

# Korean calendar

The traditional **Korean calendar** or **Dangun calendar** (단군; 檀君) is a lunisolar calendar. Dates are calculated from Korea's meridian (135th meridian east in modern time for South Korea), and observances and festivals are based in Korean culture.

Koreans mostly use the Gregorian calendar, which was officially adopted in 1896. However, traditional holidays and age-reckoning for older generations are still based on the old calendar.<sup>[1]</sup> The biggest festivals in Korea today, which are also national holidays, are Seollal, the first day of the traditional Korean New Year, and Chuseok its harvest moon festival. Other important festivals include Daeboreum also referred to as *Boreumdaal* (the first full moon), Dano (spring festival) and Samjinnal (spring-opening festival). Other minor festivals include Yudu (summer festival), and Chilseok (monsoon festival).

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## History

Like most traditional calendars of other East Asian countries, the Korean Calendar is mainly derived from the Chinese calendar.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The traditional calendar designated its years via Korean era names from 270 to 963, then Chinese era names with Korean era names at a few times until 1894. In 1894 and 1895, the lunar calendar was used with years numbered from the foundation of the Joseon Dynasty in 1392.

The Gregorian calendar was adopted on 1 January 1896, with Korean era name "Geon-yang (건양 / Hanja: 建陽, "adopting solar calendar")."

From 1945 until 1961 in South Korea, Gregorian calendar years were counted from the foundation of Gojoseon in 2333 BC (regarded as year one), the date of the legendary founding of Korea by Dangun, hence these Dangi (단기 / Hanja: 檀紀) years were 4278 to 4294. This numbering was informally used with the Korean lunar calendar before 1945 but has only been occasionally used since 1961, and mostly in North Korea prior to 1997.

Although not being an official calendar, in South Korea, the traditional Korean calendar is still maintained by the government. The current version is based on Asia's Shixian calendar ("*shi-heon-nyeok* 시헌력 (時憲曆)" in Korean), which was in turn developed by Jesuit scholars. However, because the Korean calendar is now based on the moon's shape seen from Korea, occasionally the calendar diverges from the traditional asian calendar by one day, even though the underlying rule is the same. As a result, sometime the New Year's Day differ by one between the two countries, which last happened in 1997.<sup>[4]</sup>

In North Korea, the Juche calendar has been used since 1997 to number its years, based on the birth of the state's founder Kim Il-sung.

## Features

- The Chinese zodiac of 12 Earthly Branches (animals), which were used for counting hours and years;
- Ten Heavenly Stems, which were combined with the 12 Earthly Branches to form a sixty-year cycle;
- Twenty-four solar terms (*jeolgi* / 절기, Hanja: 節氣) in the year, spaced roughly 15 days apart;
- Lunar months including leap months added every two or three years.

## Weekdays

Note that traditional Korean calendar has no concept of "weekdays": the following are names of weekdays in the modern (Western) calendar.

English	<u>Hangul</u>	<u>Hanja</u>	Transliteration	<u>Heavenly body</u>	<u>5 Elements</u> ( <u>Hanja/ Hanzi</u> : 五行 = <u>Korean</u> : 오행; <u>Chinese</u> : Wuxing)
Sunday	일요일	日曜日	<i>il.yo.il: iryoil</i>	<u>Sun</u>	
Monday	월요일	月曜日	<i>wŏl.yo.il: woryoil</i>	<u>Moon</u>	
Tuesday	화요일	火曜日	<i>hwa.yo.il: hwayoil</i>	<u>Mars</u>	Fire
Wednesday	수요일	水曜日	<i>su.yo.il: suyoil</i>	<u>Mercury</u>	Water
Thursday	목요일	木曜日	<i>mok.yo.il: mogyoil</i>	<u>Jupiter</u>	Wood
Friday	금요일	金曜日	<i>kŭm.yo.il: geumyoil</i>	<u>Venus</u>	Metal
Saturday	토요일	土曜日	<i>tho.yo.il: toyoil</i>	<u>Saturn</u>	Earth

## Months

In modern Korean language, the months of both the traditional lunisolar and Western calendars are named by prefixing Sino-Korean numerals to *wol*, the Sino-Korean word for "month". Traditionally, when speaking of individuals' birth months, the months of the lunisolar calendar were named by prefixing the native Korean name of the animal associated with each Earthly Branch in the Chinese zodiac to *dal*, the native Korean word for "month". Additionally, the first, eleventh, and twelfth months have other Korean names which are similar to traditional Chinese month names.<sup>[5]</sup> However, the other traditional Chinese month names, such as *Xìngyuè* ("apricot month") for the second month, are not used in Korean.

