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QATAR “Kingdom of Falcons”



Chief of State: Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (since June 25, 2013)

Head of Government: Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman Al Thani (since March 7, 2023)

Capital City: Doha • Population: 2.5 million

Independence: September 3, 1971, from the United Kingdom.

National Day: December 18 (1878), anniversary of the Al Thani family's accession to the throne.

The name “Qatar” likely comes from “Qatara,” an ancient place name known to Greek and Roman geographers; the peninsula's strategic location made it a historic stop for pearling and trade. Ruled by the Al Thani family since the mid-1800s, [Qatar](#) has, over the last 60 years, transformed itself from a poor British protectorate noted mainly for [pearling](#) into an independent state with significant hydrocarbon revenues. The pearling industry is the harvesting and cultivation of pearls from oysters for jewelry and other decorative uses.

Former Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who overthrew his father in a bloodless coup in 1995, ushered in wide-sweeping political and media reforms, unprecedented economic investment, and a growing Qatari regional leadership role, in part through the creation of the pan-Arab satellite news network Al-Jazeera and Qatar's mediation of some regional conflicts. In the 2000s, it resolved its longstanding border disputes with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, and by 2007, [Doha](#), its capital city, had attained the highest per capita income in the world.

Qatar did not experience domestic unrest or violence like that seen in other Near Eastern and North African countries in 2011, due in part to its immense wealth and patronage network. In mid-2013, Hamad peacefully abdicated, transferring power to his son, the current Amir Tamim bin Hamad. Tamim is popular with the Qatari public for his role in shepherding the country through an economic embargo from some other regional countries, for his efforts to improve the country's healthcare and education systems, and for his expansion of the country's infrastructure in anticipation of hosting international sporting events.

Fun Facts

- * Qatar is the world's most prosperous country by GDP per capita driven by huge natural gas and oil reserves in the North Field — the largest non-associated gas field on Earth.
- * Qatar will always be associated with the [2022 FIFA Men's World Cup](#) — the first World Cup held in the Middle East and the first held entirely in a single compact metropolitan area, making stadiums and fan sites unusually close together.
- * [The national sport is falconry](#). Falcons are prized, sometimes fitted with GPS or small cameras, and flown on desert hunts for [African houbara, also known as houbara bustards](#). Falconry is an ancient art recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is passed down from generation to generation. For Qataris, who invest heavily in breeding and training birds of prey, falcons embody a centuries-old tradition of hunting, prestige, and a respect for nature.
- * [Lusail City](#) — a planned smart city north of Doha — includes illuminated marinas, a stadium that hosted the World Cup final, and a waterfront designed for 200,000 residents.
- * Qatar has a strong cultural push: the Museum of Islamic Art (on an artificial island) and the newer National Museum of Qatar (designed by Jean Nouvel, inspired by desert rose formations) both house world-class collections and striking architecture.
- * The country has an interesting summer trick: many public places and stadiums use extensive district cooling and air-conditioned walkways. For the 2022 World Cup, several stadiums used advanced cooling technologies to keep temperatures comfortable.
- * Qatar's bird and marine life are notable: the waters host dugongs (sea cows) and diverse coral communities, and the inland desert is home to oryx (the national animal), sand gazelles, and migratory birds along the Gulf flyway.
- * Qatar plays an outsized role in global diplomacy and media, hosting the Al Udeid Air Base and regional mediation initiatives, despite its small size.

As we approach the closure of another remarkable year, it is with great pleasure that we present this final Newsletter edition. A spirit of gratitude, unity, and renewal marks these final months of the year. November, traditionally a time of harvest and thanksgiving, invites us to reflect on the year's blessings. December, with its many cultural and religious celebrations, reminds us of the enduring power of light, hope, and togetherness.

We take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt salute to the nations commemorating their Independence Days during November and December. Your journeys toward sovereignty and self-determination continue to inspire and remind us of the enduring values of freedom, unity, and resilience.

