creature’s supposed territories. Despite Patterson’s earnest belief in Bigfoot’s existence, no one was more shocked than he when he and Gimlin stumbled upon a hairy, apelike figure stomping through northern California’s remote forests.

Patterson was able to film Bigfoot for about a minute, capturing the now-famous shot of Bigfoot midstride. The men believed that they had struck gold, that they possessed the evidence needed to prove Bigfoot’s existence. The scientific community, however, was not impressed with the footage. Many believed the film had been a hoax and Bigfoot just a man in a costume. Yet other scientists have trouble debunking the film. Patterson and Gimlin lived out their days arguing that the film and their encounter was genuine.

Hats Off

You don’t have to be a fan of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* to celebrate Mad Hatter Day on October 6. Famed illustrator John Tenniel depicted the Mad Hatter character with a card in his hatband reading, “In this size 10/6.” Here, the 10/6 refers not to the date October 6, but the hat’s price of 10 shillings and six pence. While the interpretation of the hat card may have been mistaken, the hatter’s “madness” is a matter of historical fact.



Lewis Carroll attempted to illustrate Alice herself before calling on illustrator John Tenniel.

In the mid-19th century, the process of turning fur into felt involved the use of the chemical mercury nitrate, a poison that caused shakes, speech problems, unpredictable behavior, and hallucinations in many hatters. The idiom “mad as a hatter” developed as a result. Of course, one needn’t be mad to celebrate this offbeat holiday. Instead, enjoy Lewis Carroll’s classic novel of fantasy and nonsense, and perhaps engage in some nonsensical antics yourself.

Now We’re Cooking



Sales of cookbooks have jumped 17% over the past year.

October is Cookbook Month, which means it’s time to get into the kitchen and dust off those pots and pans. While many forms of print media have suffered in the digital age, cookbook sales are booming.

Even for seasoned chefs, cookbooks provide a means of reinvigorating a stale cooking routine. This doesn’t mean that

you should go out and buy Buck Peterson’s *Road Kill Cookbook*. Adventurous foodies could instead try *Bugs for Beginners*. Historians might like *Cooking Apicius*, recipes from ancient Rome. Mechanics will appreciate *Manifold Destiny*, which teaches how to cook on your car engine. There is truly a cookbook that appeals to every possible taste.

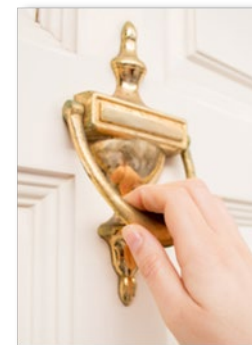
Who’s There?

Knock knock. Who’s there? October 31st. October 31st who? Did you know that October 31st is Knock-Knock Joke Day? It is no coincidence that this holiday coincides with Halloween. As children rove door-to-door asking “Trick or treat,” they can offer knock-knock jokes as compensation for their candy and goodies.

The origin of the knock-knock joke is anything but clear-cut, but clever historians have uncovered bits of American popular culture that present a convoluted history of its creation. Before the knock-knock joke, there was the “Do You Know” joke. Around the year 1900, it was common for joke tellers to ask something like, “Do you know Arthur?” To which the person would reply, “Arthur who?” The jokester would then reveal the punchline: “Arthurmometer!” This groan-worthy punchline, with its silly play on words, foreshadowed the sort of punchlines knock-

knock jokes would become famous for. But where did the door-knocking imagery come from?

In 1929, author Henry Bett wrote the book *The Games of Children: Their Origin and History*. In it, Bett describes a common game called “Buff” in which a player would tap with a stick and say, “Knock knock,” to which another player would respond, “Who’s there?” Is it coincidence that by the mid-1930s the joke form and the children’s game had been combined? Knock-knock jokes were suddenly everywhere. Businesses held knock-knock joke contests. Bands incorporated knock-knock jokes into their songs. By the end of 1936, knock-knock jokes were so ubiquitous that psychologist D.A. Laird called the compulsion to tell knock-knock jokes a mania and a sickness. Perhaps just calling them an infantile sort of humor would have sufficed.



Knock-knock. Who’s there? Little old lady. Little old lady who? I didn’t know you could yodel.