Modern name			Traditional name			Notes	Chinese Equivalent			
Translation	Hangul	RR	Translation	Hangul	RR		Month number	Earthly Branch name	Modern name	Starts on Gregorian date  (annually the dates shifts due to the lunar cycle)
Month 1	1월 (일월)	<i>Il-wol</i>	<u>Tiger Month</u>	호랑이 달	<i>Ho-rang-i-dal</i>	A loanword from Chinese <i>Zhēngyuè</i>	1	寅月; <i>yínyuè</i> ; 'tiger month'	正月; <i>zhēngyuè</i> ; 'first month'	between 21 January – 20 February
			Primary Month	정월 (正月)	<i>Jeong-wol</i>					
Month 2	2월 (이월)	<i>I-wol</i>	<u>Rabbit Month</u>	토끼달	<i>To-kki-dal</i>		2	卯月; <i>mǎoyuè</i> ; 'rabbit month'	二月; <i>èryuè</i> ; 'second month'	between 20 February – 21 March
Month 3	3월 (삼월)	<i>Sam-wol</i>	<u>Dragon Month</u>	용달	<i>Yong-dal</i>		3	辰月; <i>chényuè</i> ; 'dragon month'	三月; <i>sānyuè</i> ; 'third month'	between 21 March – 20 April
Month 4	4월 (사월)	<i>Sa-wol</i>	<u>Snake Month</u>	뱀달	<i>Baem-dal</i>		4	巳月; <i>sìyuè</i> ; 'snake month'	四月; <i>sìyuè</i> ; 'fourth month'	between 20 April – 21 May
Month 5	5월 (오월)	<i>O-wol</i>	<u>Horse Month</u>	말달	<i>Mal-dal</i>		5	午月; <i>wǔyuè</i> ; 'horse month'	五月; <i>wǔyuè</i> ; 'fifth month'	between 21 May – 21 June
Month 6	6월 (유월)	<i>Yu-wol</i>	<u>Sheep Month</u>	양달	<i>Yang-dal</i>		6	未月; <i>wèiyuè</i> ; 'goat month'	六月; <i>liùyuè</i> ; 'sixth month'	between 21 June – 23 July
Month 7	7월 (칠월)	<i>Chir-wol</i>	<u>Monkey Month</u>	원숭이 달	<i>Won-sung-i-dal</i>		7	申月; <i>shēnyuè</i> ; 'monkey month'	七月; <i>qīyuè</i> ; 'seventh month'	between 23 July – 23 August
Month 8	8월 (팔월)	<i>Par-wol</i>	<u>Rooster Month</u>	닭달	<i>Dak-dal</i>		8	酉月; <i>yǒuyuè</i> ; 'rooster month'	八月; <i>bāyuè</i> ; 'eighth month'	between 23 August – 23 September
Month 9	9월 (구월)	<i>Gu-wol</i>	<u>Dog Month</u>	개달	<i>Gae-dal</i>		9	戌月; <i>xūyuè</i> ; 'dog month'	九月; <i>jiǔyuè</i> ; 'ninth month'	between 23 September – 23 October
Month 10	10월 (시월)	<i>Shi-wol/ Si-wol</i>	<u>Pig Month</u>	돼지달	<i>Dwae-ji-dal</i>		10	亥月; <i>hàiyuè</i> ; 'pig month'	十月; <i>shíyuè</i> ; 'tenth month'	between 23 October – 22 November
Month 11	11월 (십일월)	<i>Shi-bir-wol/ Shib-ir-wol</i>	<u>Rat Month</u>	쥐달	<i>Jwi-dal</i>		11	子月; <i>zǐyuè</i> ; 'rat month'	十一月; <i>shíyīyuè</i> ; 'eleventh month'	between 22 November – 22 December
			<u>Winter Solstice Month</u>	동짓달	<i>Dong-jit-dal</i>	Compare Chinese <i>Dōngyuè</i> , "Winter Month"				
Month 12	12월 (십이월)	<i>Shib-i-wol</i>	<u>Ox Month</u>	소달	<i>So-dal</i>		12	丑月; <i>chǒuyuè</i> ; 'ox month'	臘月; 腊月; <i>làyuè</i> ; 'end-of-year month'	between 22 December – 21 January
				섣달	<i>Seot-dal</i>	Compare Chinese <i>Làyuè</i> , "preservation month"				

## Festivals

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The lunar calendar is used for the observation of traditional festivals, such as Seollal, Chuseok, and Buddha's Birthday. It is also used for jesa memorial services for ancestors and the marking of birthdays by older Koreans.