We are also honored to welcome Mr. Tuing Aye, Consul and Head of Chancery at the Consulate of Bangladesh, to our diplomatic community. Additionally, we extend our warmest congratulations to Mrs. Allene Martin, recipient of the Medal of Distinguished Foreign Service—one of the highest honors for excellence in diplomatic service awarded by the Bahamian Government.

To all our readers, colleagues, friends, and partners, we wish you a joyful and restful holiday season. May your Thanksgiving be filled with gratitude, your Christmas be merry and bright, and may the New Year bring renewed hope, health, and prosperity. We look forward to reconnecting with you in 2026, as we embark on another year of shared progress and purpose. Please stay safe!

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DIPLOMATIC & CONSULAR RELATIONS

Vice Consul Allene Martin receives the Medal of Distinguished Foreign Service from the Bahamian Government



L-R: The Honorable Frederick A. Mitchell, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Allene Martin, Vice Consul, Consulate General of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas in Miami, Dame Cynthia A. Pratt, the Governor-General of Bahama, and Mr. Jamahl Strachan, Parliamentary Secretary.

Mrs. Allene Martin is a dedicated diplomat serving with the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. With 19 years in the Bahamas Public Service, including four years as a Foreign Service Officer with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and seven years at the Bahamas Consulate General in Miami, she has built a distinguished career rooted in national service, international engagement, and public sector leadership.

Throughout her diplomatic tenure, Mrs. Martin has represented the Bahamas with professionalism and commitment, contributing to the nation's global presence and strengthening international partnerships. Her exemplary service was formally recognized on Monday, November 17, 2025, when she was awarded the Medal of Distinguished Foreign Service—one of the highest honors for excellence in diplomatic service.

Since 2018, she has served as Vice Consul in Miami, where she leads strategic initiatives, coordinates high-level engagements, and advises on regulatory and policy matters. She is known for building strong relationships with community leaders, advocacy groups, and government agencies to advance the Bahamas' interests abroad. Previously, she served as an Administrative Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and began her career as an Immigration Officer.

Mrs. Martin has a Master of Science in International and Global Studies from the University of the West Indies and a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Sojourner-Douglass College. She is an active member of the Consular Corps of Miami, Beacon for Change, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, and the International Trade Consortium.

Driven by integrity, dedication, and a passion for public service, Mrs. Martin continues to serve with distinction and pride.

Meet Mr. Tuing Aye, Consul and Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Miami, Florida



Mr. Tuing Aye is a career diplomat from Bangladesh who joined the Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs) in 2019. He currently serves as Consul and Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Miami. In this role, he supports the Consul General in managing political, consular, trade and investment, education, tourism, and cultural affairs, while also overseeing the Consulate's administrative and financial operations.

Before his posting in Miami, Mr. Aye served as First Secretary (Political) at the Embassy of Bangladesh in Muscat, Oman. There, he handled bilateral relations across trade, investment, energy, education, and cultural cooperation, while also addressing consular matters and the welfare of over 700,000 Bangladeshi expatriates.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka, he worked as Assistant Secretary in several wings, including Eastern Europe and CIS, West Asia, the Americas, and General Services. Mr. Aye holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET). Before joining the Foreign Service, he worked as an Assistant Engineer at Bangladesh Power Grid PLC.

His professional training includes the Foundation Training Course (BPATC), Special Diplomatic Training Course (FSA), and specialized programs in diplomacy from the Clingendael Institute (Netherlands) and Yunnan University (China), where he completed a 54-week online course in Chinese language and culture. Mr. Aye is dedicated to strengthening Bangladesh's bilateral ties and fostering collaboration with fellow consulates in Miami. He is married to Mrs. Khin A Rakhine, and they have one son.

