

JANUARY



I HAPPY NEW YEAR! (SEVENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS)

New Year's Day is a traditional day for wassailing. Wassail comes from the Old English toast *Wes Hel*: "Be of good health!" We toast each other and we toast the apple trees with ale and cider.

2 EIGHTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

St. Macarius's Day: He is a patron saint of cooks and confectioners.

3 NINTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

St. Genevieve's Day: Sacred to Paris.

4 TENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

St. Titus's and St. Gregory's Day, as well as St. Rigobert and St. Ramon.

5 TWELFTH NIGHT (ELEVENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS)

While not very popular in the United States, Twelfth Night brings is the Eve of the Epiphany, with festivities that in many places rival those of Christmas Day. Here comes the Festival of the Three Kings in Latin America; *los tres reyes* will deliver gifts tonight. In Italy, *la befana* makes her rounds, delivering small presents to good girls and boys. Naughty ones get coal.

6 EPIPHANY (TWELFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS)

Epiphany marks the arrival of the Magi at the stable in Bethlehem. In many places, like Mexico, today is the big day for Christmas gift-giving, for it is *El Dia de Reyes*. Epiphany also brings the traditional closing of the twelve days of Yuletide festivities after Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

7 ST. DISTAFF'S DAY

Partly work and partly play, Ye must on St. Distaff's Day: This is the day when women traditionally returned to their spinning after Christmas. The men would often try to light their flax on fire... but the women expected this and it usually was the men who ended up soaked to the skin.

II PLOUGH MONDAY, COPPERMAN'S DAY

The Monday after Epiphany, Plough Monday, meant back to work for the men; this day traditionally marked the beginning of the agricultural year with a ceremonial ploughing of the frozen ground. As for Copperman's Day: it is a traditional printers' holiday in Holland in which the apprentices got the day off to work on their own projects and show off the printing skills they'd learnt – very often it would be a printed keepsake exchanged for a copper.

I8 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Honoring the great American civil rights leader.

25 BURNS NIGHT

Celebrates the birthday of the great Scottish poet Robert Burns, who gave us the *Auld Lang Syne* song we sang at the start of the month.



CONVIVIO
bookworks

follow the book of days blog at conviviobookworks.com

Image: Graffiti on a park bench in West Palm Beach, Florida, along the Lake Worth Lagoon, offering timely New Year advice.

Convivio Book of Days January 2016 © Convivio Bookworks