## Traditional holidays

Festival	Significance	Events	Date (Lunar)	Food
<u>Seollal</u> (설날)	Lunar New Year's Day	An ancestral service is offered before the grave of the ancestors, New Year's greetings are exchanged with family, relatives and neighbors; bows to elders ( <i>sebae</i> , 세배, Hanja: 歲拜), <i>yut nori</i> (윷놀이).	Day 1 of Month 1	rice cake soup ( <i>tteokguk</i> , 떡국), honey cakes ( <i>yakgwa</i> , 약과, Hanja: 藥果).
<u>Daeboreum</u> (대보름, 大보름)	First full moon	Greeting of the moon ( <i>dalmaji</i> , 달맞이), kite-flying, burning talismans to ward off evil spirits ( <i>aengmagi taeugi</i> , 액막이 태우기), bonfires ( <i>daljip taeugi</i> , 달집 태우기).	Day 15 of Month 1	rice boiled with five grains ( <i>o-gok-bap</i> , 오곡밥, Hanja: 五穀飯), eating nuts, e.g. walnuts, pine nuts, peanuts, chestnuts ( <i>bureom</i> , 부럼), wine drinking ( <i>gwibalgisul</i> )
<u>Meoseumnal</u> (머슴날)	Festival for servants	Housecleaning, coming of age ceremony, fishermen's shaman rite ( <i>yeongdeunggut</i> , 영등굿)	Day 1 of Month 2	stuffed pine-flavored rice cakes ( <i>songpyeon</i> , 송편)
<u>Samjinnal</u> (삼짇날)	Migrant swallows return	Leg fighting, fortune telling.	Day 3 of Month 3	azalea wine ( <i>dugyeonju</i> , 두견주, Hanja: 杜鵑酒), azalea rice cake ( <i>dugyeon hwajeon</i> , 두견화전, Hanja: 杜鵑花煎)
<u>Hansik/ Hanshik</u> (한식, Hanja: 寒食)	Beginning of farming season	Visit to ancestral grave for offering rite, and cleaning and maintenance.	Day 105 after winter solstice	cold food only: mugwort cake ( <i>ssuktteok</i> , 쑥떡), mugwort dumplings ( <i>ssukdanja</i> , 쑥단자), mugwort soup ( <i>ssuktang</i> , 쑥탕)
<u>Chopail</u> (Cho-pa-il) (초파일, Hanja: 初八日) or <i>Seok-ga Tan-shin-il</i> (석가탄신일; Hanja: 釋迦誕生日)	<u>Buddha's Birthday</u>	<u>Yeondeunghoe</u> (Lotus Lantern festival)	Day 8 of Month 4	rice cake ( <i>jjintteok</i> , 찰떡), flower rice cake ( <i>hwajeon</i> , 화전, Hanja: 花煎)
<u>Dano</u> (단오, Hanja: 端午) or <i>Surit-nal</i> (수릿날)	Spring festival	Washing hair with iris water, wrestling ( <i>ssireum</i> , 씨름), swinging, giving fans as gifts	Day 5 of Month 5	rice cake with herbs ( <i>surichwitteok</i> , 수리취떡), herring soup ( <i>junchiguk</i> , 준치국)
<u>Yudu</u> (유두, Hanja: 流頭)	Water greeting	Water greeting, washing hair to wash away bad luck	Day 15 of Month 6	Five coloured noodles ( <i>yudumyeon</i> , 유두면), cooked rice cake ( <i>sudan</i> , 수단, Hanja: 水團)
<u>Chilseok</u> (칠석, Hanja: 七夕)	Meeting day of Gyeonwu and Jiknyeo, in Korean folk tale	Fabric weaving	Day 7 of Month 7	wheat pancake ( <i>miljeonbyeong</i> , 밀전병), steamed rice cake with red beans ( <i>sirutteok</i> , 시루떡)
<u>Baekjung</u>	Worship to Buddha	Worship to Buddha.	Day 15 of Month 7	mixed rice cake ( <i>seoktanbyeong</i> , 석탄병, Hanja: 惜吞餅)

(백중, <span>Hanja</span> : 百中)				
<span>Chuseok</span> (추석, <span>Hanja</span> : 秋夕)	Harvest festival	Visit to ancestral grave, <i>ssireum</i> , offering earliest rice grain ( <i>olbyeosinmi</i> , 올벼신미, --新味), circle dance ( <i>ganggang sulae</i> , 강강술래)	Day 15 of Month 8	pine-flavored rice cake stuffed with chestnuts, sesame or beans ( <i>songpyeon</i> , 송편), taro soup ( <i>torantang</i> , 토란탕)
<span>Jungyangjeol</span> (중양절, <span>Hanja</span> : 重陽節)	Migrant sparrows leave	Celebrating autumn with poetry and painting, composing poetry, enjoying nature	Day 9 of Month 9	chrysanthemum pancake ( <i>gukhwajeon</i> , 국화전, 菊花煎), fish roe ( <i>eo-ran</i> , 어란, <span>Hanja</span> : 魚卵), honey citron tea ( <i>yuja-cheong</i> , 유자청, <span>Hanja</span> : 柚子清)
<span>Dongji</span> (동지, <span>Hanja</span> : 冬至)	<span>Winter Solstice</span>	Rites to dispel bad spirits.	Around December 22 in the solar calendar	red bean porridge with rice dumplings ( <i>patjuk</i> , 팔죽)
<i>Seot-dal Geum-eum</i> (섣달그믐)	<span>New Year's Eve</span>	Staying up all night long with all doors open to receive ancestral spirits	Last day of Month 12	mixed rice with vegetables ( <i>bibimbap</i> , 비빔밥), bean powder rice cakes ( <i>injeolmi</i> , 인절미), traditional biscuits ( <i>han-gwa</i> , 한과, <span>Hanja</span> : 韓菓)

There are also many regional festivals celebrated according to the lunar calendar.

## See also

- Traditional Korean culture
- Festivals of Korea
- Korean era name
- Sexagenary cycle
- Public holidays in North Korea
- Public holidays in South Korea

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