AVIATION, CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & PROTOCOL TIDBITS

Culture, Etiquette and Protocol

As the holiday season approaches, it's an excellent time to reflect on the rich tapestry of traditions celebrated across the globe. Understanding the cultural nuances, etiquette, and protocols of different holiday customs not only fosters respect but also deepens our global connections. Here's a glimpse into how various cultures celebrate and what to keep in mind when engaging with them:

Christmas (Global, especially Western countries)

Etiquette: Gift-giving is common, but modesty and thoughtfulness are valued over extravagance.

Protocol: In many cultures, Christmas Eve (December 24) is as significant as Christmas Day. Respect religious observances, such as midnight Mass or family gatherings.

Boxing Day, celebrated on December 26 in countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, originated as a day when employers gave gifts or "Christmas boxes" to workers and the less fortunate. Today, it blends tradition with modern customs—marked by significant retail sales, sports events, and time spent with family. While its roots lie in generosity and giving back, it's now also known as a day of relaxation and post-Christmas festivities.

Hanukkah (Jewish communities worldwide)

Etiquette: Acknowledge the holiday with a warm "Happy Hanukkah." Gifts are often small and symbolic.

Protocol: Lighting the menorah is a sacred tradition. Avoid scheduling events that conflict with evening candle lighting ceremonies.

Ramadan & Eid al-Fitr (Muslim-majority countries)

Etiquette: During Ramadan, avoid eating or drinking in public during daylight hours. Greet with "Ramadan Mubarak" or "Eid Mubarak."

Protocol: Eid celebrations involve communal prayers, feasting, and charity. Dress modestly and be mindful of prayer times.

Diwali (India, Nepal, and global Hindu communities)

Etiquette: Gifts of sweets or candles are appreciated. Greet with "Happy Diwali" or "Shubh Diwali."

Protocol: Homes are decorated with lights and rangoli. Fireworks are standard, but always observe local safety guidelines.

Oshogatsu (Japanese New Year)

Etiquette: It's customary to send New Year's cards and give small monetary gifts (otoshidama) to children.

Protocol: Many businesses close from January 1–3. Visiting shrines and eating traditional foods like [osechi ryori](#) are key customs. Osechi ryori, said to have begun in the Heian era (from 794), is a set of small, traditional dishes served in beautiful three- or four-layered lacquer bento boxes called jubako. Traditionally, it is placed at the center of the table on New Year's Day and remains there over the next three days.

Kwanzaa (African American communities, USA)

Etiquette: Greet with "Habari Gani?" (What's the news?) and respond with the principle of the day.

Protocol: Celebrated from December 26–January 1, each day honors a different principle, such as unity or purpose. Ceremonies often include music, storytelling, and candle lighting.

Respecting diversity whether you're traveling, working with international colleagues, or simply wishing a friend well, a little cultural awareness goes a long way. A respectful greeting, a thoughtful gesture, or simply asking about someone's traditions can open doors to deeper understanding.

Aviation Briefs & Facts

[MIA launches the most significant single deployment of automated passport screening in the U.S.](#)

North American airports race to modernize border processing, Miami International Airport (MIA) this month introduced U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Enhanced Passenger Processing (EPP), which leverages [SITA Smart Path technology](#) to deliver faster and more secure arrivals for U.S. citizens. MIA, in collaboration with CBP, is one of several U.S. airports to go live with EPP this year and is home to CBP's most significant single deployment of EPP.

CBP is actively expanding biometric processing at major U.S. ports of entry to enhance security and streamline the arrival process for travelers. Collaborations like the one at MIA are essential to ensuring secure, efficient borders with seamless experience for passengers. At MIA, CBP's EPP initiative leverages SITA's Smart Path platform to capture and process biometric photos during inspections, verifying travelers by matching images against CBP's records in 3 seconds. This automation reduces waiting times while upholding the highest security standards. At MIA, the process involves 12 biometric face pods located in concourses D, E, and J, making it CBP's largest single EPP deployment to date. MIA's broader digital transformation strategy may include future expansion.

Miami is one of America's busiest international gateways and the door to Latin America and beyond. This EPP launch is setting a new standard for border efficiency by using biometrics to make arrivals smoother, faster, and more secure for everyone. It can easily scale over time to additional terminals and to handle increased capacity.

