

April 2026

Liberty Letter

Broad Reach Health Care Liberty Commons



Celebrating April

Straw Hat Month

Physical Wellness Month

Defeat Diabetes Month

Passover

Begins Sundown April 1

Handmade Day

April 4

World Health Day

April 7

Siblings Day

April 10

Dolphin Day

April 14

World Amateur Radio Day

April 18

Earth Day

April 22

Talk Like Shakespeare Day

April 23

International Jazz Day

April 30

Roll into Spring

April 3 marks World Marbles Day, a lighthearted celebration of one of the world's oldest and most satisfying games. Long before screens and controllers, a small pouch of marbles and a patch of dirt were enough to fill an afternoon.

Marbles have been played in some form for thousands of years. Archaeologists have uncovered stone and clay marbles at ancient sites, and by the 1800s, glass marbles—often handmade—became popular in Europe and the United States. Each one had its own personality: cat's-eyes, swirls, shooters, and cloudy "alley agates." Some were meant for play, while others were carefully traded or saved as prized collectibles.

The game itself was simple but never dull. Players crouched low, flicking a shooter marble with a practiced thumb, aiming to knock opponents' marbles out of a circle or hole. It required strategy, steady hands, and just enough daring to risk losing your best marble on a bold shot. Skill mattered, but luck always had a say, which kept things exciting.

World Marbles Day is a good excuse to revisit that sense of play. Even if you never played by official rules, you might remember the feel of cool glass in your palm or the clink marbles made when they collided. Today, marbles are still collected for their craftsmanship, with modern artists creating intricate designs that are as much art as toy.

The word *marble* even rolls into the kitchen. Think of marbled rye bread, marbled pound cake, or a perfectly marbled steak—proof that swirling patterns are just as appealing on the plate as they are in a game.

As spring arrives and days grow longer, World Marbles Day offers a reminder that fun doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes it's as simple as a small glass sphere, good aim, and the pleasure of watching something roll exactly where you hoped it would.

Inside the Human Blueprint



Over two decades ago, scientists completed a \$3 billion effort to understand and map human DNA—long strands of genetic material that influence traits such as biological sex, eye and hair color, ancestry, and susceptibility to certain diseases. That map of the human genome has opened new opportunities for doctors and researchers to better understand, prevent, and treat a wide range of illnesses. Since National DNA Day falls on the 25th, the month of April is a fitting time to learn about ongoing advances in genetic science.

Gene therapy requires scientists to find faulty strings of DNA that cause disease and replace them with normal ones. In this way, the body can stop itself from producing genetic ailments. The ultimate goal of researchers is for scientists to develop gene therapies that fight all kinds of DNA-based diseases, including some forms of blindness, muscular dystrophy, and even cancer.

Our DNA can reveal not only why we may become sick but also how our bodies respond to certain medicines. Francis Collins, former director of the National Institutes of Health, has suggested that genetic testing may one day become a routine part of medical care. By studying DNA, drug companies and doctors are already working to develop treatments tailored to groups of patients—and in some cases individuals—based on their genetic makeup.

Some promising advances also come from stem cells, which act as a body's internal repair system and can develop into many different types of cells. Researchers continue to explore how stem cells might be used to repair or replace damaged tissues, such as heart tissue affected by disease, vision loss from macular degeneration, joint damage from arthritis, or brain injury caused by stroke. Today, these DNA-based treatments are often complex and costly, but they remain an important and growing area of medical research.

Barnum's Biggest Star

On April 9, 1882, renowned showman P. T. Barnum arrived in New York City with the largest spectacle ever to grace his traveling circus. Jumbo the African elephant, weighing 6.5 tons and standing over 11 feet tall, stepped from the British steamship *HMS Assyrian Monarch*. The massive but gentle beast instantly endeared himself to audiences. Thanks to Jumbo's many stunts, such as promenading across the Brooklyn Bridge, Barnum's circus earned the nickname "The Greatest Show on Earth."

The name *Jumbo* was a cross between two Swahili words: *jumbe* meaning "chief," and *jambo* meaning "hello." We can thank Jumbo the elephant for adding the word *jumbo* to our vocabulary.

A Perfect Pairing



Is there a more perfect sandwich than peanut butter and jelly? In celebration of one of the best food combinations of all time, April 2 is Peanut Butter and Jelly Day. When it comes to PB&J, many think, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." However, if you're looking to expand your PB&J horizons, do what Elvis did and swap the jelly for fresh fruit. Bananas, strawberries, or even pomegranates fit the bill. More adventurous types opt for grilling their sandwiches in a frying pan, while others ditch the bread and slather their pancakes with PB&J.

When it comes to food combinations, PB&J certainly tops the list. But is this humble sandwich tastier than bacon and eggs? Macaroni and cheese? Spaghetti and meatballs? A burger and fries? Cookies and milk? Dietician Katherine Brooking offers some insight into PB&J's allure. "Humans have an innate predilection for salt, sweet, and fat," she says. Add the creamy texture of peanut butter, and this sandwich becomes "one of the hardest foods to eat in moderation."

One Last Powwow



On April 24 and 25, Albuquerque, New Mexico, will host one of the largest gatherings of Indigenous Americans in the world when more than 700 tribes from the United States, Canada, and beyond arrive for the Gathering of Nations Powwow. First held more

than 40 years ago, the Gathering of Nations has grown into the premier Native American cultural event in North America. Sadly, organizers have announced that the 2026 powwow will be its final year—“The Last Dance.”

