

March Newsletter



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“*It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want – oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so*

~Mark Twain

Why March Used To Be The First Month Of The Year



Today, the year officially begins on January 1. It feels fixed and unquestionable. But for much of early history, that wasn't the case at all. The calendar once started in March, and the reason was far more practical than ceremonial.

Spring Was When Life Actually Restarted

In early Roman society, calendars followed daily life, not abstract dates. March marked the return of longer days and warmer temperatures after winter. Farming resumed, travel became possible again, and military campaigns could move forward. When activity picked up, it made sense to mark that moment as the start of the year.

The Month Names Tell on the Old Calendar

The earliest Roman calendar only had ten months, beginning with March. Even though the calendar evolved, traces of that system never fully disappeared. September comes from the word for seventh, October for eighth, November for ninth, and December for tenth. Those names only make sense if March was once month one.

How January Moved to the Front

As timekeeping became more precise, the calendar was adjusted to better align with the solar year. January and February were added to fill the winter gap. Over

time, January was moved to the first position. It was named after Janus, a Roman figure associated with transitions and beginnings, which made the shift feel fitting rather than arbitrary.

Why March Still Feels Like a Turning Point

Even without the official title, March still carries a sense of momentum. Days grow longer, routines pick up, and energy shifts. For many people, it feels like the year truly starts moving again, echoing the role March once played centuries ago.

A Calendar Built Around Real Life

Early calendars were shaped by weather, agriculture, and survival. While modern systems are standardized and precise, their roots are practical. March's former place at the beginning of the year is a reminder that calendars weren't designed around numbers. They were designed around how people lived.



Ingredients

- 8 slices thick-cut bacon diced
- 1 large yellow onion thinly sliced
 - 3 garlic cloves minced
 - 4 cups shredded cabbage
 - 2 leeks sliced and cleaned
- 2 large Russet potatoes cleaned and cooked until fork tender
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons Kosher salt
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons black pepper
 - 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 - 1/2 teaspoon paprika
 - 3 cups whole milk
 - 3 tablespoons butter
 - 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese shredded
 - 1 cup Sharp White Cheddar cheese shredded
 - 1 cup Havarti shredded
 - 1/2 cup panko or plain bread crumbs
 - 1/2 cup scallions sliced
- 1 pound elbow macaroni cooked until tender

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Cook the potatoes in the microwave, in the oven or in a pot of boiling water

until fork tender. Allow to cool down completely. Peel with a pairing knife and shred with a box grater. Set aside.

3. Heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the bacon and cook until crispy and browned. Remove with a slotted spoon and transfer to a plate lined with paper towels, to catch the excess fat. Remove all but 1 tablespoon of the bacon grease from the pot. Stir in the onions and garlic and sauté for about 5 minutes, until soft and translucent. Add the cabbage and leeks. Season with 3/4 teaspoon salt, 3/4 teaspoon black pepper, and the red pepper flakes. Stir and cook for about 5 minutes more until soft. Fold in the shredded potatoes and remove from heat. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

4. Place the milk in a medium saucepan and bring to barely a simmer, over medium heat.

5. Return the large pot to the stove and place over medium-high heat. Add the butter and allow to melt. Whisk in the flour and cook for about 10 seconds to cook the flour a bit. Carefully pour in the warm milk, while whisking continuously until all of the milk has been added and the butter/flour mixture has completely dissolved. Lower the flame to medium and cook until thickened. Season with 3/4 teaspoon salt, 3/4 teaspoon black pepper and the paprika. Once thick, remove from heat.

6. In a medium bowl, toss together the shredded Wisconsin cheeses. Add the cheeses to the hot thickened milk, reserving about 1/2 cup for topping later on. Stir with a wooden spoon, until the cheese has melted. Fold in the cooked noodles, the cooked cabbage mixture, the crispy bacon and the scallions, until evenly combined. Pour the mixture into a 9 x 13 inch baking dish or into individual baking dishes and top with the breadcrumbs and reserved cheese. Bake for about 25 to 30 minutes, until bubbly. Place under the broiler for a few seconds to crispy up the top. Serve warm and garnish with sliced scallions on top. Enjoy!

[Jonathan Melendez](#)



Smart home features are no longer something buyers see as a bonus or a novelty. Thermostats, lighting systems, security cameras, and voice assistants are becoming part of everyday living. As these features show up in more homes, homeowners are starting to care about more than just what the technology does. They care about how it looks and how it fits into the space.

First impressions still count.

When someone walks through a home, they are not evaluating devices one by one. They are taking in the space as a whole. If smart devices feel randomly placed or visually inconsistent, they can pull attention away from the home itself. When technology feels intentional, it fades into the background in the best way possible.

Work with the home's style, not against it.

Every home already has a personality. Some lean modern, others feel traditional, and many land somewhere in between. Smart technology should follow that lead. The good news is that many newer devices are designed with simpler finishes and quieter profiles, which makes it easier to match them to existing interiors rather than forcing a design shift.

Placement matters more than people think.

How and where devices are installed affects how noticeable they are. Items that get daily use should be easy to reach without dominating the room. Smaller components that do not need regular interaction are better placed outside main sightlines. This keeps the focus on the home rather than the hardware.

Let technology support the space.

The best smart homes are the ones where technology feels secondary to the design. Thoughtful lighting controls, discreet thermostats, and well-placed speakers help everything work together naturally. When smart features support the room instead of competing with it, the space feels more comfortable and intentional.

A thoughtful approach adds value.

From a real estate perspective, homes that feel organized and well-considered tend to leave a stronger impression. Smart features can absolutely be a selling point, but how they are presented matters. When technology blends seamlessly into the home, it enhances daily living while preserving the look and feel buyers connect with most.



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Ech Interior Design