The mobile wireless-enabled pods can be repositioned as passenger flow changes, helping CBP optimize staffing and throughput. Each unit is equipped with agent-facing screens for real-time monitoring, ensuring that the technology enhances both passenger experience and officer oversight.

According to SITA's latest Air Transport IT Insights, 53% of North American airlines are already investing in biometric and digital identity management, outpacing the global average. Meanwhile, nearly 60% of airports have implemented touchless passenger flow technologies, indicating that the region is at the forefront of aviation's digital transformation. The introduction of EPP at MIA supports this trend, enabling more efficient processing without the need for new infrastructure, and demonstrating how biometrics and mobile connectivity alleviate congestion as passenger volumes increase.

MIA, America's busiest airport for international freight and the second busiest for international passengers, is receiving an unprecedented investment of \$9 billion in capital improvements and maintenance upgrades. MIA offers more flights to Latin America and the Caribbean than any other U.S. airport and is also the leading economic engine for Miami-Dade County and the state of Florida, generating \$181 billion in business revenue and approximately 60 percent of all international visitors to Florida annually.

BRIEFS & NOTES

World Dwarfism Day—October 25



October 25 was World Dwarfism Awareness Day. October is also the month of awareness dedicated to dwarfism, a time to celebrate people affected by [achondroplasia](#). According to the Advocacy Committee of the [Little People of America](#) (LPA), the theme for this year's Dwarfism Awareness/Advocacy Month is "Supporting All of Us for Each of Us." Little People of America is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives while celebrating with great pride Little People's contribution to social diversity. LPA strives to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature and their families. LPA was founded in 1957 to mark the birthday of Billy Barty, born in 1924.

Achondroplasia is a rare genetic condition that affects bone growth. It is the most common type of [skeletal dysplasia](#). Skeletal dysplasia is a category of rare genetic disorders that cause abnormal development of a baby's bones, joints, and cartilage. While skeletal dysplasia affects different parts of the body in other children, the most affected areas include the legs and arms, the rib cage, the skull, and the spine. About 1 in 5,000 babies is born with skeletal dysplasia, which varies in severity. Children with mild cases often have short stature and short legs and arms compared to the rest of their bodies. Children with more severe skeletal dysplasia may be born with serious complications, such as breathing problems caused by small chest cavities. There are about 400 types of skeletal dysplasia.

Achondroplasia causes slow bone growth, especially in the long bones of the arms and legs. This causes short stature, shortened limbs, and other distinctive features. This bone growth disorder causes dwarfism, characterized by unusually short stature. Most people do not have any serious health issues and can live regular lives, while others may face physical challenges and social barriers. This condition occurs in one in every 15,000 to 40,000 live births.

World's Shortest Woman (Mobile) Visits Miami, Florida



Ms. Jyoti Kisanji Amge, the world's shortest living woman (mobile) according to [Guinness World Records](#), is visiting Miami, Florida, for Ripley's Believe It or Not! Christmas Park at Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah, Florida. She was officially welcomed on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, by Miami-Dade Commissioner René García at Miami International Airport.

Ms. Amge, who stands 2 feet 1 inch (62.8 cm) tall, was born on December 16, 1993, in Nagpur, central India. She was of average stature until she reached the age of five, according to her mother, Ranjana. However, at that point, it became evident that some disorder was hampering her growth. It subsequently emerged that she has a form of dwarfism called achondroplasia and will never grow beyond a certain height.

From the age of four, Jyoti attended school alongside regular-sized children, although she was provided with a desk and chair more appropriate for her diminutive size. She first came to the attention of the wider world back in 2009, when she appeared on Fuji TV's *Bikkuri Chojin 100 Special No.2*. Measured by doctors on the show, she was found to be just 61.95 cm (2 ft) tall, confirming her as the *shortest living teenager (female)*. At just 5.4 kg (12 lb), she weighed only 4 kg (9 lb) more than her birth weight.

