

Japanese calendar

Japanese calendar types have included a range of official and unofficial systems. At present, Japan uses the Gregorian calendar together with year designations stating the year of the reign of the current Emperor.^[1] The written form starts with the year, then the month and finally the day, coinciding with the ISO 8601 standard. For example, February 16, 2003 can be written as either 2003年2月16日 or 平成15年2月16日 (the latter following the regnal year system). 年 reads *nen* and means "year", 月 reads *gatsu* or 「がつ」 and means "month" and finally 日 (usually) reads *nichi* (its pronunciation depends on the number that precedes it, see below) and means "day".



1729 calendar, which used the Jōkyō calendar procedure, published by Ise Grand Shrine

Prior to the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1873, the reference calendar was based on the lunisolar Chinese calendar.

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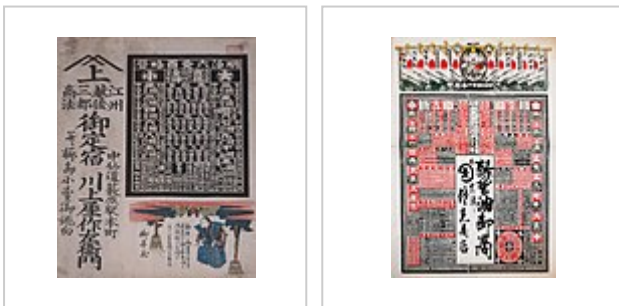
The lunisolar Chinese calendar was introduced to Japan via Korea in the middle of the sixth century. After that, Japan calculated its calendar using various Chinese calendar procedures, and from 1685, using Japanese variations of the Chinese procedures. But in 1873, as part of Japan's Meiji period modernization, a calendar based on the solar Gregorian calendar was introduced.^[2] In Japan today, the old Chinese calendar is virtually ignored; celebrations of the Lunar New Year are thus limited to Chinese and other Asian immigrant communities.

Japan has had more than one system for designating years:^[3]

- The Chinese sexagenary cycle was introduced early into Japan.^[4] It was often used together with era names, as in the 1729 Ise calendar shown above, which is for "the 14th year of Kyōhō, tsuchi-no-to no tori", i.e., 己酉. Now, though, the cycle is seldom used except around New Year.
- The era name (元号, *gengō*) system was also introduced from China, and has been in continuous use since AD 701.^[5] Since the Taishō Emperor's ascension in 1912, each emperor's reign has begun a new era; before 1868 era names were often also declared for other reasons.^[6] Nengō are the official means of dating years in Japan, and virtually all

government business is conducted using that system. It is also in general use in private and personal business.

- The Japanese imperial year (皇紀, *kōki*, or 紀元 *kigen*) is based on the date of the legendary founding of Japan by Emperor Jimmu in 660 BC.^[7] It was first used in the official calendar in 1873.^[8] However, it never replaced era names, and since World War II has been abandoned.^[9]
- The Western Common Era (Anno Domini) (西暦, *seireki*) system has gradually come into common use since the Meiji period.^[10] Nowadays, Japanese people know it as well as the regnal eras.



Briefly Abridged Calendar for 1907
Calendar of 1873



Japanese Calendar (woodcut, 1867)

Official calendar

Years

The official dating system known as *nengō* (年号) (or, strictly speaking, *gengō* (元号)), has been in use since the late 7th century. Years are numbered within regnal eras, which are named by the reigning Emperor. Beginning with Meiji (1868–1912), each reign has been one era, but many earlier Emperors decreed a new era upon any major event; the last pre-Meiji Emperor's reign (1846–1867) was split into seven eras, one of which lasted only one year. The *nengō* system remains in wide use, especially on official documents and government forms.^[11]

The imperial year system (*kōki*) was used from 1872 to the Second World War. Imperial year 1 (*Kōki* 1) was the year when the legendary Emperor Jimmu founded Japan – 660 BC according to the Gregorian Calendar. Usage of *kōki* dating can be a nationalist signal, pointing out that the history of Japan's imperial family is longer than that of Christianity, the basis of the Anno Domini (AD) system. *Kōki* 2600 (1940) was a special year. The 1940 Summer Olympics and Tokyo Expo were planned as anniversary events, but were canceled due to the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese naval Zero Fighter was named after this year. After the Second World War, the United States occupied Japan, and stopped the use of *kōki* by officials. Today, *kōki* is rarely used, except in some judicial contexts.

