



Celebrating May

Asparagus Month

Better Sleep Month

Be Kind to Animals Week

May 2-8

Kentucky Derby

May 1

Weather Observers' Day

May 4

Cinco de Mayo

May 5

Mother's Day

May 9

Tulip Day

May 13

Visit Your Relatives Day

May 18

Blueberry Cheesecake Day

May 26

Memorial Day

May 31

May On Display

When you run out of space for your collection of Pez dispensers, don't throw them away; turn your collection into a museum! May 18 is International Museum Day, and if you are tired of seeing the same old art, visit one of these unique and bizarre collections instead:

The British Lawnmower Museum

When Edwin Beard Budding invented the lawnmower in 1830 people thought he was crazy, so he tested his invention at night so no one would see him. Not only does this museum house the world's largest collection of vintage lawnmowers, but displays lawnmowers of the rich and famous, hosts a lawnmower race, and includes a collection of toy lawnmowers.



Toronto, Canada's Bata Shoe Museum

Not just women enjoy learning about the 4,500-year history of footwear. Footwear is about both fashion and function. Among the thousands of

shoes, you can see a pair of ten-inch-tall Syrian stilt shoes, designed to lift feet off the hot floor of a Turkish bath, and a pair of spiked chestnut-crushing clogs from France.

Massachusetts Museum of Bad Art

Visit a museum that dares to admit that the art is ugly. Dog and cat portraits, a queen holding a chocolate chip cookie, an entire exhibition of people painted blue, and every single painting is poorly done. Best of all, admission is free. Who would pay money to see this bad art?

SPAM Museum of Minnesota

Fans of this beloved canned pork treat can venture to Austin, Minnesota, to indulge in over 16,000 square feet of SPAM-related artifacts, including a wall made of 5,000 cans of SPAM. Visitors can also don white jackets and hairnets and head off to work in a scale model SPAM manufacturing plant.



Coco's No. 5

On May 5, 1921, "Coco" Chanel unveiled her first fragrance, Chanel No. 5. As the world's most legendary perfume, a bottle of Chanel No. 5 is sold worldwide every thirty seconds. When asked what she would name her perfume, Coco replied, "I always launch my collection on the 5th day of the 5th month, so the number 5 seems to bring me luck. Therefore, I will name it *No. 5*."



Legend surrounds the fragrance's inspiration. Some even claim that the perfume's chemist, Ernest Beaux, modeled the scent after the fresh smell of Russia's northern lakes on the Kola Peninsula, where he was stationed during the Russian Civil War.

The Monster of Loch Ness



On May 2, 1933, the *Inverness Courier* newspaper from the north of Scotland published an article titled “A Strange Spectacle on Loch

Ness.” This column made the first official mention of a “monster” living in Loch Ness, the largest lake in the United Kingdom. For the next seventy years, the Loch Ness monster, known as Nessie, would become one of the most investigated and most beloved mysteries the world had ever, or never, seen.

The first famous sighting was made by Mrs. Aldie MacKay, who reported seeing a whale-like creature in the lake near Aldourie Castle. She shouted to her husband to stop their car, but by then the creature had disappeared, leaving an enormous disturbance in the water.

Three months later, after repeated sightings of the monster in the water, another couple, Mr. and Mrs. George Spicer, claimed to have seen the monster on land. They reported that “a dragon or pre-historic animal” crossed the road in front of them carrying a small lamb or other animal in its mouth. It was twenty-five feet long with a long neck. Decades later, a monk from a local abbey claimed to have glimpsed the creature while strolling along Loch Ness with the abbey’s organist.

Several expeditions have attempted to confirm Nessie’s existence. The Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau worked throughout the 1960s and ‘70s to photograph the creature, but their snapshots were ambiguous. In the 1980s, Operation Deepscan used sonar to probe the lake’s icy depths. Although no definitive evidence of Nessie was found, three large sonar contacts were made, which indicated something below the water larger than a shark but smaller than a whale. While not the proof the world was clamoring for, these sonar records helped keep the legend alive.

The True Heavy Metal

The first Friday in May is International Tuba Day, a day when we should all pay respect to that largest and lowest-pitched brass instrument. Frequently, the tuba does not get the respect it deserves. It has earned a goofy reputation as the oaf of instruments, a huge, unwieldy blower of low notes. Even though on this day the tuba may be elevated to the king of brass, you can still enjoy a few good tuba jokes.

Q: How do you fix a broken tuba?

A: With a “tuba” glue.

Q: What’s a “tuba for”?

A: A piece of lumber.

Q: What is the range of a tuba?

A: Twenty yards if you’ve got a good arm.



Dance Your Way Through May



In November of 1989, Representative John Conyers of Michigan and Senator Al D'Amato of New York passed a congressional resolution declaring May 25 Tap Dance Day. Conyers said, "By golly, there ought to be a law to make everyone love tap dancing."

As Conyers predicted, everyone has come to love tap dancing, and Tap Dance Day is celebrated as far away as Japan, Australia, India, and Iceland. May 25 was the perfect day for the holiday because it was the birthday of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, one of the greatest tap dancers of stage and screen. Robinson explained that his tap dancing abilities stemmed from quieting his head and letting his feet do all the thinking. He continued to tap well into his sixties.

Other famous dancers were also born in May. Fred Astaire was born on May 10, 1899. As a child, Astaire's mother encouraged him and his sister to dance and sing as a vaudeville brother-sister act. She secretly hoped to ride their talents out of Omaha, Nebraska. Young Fred refused dance lessons at first, but soon became the greatest child act in vaudeville, and a great dancer on the silver screen.

The revolutionary dancer Martha Graham was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on May 11, 1894. She is credited with beginning a new era of contemporary dance, inventing a new language of bodily movement meant to express all the emotional complexities of the human experience. She became the first dancer to perform at the White House. Her influence on dance has been compared to Picasso's influence on painting and Frank Lloyd Wright's influence on architecture.

Whether you tap, saunter, fox trot, or sashay, celebrate Tap Dance Day on May 25 by letting your feet step out footloose and fancy free.



Tale of the Tape



The invention of the first masking tape began with sandpaper. Inventor Dick Drew had just invented a new kind of sandpaper, and

he wanted to test it at a local body shop in St. Paul, Minnesota. While at the shop, he overheard workers complaining about having to paint a car with two different colors of paint. The workers used heavy tape and butcher paper to protect one coat of paint from the newly applied coat, but when the tape was removed, patches of paint came off with it.

Drew, being a savvy inventor, headed to his lab to create the first removable masking tape. The 3M Company called Drew's tape "Scotch," after Scotty McTape, a kilt-wearing cartoon boy who was the brand's mascot. You can still see Scotty McTape's plaid tartan pattern on packages of the tape sold today.