Another woman who holds a Guinness World Record for "shortest female living (non-mobile)" is [Wildine Aumoithe](#), an 18-year-old from North Miami Beach, Florida, who is 72 cm (28.3 in) tall. She is also proud to be the first Haitian American to hold the world record for the shortest woman.

Commissioner René García (standing), Jyoti Amge and U. Desmond Alufohai.



Photo of Jyoti Amge, World's shortest woman (mobile). Source: Guinness World Records.

	NAME	GENDER	HEIGHT	COUNTRY	LIFESPAN
Top 10 Shortest Verified Humans					
1	Chandra Bahadur Dangi	Male	54.6 cm (21.5 in)	Nepal	1939–2015
2	Gul Mohammed	Male	57.0 cm (22.4 in)	India	1957–1997
3	Junrey Balawing	Male	59.93 cm (23.6 in)	Philippines	1993–2020
4	Pauline Musters	Female	61 cm (24 in)	The Netherlands	1878–1895
5	Jyoti Amge	Female	62.8 cm (24.7 in)	India	1993–present
6	Madge Bester	Female	65 cm (25.6 in)	South Africa	1963–2018
7	Afshin Esmaeil Ghaderzadeh	Male	65.24 cm (25.7 in)	Iran	2002–present
8	Khagendra Thapa Magar	Male	67.08 cm (26.4 in)	Nepal	1992–2020
9	Lin Yü-chih	Male	67.5 cm (26.6 in)	Taiwan	1972–present
10	Edward Niño Hernández	Male	72.1 cm (28.4 in)	Colombia	1986–present
Top 10 Tallest Verified Humans					
1	Robert Pershing Wadlow	Male	272 cm (8 ft 11.1 in)	USA	1918–1940
2	John "Bud" Rogan	Male	267 cm (8 ft 9 in)	USA	1868–1905
3	John F. Carroll	Male	263.5 cm (8 ft 7.75 in)	USA	1932–1969
4	Väinö Myllyrinne	Male	251–253 cm (8 ft 2–3 in)	Finland	1909–1963
5	Sultan Kösen	Male	251 cm (8 ft 2.8 in)	Türkiye	1982–present
6	Édouard Beauré	Male	251 cm (8 ft 3 in)	Canada	1881–1904
7	Bernard Coyne	Male	249 cm (8 ft 2 in)	USA	1897–1921
8	Don Koehler	Male	248.3 cm (8ft 2ins)	USA	1925–1981
9	Zeng Jinlian	Female	246.3 cm (8ft 1 in)	China	1964–1982
10	Yao Defen	Female	233 ft 7ins)	China	1972–2912
Source: Guinness World Records					

BRIEFS & NOTES

Prematurity Awareness Month®



[Prematurity Awareness Month®](#), observed each November, shines a spotlight on the global challenge of babies born too soon. Established by the March of Dimes in 2003, it began as Prematurity Awareness Day, but quickly expanded into a month-long campaign to raise awareness, educate families, and advocate for healthier pregnancies. Today, it coincides with [World Prematurity Day on November 15](#), uniting communities worldwide in support of premature infants and their families.

Premature birth — defined as delivery before 37 weeks of pregnancy — remains one of the leading causes of infant mortality and long-term health complications. Globally, 1 in 10 babies is born prematurely, amounting to millions of infants each year. In the United States alone, more than 360,000 babies are born before term each year, representing about 10% of all births. These newborns face heightened risks of breathing difficulties, infections, developmental delays, and lifelong health challenges.

The origins of Prematurity Awareness Month are rooted in advocacy. The March of Dimes launched the initiative to confront rising preterm birth rates and to mobilize communities, healthcare providers, and policymakers. Over the past two decades, the campaign has grown to include public events, educational programs, and the release of the annual March of Dimes Report Card, which grades states on maternal and infant health outcomes. This report highlights disparities, with preterm birth rates disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, and rural communities, underscoring the urgent need for equity in maternal care.