The 1898 law determining the placement of leap years^[12] is officially based on the *kōki* years, using a formula that is effectively equivalent to that of the Gregorian calendar: if the *kōki* year number is evenly divisible by four, it is a leap year, unless the number minus 660 is evenly divisible by 100 and not by 400. Thus, for example, the year *Kōki* 2560 (AD 1900) is divisible by 4; but 2560 – 660 = 1900, which is evenly divisible by 100 and not by 400, so *kōki* 2560 was not a leap year, just as in most of the rest of the world.

The present era, Reiwa, formally began on 1 May 2019. The name of the new era was announced by the Japanese government on 1 April 2019, a month prior to Naruhito's succession to the throne. The previous era, Heisei, came to an end on 30 April 2019, after Japan's former emperor, Akihito, abdicated the throne. Reiwa is the first era name whose characters come from a Japanese root source; prior eras' names were taken from Chinese classic literature.

Seasons

English name	Japanese name	Romanisation	Traditional dates
Spring	春	<i>haru</i>	February 5 – May 6
Summer	夏	<i>natsu</i>	May 7 – August 8
Autumn	秋	<i>aki</i>	August 9 – November 7
Winter	冬	<i>fuyu</i>	November 8 – February 4

See also "Seasonal days", below.

Months

The modern Japanese names for the months literally translate to "first month", "second month", and so on. The corresponding number is combined with the suffix 月 (*-gatsu*, "month"). The table below uses traditional numerals, but the use of Western numerals (1 月, 2 月, 3 月 etc.) is common.

In addition, every month has a traditional name, still used by some in fields such as poetry; of the twelve, *Shiwasu* is still widely used today. The opening paragraph of a letter or the greeting in a speech might borrow one of these names to convey a sense of the season. Some, such as *Yayoi* and *Satsuki*, do double duty as given names (for women). These month names also appear from time to time on *jidaigeki*, contemporary television shows and movies set in the Edo period or earlier.

The old Japanese calendar was an adjusted lunar calendar based on the Chinese calendar, and the year—and with it the months—started anywhere from about 3 to 7 weeks later than the modern year, so in historical contexts it is not entirely accurate to equate the first month with January.

English name	Common Japanese name	Traditional Japanese name
January	一月 (<i>ichigatsu</i>)	<i>Mutsuki</i> (睦月, "Month of Love," alternatively "Month of Affection"). ^[13]
February	二月 (<i>nigatsu</i>)	<i>Kisaragi</i> (如月) or <i>Kinusaragi</i> (衣更着, "Changing Clothes"). ^[13]
March	三月 (<i>sangatsu</i>)	<i>Yayoi</i> (弥生, "New Life"). ^[13]
April	四月 (<i>shigatsu</i>)	<i>Uzuki</i> (卯月, "u-no-hana month"). ^[13] The <i>u-no-hana</i> (卯の花) is a flower, of the genus <i>Deutzia</i> . ^[14]
May	五月 (<i>gogatsu</i>)	<i>Satsuki</i> (皐月) or <i>Sanaetsuki</i> (早苗月, "Early-rice-planting Month"). ^[13]
June	六月 (<i>rokugatsu</i>)	<i>Minazuki</i> (水無月, "Month of Water"). The 無 character, which normally means "absent" or "there is no", is <i>ateji</i> here, and is only used for the <i>na</i> sound. In this name the <i>na</i> is actually a possessive particle, so <i>minazuki</i> means "month of water", not "month without water", and this is in reference to the flooding of the rice fields, which require large quantities of water. ^[15]
July	七月 (<i>shichigatsu</i>)	<i>Fumizuki</i> (文月, "Month of Erudition"). ^[13]
August	八月 (<i>hachigatsu</i>)	<i>Hazuki</i> (葉月, "Month of Leaves"). In old Japanese, the month was called 葉落ち月 (<i>Haochizuki</i> , or "Month of Falling Leaves"). ^[13]
September	九月 (<i>kugatsu</i>)	<i>Nagatsuki</i> (長月, "The Long Month"). ^[13]
October	十月 (<i>jūgatsu</i>)	<i>Kannazuki</i> or <i>Kaminazuki</i> (神無月, Month of the Gods). The 無 character, which normally means "absent" or "there is not", was here probably originally used as an <i>ateji</i> for the possessive particle <i>na</i> , so <i>Kaminazuki</i> may have originally meant "Month of the Gods", not "Month without Gods" (<i>Kaminakizuki</i>), similarly to <i>Minatsuki</i> , the "Month of Water". ^[16] However, by what may be <u>false etymology</u> , the name became commonly interpreted to mean that, because in that month all the <u>Shinto</u> <u>kami</u>



