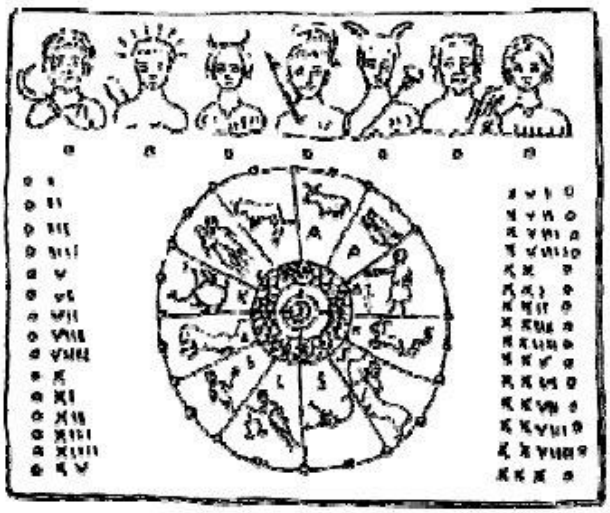
"Life is not dated merely by years. Events are sometimes the best calendars." - Benjamin Disraeli

Roman Calendar

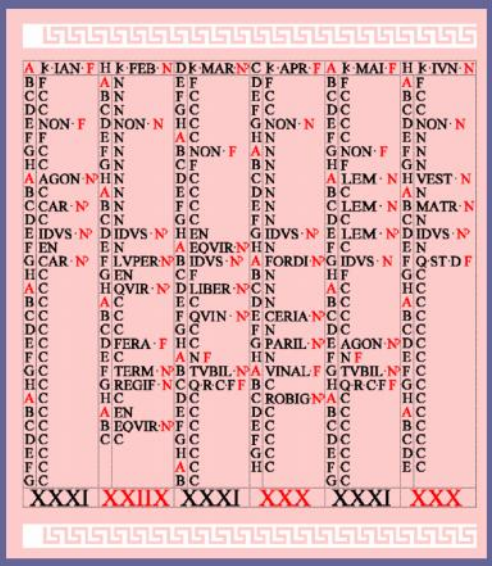
We owe the modern calendar's differing number of days in each month to the Romans. The early Roman calendar consisted of 12 months beginning in March like this (later January became the start of the year).

The early Romans attempted to synchronize the months with the first crescent moon following a new moon resulting in some months of 29 days and some of more.

Every other year, February was shortened and a leap month (Intercalaris) was added in an attempt to realign lunar cycles with the solar calendar. The lengths of the years in a four-year cycle of this lunisolar calendar were 355, 377, 355, and 378 days. This added up to 4 days too many to stay in sync with the solar year.

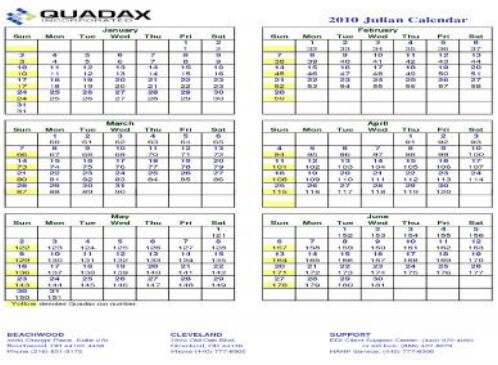


The Roman calendar



Julian Calendar

Eventually Julius Caesar asked an astronomer, Sosigenes of Alexandria, Egypt, to devise a better calendar. What resulted is called the Julian Calendar. He abandoned aligning the months with lunar cycles, and adopted months of 30 or 31 days length, keeping February at 28 days. He introduced an extra day in February in leap years. Sound familiar?
Julius Caesar re-named the 5th month after himself. His successor, Augustus Caesar, re-named the 6th month after himself.
The first day of each month was called Kalendae, or calends. Debts were due on this day, so books to track payments were called calendarium (account book) from which we get our modern day calendar.



From what were the months named after?

January

The first month of the year marks the beginning and the end, the entrance and the exit. The name comes from the Roman god, Janus (Janus). Janus was the god with two faces, which looked in opposite directions forward to the new year and backwards to the previous one.

February

The name comes from the Latin verb meaning februare purge. It was one month dedicated to the god of the underworld February . According to the oldest Roman calendar it is the last time of the year. With the introduction of the Julian calendar in 46 BC the days were limited from 30 to 29 and at the time of the emperor Augustus another day was removed which was added in August and so February has 28 days, and 29 days every four years. The Greek version in February marks the water element of nature.

March

In the ancient Roman calendar, March was the first month of the year and it was named Primus. After 46 BC March became the third month of the year, dedicated to the god Mars who was originally the god of fertility and fields but later, he was identified with the god of war Mars.

The Greeks have given many names to that month , such as skinner because of the unsettled weather conditions.

April

April marks the opening and blossoming and was dedicated to the goddess Athena. The name comes from the Latin verb aperio meaning " to open ".

May

The fifth month of the year is named after the Roman goddess Maja (Maya) . The name Maja came from the word midwife (nurse), the mother of the god Hermes to whom it was dedicated.

June

For the name of the sixth month of the year there are two versions . The first name is derived from the goddess Juno (Hera) , as she was the Romans protector of the house and marriage .

However , according to the second version it was named June after June Lucius Brutus . He conquered the king Tarkynio Proud in 510 BC, he established the institution of the consulship and he founded the Roman Republic.

July

A month dedicated to Julius Caesar who is considered one of the three great generals of the ancient world. July was called Quintilis by the Romans.

August

Augustus was named after the Emperor Octavian, who was honoured by the Senate with the nickname August which means respected. Octavian was the nephew of Julius Caesar and an equally important personality as him.

	d	e	f	a	b	c
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
Februarias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42
Martias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Aprilias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Maias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Junias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Quinitilias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Sextilias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Septembrias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Octobrias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Novembrias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Decembrias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
Januarias	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42

September

September was the seventh in the series of months, as indicated by its name as the Latin septem means seven. But when the Julian calendar was introduced the first month of the year became January and September became the ninth.

October

Under the old Roman calendar it was the eighth month. The name comes from the word octo meaning eight. In 46 BC, by changing the diary, it became the tenth month but it kept the name.

November

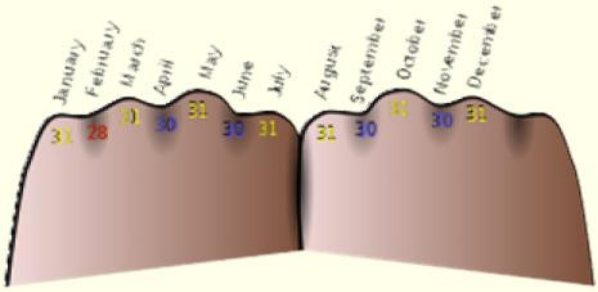
It is the eleventh month of the year according to the current calendar, but in the old Roman calendar it was the ninth month as the name comes from the number nine which is novem in Latin.

December

The last month of the year, the tenth of the old Roman calendar was named after the Latin word decem meaning ten.

Martius	31
Aprilis	30
Maius	31
Iunius	30
Quintilis	31
Sextilis	30
Septembris	30
Octobris	31
Novembris	30
Decembris	30
Total	304

Wolfgang It is delightful to transport one's self into the spirit of the past, to see how a wise man has thought before us, and to what a glorious height we have at last reached." - Johan von Goether



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