Prematurity Awareness Month also emphasizes solutions. Evidence-based interventions such as early breastfeeding, kangaroo care (skin-to-skin contact), infection prevention, and access to neonatal intensive care have proven effective in improving survival and outcomes. Organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) join the call to action, urging governments to invest in maternal health systems and neonatal care.

Ultimately, Prematurity Awareness Month is about more than statistics. It is about honoring the resilience of premature babies, the dedication of families, and the tireless work of healthcare professionals. By raising awareness and driving action, this observance seeks to ensure that every baby — no matter how early their arrival — has the chance to survive and thrive.

Sources: [March of Dimes](#); [World Health Organization](#).

December is Universal Human Rights Awareness Month



Universal Human Rights Awareness Month, observed every December, commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 and highlights the ongoing struggle to protect fundamental freedoms worldwide. It is both a celebration of progress and a reminder of the urgent challenges that remain.

Universal Human Rights Awareness Month traces its roots to the [United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the UDHR on December 10, 1948](#). This landmark document set forth 30 articles affirming rights such as freedom of speech, equality before the law, and protection from torture. In the United States, the observance gained traction in 2001, when President George W. Bush proclaimed the first Human Rights Week, which later expanded into a month-long recognition.

Despite the UDHR's influence, human rights violations remain widespread:

- * Every 12 minutes, a civilian dies in armed conflict.
- * Every 14 hours, a human rights defender, journalist, or trade unionist is killed or disappeared.
- * 1 in 5 people worldwide report experiencing discrimination in the past year.
- * In 2024, civilian deaths in conflict rose by 40%, underscoring the fragility of global peace.
- * According to Statista, millions continue to face systemic racism, gender inequality, and suppression of free expression, while access to healthcare and education remains uneven across regions.

Universal Human Rights Awareness Month is not only about remembering history, but also about mobilizing action. Governments, NGOs, and communities use December to host dialogues, educational campaigns, and advocacy initiatives. The observance coincides with Human Rights Day on December 10, reinforcing the call to uphold dignity, equality, and justice for all.

Universal Human Rights Awareness Month reminds us that human rights are universal, indivisible, and non-negotiable. Behind every statistic is a human story — a life impacted by injustice or uplifted by protection. By recommitting to the UDHR's vision, societies can work toward a future where every person, everywhere, enjoys the rights and freedoms they deserve.

Source: [UNESCO](#)

BRIEFS & NOTES

Global Games: A Cultural Tour of Unusual Recreational Contests

Below is a formal, comprehensive list of ten notable recreational contests and traditional games from around the world—some humorous, some historic, and some controversial. These events reflect the diversity of human creativity and community spirit. Where an activity raises ethical or safety concerns, this is clearly noted while still acknowledging its place in cultural discourse.

1. [Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling and Wake – England](#)

Held annually in Gloucestershire, this daring event sees participants chase a rolling wheel of cheese down a dangerously steep hill. Known for its chaotic energy and frequent tumbles, the contest has become a symbol of English eccentricity. Despite the risk of injury, it continues to draw both competitors and spectators from around the world.

2. [The Running of the Bulls \(San Fermin\) – Pamplona, Spain](#)

A centuries-old tradition, this event involves participants running ahead of a group of bulls through the narrow streets of Pamplona. Deeply embedded in Spanish culture and accompanied by religious and ceremonial elements, it is also the subject of ongoing ethical debates due to the dangers posed to both humans and animals.

3. [World Wife-Carrying Championship – Finland](#)

Originating in the Finnish town of Sonkajärvi, this lighthearted competition features male participants carrying their female partners through a challenging obstacle course. With roots in local folklore, the event has grown into an international spectacle, celebrated for its humor, athleticism, and inclusive spirit.

