

1・2月の暦、行事や習慣あれこれ

Calendar, Events & Customs of January and February

国民の祝日・休日



《元日》1月1日（火）：「年のはじめを祝う日」。

日本人にとっては、一年でもっとも厳 肅な気持ちで迎える特別な祝日と考えられています。お祝いの仕方は、それぞれの地方や家庭、個人によって違いますが、年賀状を読む、雑煮やお節料理を食べる、初詣に行くなどして過ごすのが一般的です。

《成人の日》1月の第2月曜日・今年は1月14日（月）：「大人になったことを自覚し、みずから生き抜こうとする青年を祝い、はげます日」。

たいていの市町村では、新成人（*新しく20歳になった人）を招いて成人式が行われます。現在は、同じ学年の人（*前年の4月2日からその年の4月1日の間に成人する人）が招かれます。着物姿で出席する女性が多いので、雨や雪が降ることが心配されます。

《建国記念の日》2月11日（月）：「建国をしへのび、国を愛する心を養う日」。

当日は、建国記念を祝う式典や集会が各地で行われます。

伝統的な行事や習慣あれこれ

◆正月元日から三日までの三日間を「三が日」と言い、役所やたいていの会社などは休みとなりますが、最近では、デパートやスーパーなどのお店は営業しているところが多いようです。

◆正月の松飾りがある間のことを「松の内」と呼びます。昔は15日までとされていましたが、近年は七日には松飾りを取りはずし、正月気分も消えて日常生活に戻る傾向にあるため、一般に7日までと考えられています。

◆7日には、「七草がゆ」を食べる風習もあります。濃いめの味のお節料理やお正月のご馳走などがつついて胃腸が疲れてきたころ、春の七草（*日本のハーブのようなもの）を、あっさり味のおかゆで食べることは理にかなっていると考えられています。

◆11日は「鏡開き」の日とされ、正月に神仏に供えた鏡もち（*大小の丸もちを重ね、上に 橙などを飾ったもの）を下げ、一年の無病息災や一家円満などを祈りながら、汁粉や雑煮にして食べます。

◆新年恒例行事の一つに自治体消防による「出初め式」もあります。消防士や鳶の人たちが出そろって、消防演習やはしご乗りなどが披露されます。

◆「節分」とは、本来は、1年に4回訪れる大きな季節の変わり目を指す言葉でしたが、今では、立春の前日（2月3日ごろ）だけを指す言葉になっています。「鬼は外、福は内！」と大声で唱えながら、煎った大豆をまいて悪鬼を追い払う豆まきの風習があります。



<New Year's Day> January 1 (Tuesday): "The day to celebrate the beginning of the year".

For Japanese, it is considered a special holiday celebrated in a most solemn manner in a year. The manner of celebration depends on the locality and household, and differs on individual; reading "Nenga-jo" or new year's card, eating "zoni" or soup containing rice cakes and "Osechi-Ryori" or special new year's dishes and going "Hatsu-mode" or paying the first visit to a shrine or temple are thought to be the common way to spend the day.

<Coming of Age Day> The 2nd Monday of January. This year, it's January 14: "The day for the youth to realize that they have become adult, and for adults to celebrate and encourage the youth who are trying to live independently of their own motion."

Most municipalities hold a ceremony to celebrate new adults (the youth who have newly become the age of 20) on "Coming of Age Day". Recently people of the same academic year (those who have become 20 between April 2nd of last year and April 1st of the present year) are invited. Majority of the ladies wear their "kimono" to attend the ceremony, so they worry about the rainy or snowy weather.



<National Foundation Day> February 11 (Monday) "The day to commemorate the foundation and to develop the love of country"

On this day, ceremonies and gatherings are held in various places to celebrate the National Foundation Day.

This and that of traditional events and customs

◆The first 3 days of the new year are called "san-ga-nichi", when public offices and almost all companies are on holiday. Recently, however, many department stores and supermarkets are doing business on the said days.

◆The period when pine decorations are put up on the door of the gate is called "matsu-no-uchi". It used to be thought 'from New Year's Day until the 15th', but now 'until 7th' because the pine decorations are usually put away on the 7th, and people's new year mood seems to fade away and they go back to their usual daily life by the day.

◆On the 7th, there is a custom to eat "nana-kusa-gayu" or rice porridge with seven different kinds of spring herbs. After eating "Osechi-Ryori" continuously, which are strongly seasoned dishes for new year's day, or after having very good large meals many times, your stomach may have got weak. That's why it is thought reasonable to eat lightly seasoned porridge, "o-kayu", with the Japanese herbs, "haru no nana-kusa".

◆January 11th is the day of "kagami-biraki", literally 'opening the mirror', when you take down "kagami-mochi" you have offered to the Gods on New Year's day and eat the rice cakes in the sweet red-bean soup, "shiru-ko", or "zoni" soup, praying for good health and happiness of your family.



◆"Dezome-shiki" or "the New Year's parade of a fire brigade" held by the municipal fire fighting authorities is also one of the annual events of the New Year. Various teams of firefighters and many people concerned turn out for the event and show to the public a fire fighting drills, performances on top of a tall ladder, "hashigo-nori", and many other programs.

◆Original meaning of "Setsu-bun" is the big turn of the season which comes four times in a year, but now it only refers to the day before the beginning of spring, "Risshun" (around February 3). On the day, roasted soybeans are symbolically thrown to drive evil spirits out of the house ("mame-maki"), chanting in a loud voice "Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi! (Demons out! Good fortune in!)"

