



# The Calendar: Measuring Time (New Horizons)

*Jacqueline De Bourgoing*

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We take the measurement of time for granted, yet our lives are punctuated by dates: Christmas, Passover, New Year, Mother's Day, birthdays, pay-day. Some events are world-wide holidays, while others are celebrated by only a few. At what point in history did mankind begin to organize time? How did the patterns of the sun, moon and stars influence the way in which we mark our hours and day? When and how did we establish the cycles of time that make a season, a decade, a century or a millennium? The calendar is an indispensable tool for civilized life, allowing people to order the past, present and future and to record events. Many cultures - including the ancient Greeks, Romans and Chinese, the Maya, Aztec and other religions - have developed independent calendar systems. The modern western calendar, accepted today as the global standard, is the fruit of a long and tumultuous history. This book traces the scientific, technical and political history of calendars.

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