4. [La Tomatina – Buñol, Spain](#)

This vibrant festival transforms the streets of Buñol into a massive tomato battleground. Participants engage in a one-hour food fight using overripe tomatoes, creating a joyful, messy, and highly regulated event. La Tomatina has become a major tourist attraction, celebrated for its festive atmosphere and communal spirit.

5. [Buzkashi – Afghanistan and Central Asia](#)

Often described as a rugged, intense form of polo, Buzkashi involves horseback riders competing to carry a goat or calf carcass to a designated goal. It is Afghanistan's national sport and holds deep cultural significance, showcasing strength, strategy, and horsemanship.

6. [Caber Toss – Scotland](#)

A highlight of the Scottish Highland Games, the caber toss challenges athletes to flip a tall, heavy log end over end. More than a test of brute strength, it requires balance and precision. The event is a proud expression of Scottish heritage and athletic tradition.

7. [Toe Wrestling – England](#)

Invented in the 1970s as a quirky alternative to arm wrestling, toe wrestling involves locking toes and attempting to pin the opponent's foot. Despite its novelty, it has grown into a niche sport with its own world championship and loyal fan base.

8. [Shin-Kicking Championship – England](#)

Dating back to the 17th century and revived as part of the Cotswold Olimpick Games, this contest involves competitors attempting to unbalance one another by kicking each other's shins. Modern versions include safety padding and rules to reduce injury, preserving the tradition while prioritizing participant welfare.

9. [Human Wheelbarrow Races, and Novelty Obstacle Games – Global](#)

Across continents, communities engage in playful contests involving carrying teammates, navigating humorous obstacles, or racing in unconventional ways. While less formalized than Finland's championship, these events reflect a universal love for laughter, teamwork, and physical challenge.

10. [Dwarf Tossing / Little-Person Throwing – Various Locations \(Historical/Controversial\)](#)

Once practiced in certain bars and clubs, this activity involved tossing a consenting little person wearing protective gear. Today, it is widely condemned as degrading and unsafe and has been banned in many regions. While it remains a part of historical discourse, modern perspectives treat it as a cautionary example of entertainment that fails to uphold human dignity.

These contests, whether rooted in ancient tradition or modern invention, offer a fascinating lens into how communities celebrate identity, humor, and resilience. While many are harmless and culturally enriching, others prompt essential conversations about ethics, safety, and respect. Together, they reveal the remarkable ways in which people around the world come together to compete, connect, and celebrate the human spirit.

INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (NOVEMBER)

November 1, 1981 – Antigua and Barbuda: National Day marks the day the islands gained independence from Great Britain.

November 3, 1978 – Dominica: Gained independence from Great Britain to become an independent republic in the Commonwealth.

November 9, 1953 – Cambodia: Declared independence from France.

November 11, 1975 – Angola: Portugal granted Angola independence on this day.

November 11, 1918 – Poland: National Independence Day commemorates the anniversary of the restoration of Poland's sovereignty as the Second Polish Republic in 1918 and independence from the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian Empires.

November 15, 1983 – North Cyprus: In a unilateral declaration, the Turkish Cypriot parliament declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus independent from the Republic of Cyprus.

November 18, 1918 – Latvia: Achieved full independence from the U.S.S.R. on August 21, 1991, but the main Independence Day holiday in Latvia celebrates independence from German and Russian occupations on November 18, 1918.

November 18, 1955 – Morocco: Gained independence from France on March 2, 1956, and from Spain on April 7, 1956. When King Hassan II was crowned in 1961, at the King's request, Moroccan Independence is now celebrated on November 18th to commemorate the day King Mohammed V gave his iconic independence speech in 1955.

November 18, 1650 – Oman: National Day celebrates independence from Portuguese control in 1650.

November 19, 2021 – Monaco: The Sovereign Prince's Day, Monaco's National Day, is currently celebrated on November 19. Traditionally, the reigning Prince determines the date, and previous Princes often chose the day of the saint they were named after. When he ascended the throne in 2005, Prince Albert chose to celebrate the day of Saint Rainier, the same day his father had celebrated, and the day he officially ascended the throne in 2005.