This mural on the wall of Shin-Ochanomizu subway station in Tokyo celebrates *Hazuki*, the eighth month.



A Japanese calendar from 2011 depicting the month of December (shiwasu 師走).

		gather at Izumo shrine in Izumo Province (modern-day Shimane Prefecture), there are no gods in the rest of the country. Thus in Izumo Province, the month is called Kamiarizuki (神有月 or 神在月, "Month with Gods"). ^[17] Various other etymologies have also been suggested from time to time. ^[18]
November	十一月 (<i>jūichigatsu</i>)	<i>Shimotsuki</i> (霜月, "Month of Frost"). ^[13]
December	十二月 (<i>jūnigatsu</i>)	<i>Shiwasu</i> (師走, "Priests Running"). This is in reference to priests being busy at the end of the year for <u>New Year's</u> preparations and blessings. ^[13]

Subdivisions of the month

Japan uses a seven-day week, aligned with the Western calendar. The seven-day week, with names for the days corresponding to the Latin system, was brought to Japan around AD 800 with the Buddhist calendar. The system was used for astrological purposes and little else until 1876.

Much like in multiple European languages, in which the names for weekdays are, partially or fully, based on what the Ancient Romans considered the seven visible planets, meaning the five visible planets and the sun and the moon, in The Far East the five visible planets are named after the five Chinese elements (metal, wood, water, fire, earth.) On the origin of the names of the days of the week, also see East Asian Seven Luminaries.

Japanese	Romanization	Element (planet)	English name
日曜日	<i>nichiyōbi</i>	Sun*	Sunday
月曜日	<i>getsuyōbi</i>	Moon*	Monday
火曜日	<i>kayōbi</i>	Fire (<u>Mars</u>)	Tuesday
水曜日	<i>suiyōbi</i>	Water (<u>Mercury</u>)	Wednesday
木曜日	<i>mokuyōbi</i>	Wood (<u>Jupiter</u>)	Thursday
金曜日	<i>kin'yōbi</i>	Metal (<u>Venus</u>)	Friday
土曜日	<i>doyōbi</i>	Earth (<u>Saturn</u>)	Saturday

* For those wondering, the Sun is 太陽 (great yang) and the Moon is 太陰 (great yin) ☯

Sunday and Saturday are regarded as "Western style take-a-rest days". Since the late 19th century, Sunday has been regarded as a "full-time holiday", and Saturday a half-time holiday (半ドン). These holidays have no religious meaning (except those who believe in Christianity or Judaism). Many Japanese retailers do not close on Saturdays or Sundays, because many office workers and their families are expected to visit the shops during the weekend. An old Imperial Japanese Navy song (月月火水木金金) says "Mon Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Fri!" which means "We work throughout the entire week."

Japanese people also use 10-day periods called *jun* (旬). Each month is divided into two 10-day periods and a third with the remaining 8 to 11 days:

- The first (from the 1st to the 10th) is *jōjun* (上旬, upper jun)
- The second (from the 11th to the 20th), *chūjun* (中旬, middle jun)
- The last (from the 21st to the end of the month), *gejun* (下旬, lower jun). ^[19]

These are frequently used to indicate approximate times, for example, "the temperatures are typical of the *jōjun* of April"; "a vote on a bill is expected during the *gejun* of this month." The magazine *Kinema Junpo* was originally published once every *jun* (i.e. three times a month).^[20]

Days of the month

Each day of the month has a semi-systematic name. The days generally use *kun* (native Japanese) numeral readings up to ten, and thereafter *on* (Chinese-derived) readings, but there are some irregularities. The table below shows dates written with traditional numerals, but use of Arabic numerals (1 日, 2 日, 3 日, etc.) is extremely common in everyday communication, almost the norm.

