

## 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 dramatic, it is no wonder that the king of the jungle is a Leo's mascot. Whether it's in Hollywood or in the home, Leos accomplish their goals.

Richard Petty (race-car driver) – July 2, 1937  
 Ringo Starr (Beatle) – July 7, 1940  
 Tom Hanks (actor) – July 9, 1956  
 Arthur Ashe (tennis pro) – July 10, 1943  
 Woody Guthrie (folk singer) – July 14, 1912  
 Ginger Rogers (dancer) – July 16, 1911  
 Janet Reno (attorney general) – July 21, 1938  
 Lynda Carter (actress) – July 24, 1951  
 Gracie Allen (comedian) – July 26, 1895

## Night of Nights



Morse code, that method of communicating letters using long and short signals of sound or light, seems old fashioned. After all, commercial Morse radio stations have been defunct for almost three decades. The last U.S. transmission went out on July 12, 1999, and read, "What hath God wrought"—which is also the first message sent by Samuel Morse in 1844. It was a sad night for those who had used Morse code throughout their lives. The abandoned station was filled with old rotary phones, manual typewriters, teletype machines, and telegraphy keys, some dating back to the time of Samuel Morse. What a pleasant surprise when the airwaves sprang to life again with buzzing and beeping on July 12, 2000. This was the first "Night of Nights," when for one night, an old maritime radio station on the coast of northern California sent out Morse transmissions. The tradition has been carried on ever since.

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## 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.

## Celebrating July

### Independence Day (U.S.)

July 4<sup>th</sup>

## Facility Events

### Independence Day

July 4<sup>th</sup>

### Friday Jams & Donuts

July 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

### Resident Group Outing

July 29<sup>th</sup>

### Resident Council Meeting

July 30<sup>th</sup>

### Birthday Bash

July 31<sup>st</sup>