What makes the powwow so special? It is a shared celebration of traditional Indigenous cultures—a feast for the eyes, ears, and mouth. With more than 30 judged categories, spirited competition in Native music, singing, and dancing involves everyone from children to elders. It is a remarkable sight to see men and women perform many different dances in their traditional regalia adorned with feathers, beads, and colorful clothing. Visitors should not miss the Grand Entry, when thousands of dancers in full costume enter the arena with great fanfare.

Another highlight is the Miss Indian World competition, where young Native women compete in public speaking, traditional talents, interviews, and dance, sharing their tribes’ cultures and histories. Winners traditionally serve as cultural ambassadors and educators.

In the spirit of community, all are welcome to attend the powwow. Tickets grant access to the powwow grounds, Stage 49 (a live music stage featuring Native performers), the Indian Traders Market with hundreds of artisans and craft workers, the Native Food Court, and the Horse & Rider Regalia Parade. Events take place at the Powwow Grounds at Expo New Mexico, centered around the Tingley Coliseum in Albuquerque.

Letters in Action

National Scrabble Day, celebrated every April 13, is the perfect excuse to dust off your tiles and show off your word skills. Since its creation in 1938 by Alfred Butts, Scrabble has challenged players to turn letters into clever combinations, scoring big points while occasionally learning a new word or two. From casual family game nights to competitive tournaments, Scrabble brings people together and sparks a bit of friendly rivalry.

On National Scrabble Day, players embrace the challenge of crafting the highest-scoring words and reveling in the joy of landing a triple-word score. Even if you’re not a seasoned pro, the day is a fun reminder that words can be playful, powerful, and sometimes tricky.

Some enthusiasts share words or post photos of game boards mid-battle on social media. Schools, libraries, and community centers often host Scrabble events to encourage literacy and spark a love of language. So grab your tiles, find a worthy opponent, and celebrate the delightful challenge of Scrabble.

Drawn to Birds



Draw a Bird Day, celebrated on April 8 each year, dates to 1943, when seven-year-old Dorie Cooper visited her uncle, a wounded war veteran, in the hospital. He was in poor spirits, and Dorie tried to cheer him up by requesting he draw a bird for her. Dorie couldn’t

help but laugh at the resulting picture, but she did, indeed, boost her uncle’s spirits. With each subsequent visit to the hospital, Dorie was greeted with pictures of birds drawn by the soldiers, some good and many bad, but all of them evoking smiles. On April 8, put your talents to work drawing a bird. And don’t feel too bad if your work isn’t quite as beautiful as the paintings of famous ornithologist John J. Audubon, whose birthday is celebrated on April 26.

Across Faiths and Time



April 1–7 may be Golden Rule Week, but the message of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you is timeless. While many know the Golden Rule to

come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, it might be a surprise to hear that a version of the Golden Rule appears in almost every major religion. The Bible tells the story of how Jesus, in order to better address the great crowds following him, ascended a mountainside. His moving proclamations became known as the Sermon on the Mount. As told by his apostle Matthew, Jesus said, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus, in this teaching, was actually summarizing the Jewish Torah. Elsewhere in the Talmud, Rabbi Hillel taught, "What is hateful to yourself, do not do to another." This is a sentiment that echoes other religious teachings. The Chinese philosopher Confucius said, "Do not do to others what you would not like yourself." The Buddha preached, "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." It is written in the Hindu text Mahabharata, "Do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you." The Quran advises Muslims, "None of you has faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

Though many now call these teachings the Golden Rule, it was never called that in the Bible or elsewhere. The term originated in the 17th century in reference to the courts of old England, where golden law implied that judges could be bought with gold. From this cynical view of law sprouted a more optimistic and common-sense golden rule, which implied the sharing of good deeds between citizens in order to sidestep corrupt courts. The Golden Rule is found in so many different cultures that some believe it to be the fundamental quality of human nature.

April Birthdays

In astrology, those born between April 1–19 are Rams of Aries. As the first sign of the zodiac, Arians charge out of the gate with energy, confidence, power, and zeal. As pioneers, Arians are unafraid of the unknown. As eternal optimists, no odds are ever considered insurmountable. Those born April 20–30 are Bulls of Taurus. Bulls show a steady persistence in endeavors both professional and personal, and after working hard, are not shy about rewarding themselves for a job well done.

Buddy Ebsen (actor) – April 2, 1908

Eddie Murphy (comedian) – April 3, 1961

Gregory Peck (actor) – April 5, 1916

Loretta Lynn (singer) – April 14, 1932

Clarence Darrow (lawyer) – April 18, 1857

Elizabeth II (queen) – April 21, 1926

Shirley Temple (actress) – April 23, 1928

Carol Burnett (comedian) – April 26, 1933

Willie Nelson (musician) – April 30, 1933

Rocking Broadway



The year 1968 was a turbulent time of social and cultural upheaval in the United States. The Vietcong launched the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. In the midst of the Civil

Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. were assassinated. Then on April 29, 1968, the countercultural musical *Hair* debuted on Broadway.

Hair marked a radical break from Broadway musical tradition. It was Broadway's first rock musical. The subject matter threw light on the hippie subculture with many overt references to drugs and sexuality. Indeed, the end of the first act boasted a completely nude scene. To the surprise of many, audiences loved it. *Hair* became an instant smash. For so many, it finally "Let the Sunshine In."