Day number	Japanese name	Romanisation	Day number	Japanese name	Romanisation
1	一日	<i>tsuitachi</i>	16	十六日	<i>jūroku-nichi</i>
2	二日	<i>futsuka</i>	17	十七日	<i>jūshichi-nichi</i>
3	三日	<i>mikka</i>	18	十八日	<i>jūhachi-nichi</i>
4	四日	<i>yokka</i>	19	十九日	<i>jūkyū-nichi</i> <i>jūku-nichi</i>
5	五日	<i>itsuka</i>	20	二十日	<i>hatsuka</i>
6	六日	<i>muika</i>	21	二十一日	<i>nijūichi-nichi</i>
7	七日	<i>nanoka</i>	22	二十二日	<i>nijūni-nichi</i>
8	八日	<i>yōka</i>	23	二十三日	<i>nijūsan-nichi</i>
9	九日	<i>kokonoka</i>	24	二十四日	<i>nijūyokka</i> <i>nijūyon-nichi</i>
10	十日	<i>tōka</i>	25	二十五日	<i>nijūgo-nichi</i>
11	十一日	<i>jūichi-nichi</i>	26	二十六日	<i>nijūroku-nichi</i>
12	十二日	<i>jūni-nichi</i>	27	二十七日	<i>nijūshichi-nichi</i>
13	十三日	<i>jūsan-nichi</i>	28	二十八日	<i>nijūhachi-nichi</i>
14	十四日	<i>jūyokka</i> <i>jūyon-nichi</i>	29	二十九日	<i>nijūkyū-nichi</i> <i>nijūku-nichi</i>
15	十五日	<i>jūgo-nichi</i>	30	三十日	<i>sanjū-nichi</i>
			31	三十一日	<i>sanjūichi-nichi</i>

Tsuitachi is a worn-down form of *tsuki-tachi* (月立ち), which means "the month beginning". The last day of the month was called *tsugomori*, which means "Moon hidden". This classical word comes from the tradition of the lunisolar calendar.

The 30th was also called *misoka*, just as the 20th is called *hatsuka*. Nowadays, the terms for the numbers 28–31 plus *nichi* are much more common. However, *misoka* is much used in contracts, etc., specifying that a payment should be made on or by the last day of the month, whatever the number is. New Year's Eve is known as Ōmisoka (大晦日, big 30th), and that term is still in use.

There is traditional belief that some days are lucky (*kichijitsu*) or unlucky. For example, there are some who will avoid beginning something on an unlucky day.^[21]

National holidays

After World War II, the names of Japanese national holidays were completely changed because of the secular state principle (Article 20, The Constitution of Japan). Although many of them actually originated from Shinto, Buddhism and important events relating to the Japanese imperial family, it is not easy to understand the original meanings from the superficial and vague official names.

Notes: Single days between two national holidays are taken as a bank holiday. This applies to May 4, which is a holiday each year. When a national holiday falls on a Sunday the next day that is not a holiday (usually a Monday) is taken as a holiday.



Koinobori, flags decorated like koi, are popular decorations around Children's Day

Japanese national holidays

Date	English name	Official name	Romanization
January 1	<u>New Year's Day</u>	元日	<i>Ganjitsu</i>
Second Monday of January	<u>Coming of Age Day</u>	成人の日	<i>Seijin no hi</i>
February 11	<u>National Foundation Day</u> [†]	建国記念の日	<i>Kenkoku kinen no hi</i>
February 23	<u>The Emperor's Birthday</u>	天皇誕生日	<i>Tennō tanjōbi</i>
March 20 or 21	<u>Vernal Equinox Day</u>	春分の日	<i>Shunbun no hi</i>
April 29	<u>Shōwa Day</u> *	昭和の日	<i>Shōwa no hi</i>
May 3	<u>Constitution Memorial Day</u> *	憲法記念日	<i>Kenpō kinenbi</i>
May 4	<u>Greenery Day</u> *	みどり(緑)の日	<i>Midori no hi</i>
May 5	<u>Children's Day</u> *	子供の日	<i>Kodomo no hi</i>
Third Monday of July	<u>Marine Day</u>	海の日	<i>Umi no hi</i>
August 11	<u>Mountain Day</u>	山の日	<i>Yama no hi</i>
Third Monday of September	<u>Respect for the Aged Day</u>	敬老の日	<i>Keirō no hi</i>
September 22 or 23	<u>Autumnal Equinox Day</u>	秋分の日	<i>Shūbun no hi</i>
Second Monday of October	<u>Health and Sports Day</u>	体育の日	<i>Taiiku no hi</i>
November 3	<u>Culture Day</u>	文化の日	<i>Bunka no hi</i>
November 23	<u>Labour Thanksgiving Day</u>	勤労感謝の日	<i>Kinrō kansha no hi</i>

