

The French Revolutionary Calendar

What was the Revolutionary Calendar?

The Revolutionary Calendar, also called the Republican Calendar, was a new calendar designed during the French Revolution. It replaced for a time the old Gregorian Calendar, which we still use today.

Notes:

When was it put into effect?

The calendar officially took effect on October 24th, 1793, even though it counted 1792, the year the Republic began, as the first year of the calendar.

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Who was involved in its creation?

The calendar was designed by a board comprised of the mathematicians Romme and Monge, the poets Chenier and Fabre d'Englantine, and the painter David.

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Why was it created?

The calendar was created to remove the influence of Christianity in the French Republic and to promote the new way of thought and life in France.

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How was it organized?

The calendar was divided into twelve months of thirty days, with five days added to the end of the year (six on leap years).

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What was special about the naming system?

The months of the calendar were named to describe seasonal weather or activities. Not only were the days of the week named from one to ten, but each day of the year was associated with an animal, tool, plant, or mineral. The extra days at the end of the year were given their own special names, such as "Fête de la Vertu" (Celebration of Virtue.)

Notes:

Was it successful?

Because the calendar had longer weeks, workers had fewer weekends to rest or worship. Also, since France was the only European country with the calendar, interaction with other countries became more complicated.

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