



National Fried Clam Day



National Hot Dog Day



National Donut Day

# July | 2016

What to celebrate this week, according to the National Day Calendar.

## Monday

Independence Day  
National Barbecued Spareribs Day  
National Caesar Salad Day

## Tuesday

National Apple Turnover Day  
National Graham Cracker Day  
National Bikini Day

## Wednesday

National Fried Chicken Day

## Thursday

National Father-Daughter Take a Walk Day  
National Strawberry Sundae Day  
National Macaroni Day

## Friday

National Chocolate with Almonds Day  
Collector Car Appreciation Day

Source: National Day Calendar

# Happy Fried Chicken Day

How every food, product and cause got its own day on the calendar for us to celebrate

By JILLIAN BERMAN

When the owners of Woodman's of Essex opened their mail last summer, they were elated to find a poster-size proclamation declaring July 3 National Fried Clam Day.

"It really was a big deal for us," says Maureen Woodman, a third-generation co-owner of the roadside seafood restaurant in Essex, Mass. For her, the recognition provides "just one more stamp of approval" for the restaurant's claim that its founder invented the fried clam 100 years ago on July 3, then introduced it to the public the following day during a local Fourth of July parade.

The honor was granted by National Day Calendar, a little-known group in Mandan, N.D., with outsize clout to decide who gets their own day. The group's official calendar is

one of several such efforts to make every day office-cupcake worthy. In Woodman's case, a staffer purchased the proclamation as a surprise for the restaurant's owners.

With a motto like "celebrate every day," expect a full calendar. In fact, the National Day Calendar also features a National Deep Fried Clams Day on Nov. 1, though Marlo Anderson, the calendar's founder, says he couldn't find much research to substantiate the origins of National Deep Fried Clams Day.

"We're like, 'Who eats fried clams in November?'" says Mrs. Woodman of the rival designation.

When Mr. Anderson, 52, created the database in January 2013 for National Day Calendar—now part of Zoovio Inc., a company that digitizes videos—he wondered, "How many national days can we have?"

The number, apparently, is as limitless as the day is long. Mr. Anderson lists some 1,200 holidays, many of which existed before he launched his project.

In its short life, National Day Calendar has

become a go-to source for such celebrations. The power of the site basically rests in the fact that more than 20,000 media outlets subscribe to it, free of charge, according to Mr. Anderson, so if you're on it you may get a mention on a slow news day.

Mr. Anderson was moved to start the calendar when he was looking for information on a National Popcorn Day and couldn't find any. His calendar now includes a National Popcorn Day (Jan. 19), as well as National Orange Blossom Day (June 27), National Periodic Table Day (Feb. 7), National Ferret Day (April 2), National Drinking Straw Day (Jan. 3) and National I Love My Feet Day (Aug. 17).

The designations are typically used by organizations, small businesses and other companies as promotional opportunities, often in tandem with social-media campaigns and special shopping days, to raise awareness about a brand or a cause.

The notion of using a self-designated holiday as a marketing opportunity goes back a

Please see DAY page D2

FROM LEFT: NORMAN LEMCKE/WOODMAN'S OF ESSEX; CBS/GETTY IMAGES; UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT/GETTY IMAGES

# DAY

Continued from the prior page long way. The Salvation Army started National Donut Day in 1938 as a way to raise money for social services during the Great Depression and to celebrate the group's volunteers, who handed out doughnuts to soldiers during World War I.

The U.S. government designates federal holidays. Some states also create their own. Additional celebrations can be recognized by presidential proclamation, such as National Maritime Day, which was May 22.

Despite today's crowded landscape—and the cost of up to \$4,500 for a day—businesses still clamor for a spot on the calendar. Mr. Anderson says he and his four-person committee receive about 18,000 applications for new national days each year. They choose about 30, meaning about 90 new days have been registered since they started.

Applicants submit a brief online form. The committee must unanimously agree for the day to be featured on the calendar, which is offered in print and online. If a day is approved, the applicant must pay \$2,300 to \$4,500—depending on whether the company wants National Day Calendar help in promoting the holiday—to be written onto the calendar.

Mr. Anderson's group doesn't shy away from listing



RICHARD ELLIS/GETTY IMAGES

**Competitors see who can cover themselves in the most grits on National Grits Day on April 14, 2012, in St. George, S.C.**

multiple holidays on a given date. The audience for national days is wide enough not to be put off by a day that includes, say, National Chocolate Éclair Day and National Onion Rings Day, both on June 22, he says.

"It could be a niche type of thing, but if you've got 10 million people in this country that really love onion rings and when they post about it, it trends," he says.

The committee rejects frequent requests from boys wanting to impress their girlfriends with a special day just for them. "We don't honor individuals," Mr. Anderson says.

Mr. Anderson admits the calendar is getting crowded. He is considering retiring some holidays, such as National Deep Fried Clams Day, that seem irrelevant today or

don't appear to have a back story.

The demand is high enough to spark competition among calendar makers. In 2006, blogger John-Bryan Hopkins, 44, of Birmingham, Ala., started designating days in honor of foods as a way to create a following for his site, Foodimentary. He simply named the holidays Cereal Day or Eggs Benedict Day. He later learned that adding "national" to the name "just got much more of a response, like it was more official," he says.

The tactic worked. Mr. Hopkins's site has more than 860,000 followers on Twitter. Now, he rarely adds a new day. "There's not really much of a need for it," he says. Companies don't buy a day on his site, and there is no application process. But

he will help brands and organizations that want to create a new food day find an appropriate date.

Special days keep growing as barriers to new celebrations fall. Twitter, Instagram and other social-media platforms have made it easier than ever for companies to create so-called hashtag holidays and amplify special days that fit their brand.

Despite the noise, some business owners still see the value in celebrating a contrived holiday. Greg Kempel says he has made back four-fold his \$899 investment

(rates have since increased) in a listing on the National Day Calendar for National Strawberry Rhubarb Wine Day. Mr. Kempel and his wife, who own Maple River Winery, based in Casselton, N.D., created the holiday in 2013 as a way to draw attention to one of their signature products. They celebrate it on the third Saturday of July every year.

"When someone in Alaska is enjoying our bottle of wine on National Strawberry Rhubarb Wine Day, you can't put that into perspective as a small-business owner in North Dakota," Mr. Kempel says.

This year he'll share July 16 with National Corn Fritters Day, National Personal Chef's Day, Toss Away the "Could Haves" and "Should Haves" Day, and National Woodie Wagon Day, according to the National Day Calendar.