[†] Traditional date on which according to legend Emperor Jimmu founded Japan in 660 BC.

* Part of Golden Week.

Timeline of changes to national holidays

- **1948:** The following national holidays were introduced: New Year's Day, Coming-of-Age Day, Constitution Memorial Day, Children's Day, Autumnal Equinox Day, Culture Day, Labour Thanksgiving Day.
- **1966:** Health and Sports Day was introduced in memory of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Vernal Equinox Day was also introduced.
- **1985:** Reform to the national holiday law made May 4, sandwiched between two other national holidays, also a holiday.
- **1989:** After the Shōwa Emperor died on January 7, the Emperor's Birthday became December 23 and Greenery Day took the place of the former Emperor's birthday.
- **2000, 2003:** Happy Monday System (ハッピーマンデー制度, *Happī Mandē Seido*) moved several holidays to Monday. Starting with 2000: Coming-of-Age Day (formerly January 15) and Health and Sports Day (formerly October 10). Starting with 2003: Marine Day (formerly July 20) and Respect for the Aged Day (formerly September 15).

- **2005, 2007:** According to a May 2005 decision, starting with 2007 Greenery Day will be moved from April 29 to May 4 replacing a generic national holiday (国民の休日, *kokumin no kyūjitsu*) that existed after the 1985 reform, while April 29 will be known as Shōwa Day.
- **2009:** September 22 may become sandwiched between two holidays, which would make this day a national holiday.
- **2014:** Mountain Day established as a new holiday, to be observed starting 2016
- **2019:** Emperor's Birthday not celebrated. The final celebration of Emperor's Birthday during the Heisei era took place on December 23, 2018, the birthday of Akihito. After the start of the Reiwa era on 1 May 2019, the next celebration of Emperor's Birthday is expected to take place on or around 23 February 2020, the birthday of the reigning Emperor Naruhito (as Naruhito's birthday falls on a Sunday in 2020, the official public holiday is expected to be celebrated on Monday, 24 February 2020 instead).

Customary issues in modern Japan

Gregorian months and the "One-Month Delay"

In contrast to other East Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, Korea and Mongolia, Japan has almost completely forgotten the Chinese calendar. Since 1876, January has been officially regarded as the "first month" even when setting the date of Japanese traditional folklore events (other months are the same: February as the second month, March as the third, and so on). But this system often brings a strong seasonal sense of gap since the event is 3 to 7 weeks earlier than in the traditional calendar. Modern Japanese culture has invented a kind of "compromised" way of setting dates for festivals called *Tsuki-okure* ("One-Month Delay") or *Chūreki* ("The Eclectic Calendar"). The festival is celebrated just one solar calendar month later than the date on the Gregorian calendar. For example, the Buddhist festival of Obon was the 15th day of the 7th month. Many places the religious services are held on July 15. However, in some areas, the rites are normally held on August 15, which is more seasonally close to the old calendar. (The general term "Obon holiday" always refers to the middle of August.) Although this is just de facto and customary, it is broadly used when setting the dates of many folklore events and religious festivals. But Japanese New Year is the great exception. The date of Japanese New Year is always January 1.

Seasonal days

Some days have special names to mark the change in seasons. The 24 sekki (Japanese: 二十四節気; *rōmaji: nijūshi sekki*) are days that divide the solar year into twenty four equal sections. *Zassetsu* (雑節) is a collective term for the seasonal days other than the 24 *sekki*. 72 *Kō* (七十二候, *Shichijūni kō*) days are made from dividing the 24 *sekki* of a year further by three. These were named based upon the climate of Northern China, so many of the names do not fit in with the climate of Japanese archipelago. But some of these names, such as *Shunbun*, *Risshū* and *Tōji*, are still used quite frequently in everyday life in Japan.