November 22, 1943 – Lebanon: Liberation Day from the French Mandate.

November 25, 1975 – Suriname: Formerly known as Dutch Guiana, Suriname gained independence from the Netherlands.

November 28, 1912 – Albania: Declared independence from the Ottoman Empire.

November 28, 1960 – Mauritania: On this day in 1960, Mauritania gained independence from France.

November 28, 1821 – Panama: November is Panama's Patriotic Month, as it celebrates three independence days. November 3rd is celebrated as Independence from Colombia (1903). This day is also known as Colón Day. It is followed on November 10th, when Panamanians commemorate the "uprising in Villa Los Santos" against the Spaniards, and finally, November 28th, National Day, celebrates independence from Spain.

November 30, 1966 – Barbados: Fifty-five years to the day of gaining independence from the UK, Barbados became a republic on November 30, 2021.

November 30, 1967 – Yemen: The declaration of Independence of South Yemen from the United Kingdom. The Yemeni National Day is observed each year on May 22, Unification Day.

INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (DECEMBER)

December 1, 1640 – Portugal: The day commemorates the restoration of Portuguese independence after 60 years of Spanish rule.

December 1, 1918 – Romania: Great Union Day marks the unification of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina with the Romanian Kingdom.

December 1, 1958 – Central African Republic: On this date, the French colony of Ubangi-Shari was granted independence within the French Community but remained part of the French Empire in Africa. The country was renamed the Central African Republic when it gained full independence from France on August 13, 1960.

December 5 – Thailand: The birthday anniversary of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great continues to be celebrated as Thailand's National Day.

December 5, 1972 – United Arab Emirates: On this day, known as Union Day, six of the seven emirates formed a federation, founding the UAE. The 7th joined on February 10, 1972.

December 6, 1917 – Finland: Finland gained independence from Russia on December 6, 1917.

December 9, 1961 – Tanzania: Tanganyika gained independence from Britain on December 9, 1961. In 1964, it merged with Zanzibar to become Tanzania.

December 11, 1931 – South Africa: On this day in 1931, South Africa gained legislative independence from Great Britain, but retained the British monarch as its head of state. On May 31, 1961, the country became a republic, severing all formal ties with Great Britain.

December 11, 1958 – Burkina Faso: Republic Day commemorates the day that Upper Volta became an autonomous republic in the French Community and gained independence from France, August 5, 1960. On August 4, 1984, Upper Volta was renamed Burkina Faso.

December 12, 1963 – Kenya: "Jamhuri Day" celebrates Kenya's independence from Britain and the establishment of a republic.

December 13 – St. Lucia: Feast Day of St. Lucy, patron saint of St. Lucia, is celebrated as the National Day.

December 16, 1971 – Bahrain: After gaining independence from the United Kingdom on August 15, 1971, Bahrain celebrated its National Day on December 16, 1971.

December 16, 1991 – Kazakhstan: On this day, Kazakhstan gained independence from the Soviet Union.

December 17, 1907 – Bhutan: On this date, Bhutan became a unified kingdom under Ugyen Wangchuck, its first hereditary king. On August 8, 1949, Bhutan signed the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of Friendship with India, which maintained Bhutanese independence.

December 18, 1878 – Qatar: Founder's Day, Qatar's National Day, celebrates the country's unification in 1878. Qatar gained independence from Britain on September 3, 1971.

December 20, 1999 – Macau: On this day in 1999, Portugal returned Macau to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Macau became a Special Administrative Region of China.

December 24, 1951 – Libya: Libya gained independence from Italy on this day.

December 26, 1990 – Slovenia: Independence and Unity Day is celebrated to commemorate the official proclamation of the Slovenian independence referendum.

December 29, 1911 – Mongolia: Declared its independence from the Manchu-led Qing Empire in 1911 but did not achieve full independence from China until July 11, 1921. December 29th has been celebrated annually since 2011.

ABOUT US

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