The 24 sekki

Dates can vary by one day either way.

- Risshun (立春): February 4—Beginning of spring
- Usui (雨水): February 19—Rain water
- Keichitsu (啓蟄): March 5—Awakening of hibernated (insects)

- Shunbun (春分): March 20—Vernal equinox, middle of spring
- Seimei (清明): April 5—Clear and bright
- Kokuu (穀雨): April 20—Grain rain
- Rikka (立夏): May 5—Beginning of summer
- Shōman (小満): May 21—Grain full
- Bōshu (芒種): June 6—Grain in ear
- Geshi (夏至): June 21—Summer solstice, middle of summer
- Shōsho (小暑): July 7—Small heat
- Taisho (大暑): July 23—Large heat
- Risshū (立秋): August 7—Beginning of autumn
- Shosho (処暑): August 23—Limit of heat
- Hakuro (白露): September 7—White dew
- Shūbun (秋分): September 23—Autumnal equinox, middle of autumn
- Kanro (寒露): October 8—Cold dew
- Sōkō (霜降): October 23—Frost descent
- Rittō (立冬): November 7—Beginning of winter
- Shōsetsu (小雪): November 22—Small snow
- Taisetsu (大雪): December 7—Large snow
- Tōji (冬至): December 22—Winter solstice, middle of winter
- Shōkan (小寒): January 5—Small Cold; or *Kan no iri* (寒の入り)—Entrance of the cold
- Daikan (大寒): January 20—Major cold

Zassetsu

Date	Kanji	Romaji	Comment
February 3	節分	<u>Setsubun</u>	The eve of <i>Risshun</i> by one definition.
March 18–March 24	春彼岸	<i>Haru higan</i>	The seven days surrounding <i>Shunbun</i> .
Vernal Equinox day	春社日	<i>Haru shanichi</i>	In <u>Shinto</u> . 彼岸中日 (<i>Higan Chunichi</i>) in <u>Buddhism</u> .
May 2	八十八夜	<i>Hachijū hachiya</i>	Literally meaning 88 nights (since <i>Risshun</i>).
June 11	入梅	<i>Nyūbai</i>	Literally meaning entering <i>tsuyu</i> .
July 2	半夏生	<i>Hangeshō</i>	One of the 72 <i>Kō</i> . Farmers take five days off in some regions.
July 15	中元	<u>Chūgen</u>	Officially July 15. August 15 in many regions (<i>Tsuki-okure</i>).
July 20	夏の土用	<i>Natsu no doyō</i>	Custom of eating <u>eel</u> on this day.
September 1	二百十日	<i>Nihyaku tōka</i>	Literally meaning 210 days (since <i>Risshun</i>).

September 11	二百二十日	<i>Nihyaku hatsuka</i>	Literally meaning 220 days.
September 20– September 26	秋彼岸	<i>Aki higan</i>	
Autumnal Equinox	秋社日	<i>Aki shanichi</i>	In <u>Shinto</u> . 彼岸中日 in <u>Buddhism</u> .

Shanichi dates can vary by as much as 5 days. *Chūgen* has a fixed day. All other days can vary by one day.

Many *zassetsu* days occur in multiple seasons:

- *Setsubun* (節分) refers to the day before each season, or the eves of *Risshun*, *Rikka*, *Rishū*, and *Rittō*; especially the eve of *Risshun*.
- *Doyō* (土用) refers to the 18 days before each season, especially the one before fall which is known as the hottest period of a year.
- *Higan* (彼岸) is the seven middle days of spring and autumn, with *Shunbun* at the middle of the seven days for spring, *Shūbun* for fall.
- *Shanichi* (社日) is the *Tsuchinoe* (戌) day closest to *Shunbun* (middle of spring) or *Shūbun* (middle of fall), which can be as much as 5 days before to 4 days after *Shunbun/Shūbun*.

Seasonal festivals

The following are known as the five seasonal festivals (節句 *sekku*, also 五節句 *gosekku*). The *sekku* were made official holidays during Edo period on Chinese lunisolar calendar. The dates of these festivals are confused nowadays; some on the Gregorian calendar, others on "*Tsuki-okure*".

1. 7th day of the 1st month: 人日 (*Jinjitsu*), 七草の節句 (*Nanakusa no sekku*) held on 7 January
2. 3rd day of the 3rd month: 上巳 (*Jōshi*), 桃の節句 (*Momo no sekku*) held on 3 March in many areas, but in some area on 3 April
 - 雛祭り (*Hina matsuri*), Girls' Day.
3. 5th day of the 5th month: Tango (端午): mostly held on 5 May
 - 端午の節句 (*Tango no sekku*), 菖蒲の節句 (*Ayame no sekku*)
 - Boys' Day. Overlaps with the national holiday Children's Day.
4. 7th day of the 7th month: 七夕 (*Shichiseki*, Tanabata), 星祭り (*Hoshi matsuri*) held on 7 July in many areas, but in northern Japan held on 7 August (e.g. in Sendai)
5. 9th day of the 9th month: 重陽 (*Chōyō*), 菊の節句 (*Kiku no sekku*) almost out of vogue today

Not *sekku*:

- January 1: Japanese New Year
- August 15: Obon – the date is "*Tsuki-okure*". In central Tokyo Obon is held on July 15 (The local culture of Tokyo tends to dislike *Tsuki-okure* custom.)

- December 31: Ōmisoka

Rokuyō

The *rokuyō* (六曜) are a series of six days calculated from the date of Chinese calendar that supposedly predict whether there will be good or bad fortune during that day. The *rokuyō* are commonly found on Japanese calendars and are often used to plan weddings and funerals, though most people ignore them in ordinary life. The *rokuyō* are also known as the *rokki* (六輝). In order, they are:

Kanji	Romanization	Meaning
先勝	Senshō	Good luck before noon, bad luck after noon. Good day for beginnings (in the morning).
友引	Tomobiki	Your friends may be "drawn-in" towards good and evil. Funerals are avoided on this day (<i>tomo</i> = friend, <i>biki</i> = pull, thus a funeral might pull friends toward the deceased). Typically crematoriums are closed this day. But, for instance, weddings are fine on this day.
先負	Senbu	Bad luck before noon, good luck after noon.
仏滅	Butsumetsu	Symbolizes the day <u>Buddha</u> died. Considered the most unlucky day. Weddings are best avoided. Some <u>Shinto</u> shrines close their offices on this day.
大安	Taian	The most lucky day. Good day for weddings and events like shop openings.
赤口	Shakkō	The <u>hour of the horse</u> (11 am to 1 pm) is lucky. The rest is bad luck.

The *rokuyō* days are easily calculated from the Japanese lunisolar calendar. The first day of the first month is always *senshō*, with the days following in the order given above until the end of the month. Thus, the 2nd day is *tomobiki*, the 3rd is *senbu*, and so on. The 1st day of the 2nd month restarts the sequence at *tomobiki*. The 3rd month restarts at *senbu*, and so on for each month. The latter six months repeat the patterns of the first six, so the 1st of the 7th is *senshō*, the 1st of the 12th is *shakkō* and the moon-viewing day on the 15th of the 8th is always *butsumetsu*.

This system did not become popular in Japan until the end of the Edo period.

April 1

The first day of April has broad significance in Japan. It marks the beginning of the government's fiscal year.^[22] Many corporations follow suit. In addition, corporations often form or merge on that date. In recent years, municipalities have preferred it for mergers. On this date, many new employees begin their jobs, and it is the start of many real-estate leases. The school year begins on April 1.

See also

- East Asian age reckoning
- Jikkan Jūnishi
- List of kigo

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External links

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- [NengoCalc \(http://www.yukikurete.de/nengo_calc.htm\)](http://www.yukikurete.de/nengo_calc.htm) (Tool for converting Japanese dates into Western equivalents)
- [This Year in Japan \(https://thisyear.jp/\)](https://thisyear.jp/) Shows what the current year in Japan is
- [Convert a Western year into a Japanese year \(http://www.sljfaq.org/cgi/date.cgi\)](http://www.sljfaq.org/cgi/date.cgi) (sci.lang.Japan FAQ pages)

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