

Prewar National Holidays

With regard to national holidays and days of observances in the pre-war period, in an imperial order dated August 26, 1868, September 22 was designated as *Tenchōsetsu*, the birthday of the present emperor (then, Meiji). On November 5, 1872, January 29 was designated as the enthronement day of the first emperor Jinmu. The latter day was renamed and instituted as *Kigensetsu* on March 7, 1873. The proclamation that national holidays and days of observances should be based on the solar calendar was announced on July 2 of the same year, following the change from the lunar to the solar calendar. On October 14, eight national holidays and days of observances were instituted including *Genshisai*. The date of *Tenchōsetsu* was changed to November 3, which was renamed *Meiji-Tennōsai* (the festival of Meiji Emperor or the festival of previous emperor) in the Taishō era, and renamed again as *Meijisetsu* (memorial of the birthday of Meiji Emperor) in 1927 during the Shōwa era. Although some minor changes were made thereafter, as of 1927, there were eleven national holidays and days of observances. These continued to be observed until the end of World War II.

After the war, holidays were designated according to the constitution on July 20, 1948. On June 25, 1966, three more holidays (National Foundation Day, Respect for the Aged Day, and Health Sports Day) were added by decree and *Kenkoku-kinen no Hi* (National Foundation Day) was designated by ordinance on December 9, 1966. *Tennō-Tanjō Bi* (The Emperor's birthday) was changed on February 17, 1989 in the first year of the Heisei emperor. Due to the above changes, the above list was made to contrast changes in the pre-war period with those of the post war period. Pre-war period holidays correspond to those stipulated in 1927 decree, with a distinction made between national holidays and days of observances. Those in the post-war period correspond to holidays current as of 1993. In the table of national holidays for the post-war period, those that have no note referring to the year of designation were designated in 1948, while those that have notes mentioning the year correspond to those added later. The meaning of each national holiday established in the post-war period was stipulated in each respective decree.

Before World War II [1927]			
Name	Date	*	Supplementary Note
<i>Genshisai</i>	January 3	D	Instituted in 1873
<i>Shinnen Enkai</i>	January 5	N	Instituted in 1873
<i>Kigensetsu</i>	February 11	N	Instituted in 1872 as the enthronement day of Emperor Jinmu and renamed in 1873 as <i>Kigensetsu</i> (The anniversary day of Emperor Jinmu's Accession).
<i>Shunki Kōreisai</i>	Vernal Equinox Day	D	Instituted in 1878

<i>Jinmu-Ten 'nōsai</i>	April 3	D	Instituted in 1873
<i>Tenchōsetsu</i>	April 29	N	Instituted in 1927
<i>Shūki Kōreisai</i>	Autumnal Equinox Day	D	Instituted in 1878
<i>Kannamesai</i>	October 17	D	Instituted in 1873
<i>Meijisetsu</i>	November 3	N	Instituted in 1927
<i>Niinamesai</i>	November 23	D	Instituted in 1873
<i>Taishō-Ten 'nōsai</i>	December 25	D	Instituted in 1927

* D : day of observances

* N : national holiday

Festival Days and Postwar National Holidays

After World War II [1993]			
Name	Date	Meaning	Supplementary Note
New Year's Day <i>Gantan</i>	January 1	Celebrate the beginning of the new year.	
Coming-of-Age Day <i>Seijin no Hi</i>	January 15	Celebration of majority, to encourage new adults(20 years of age) to be conscious of their responsibilities and need to live independently.	
National Foundation Day <i>Kenkoku-Kinen no Hi</i>	February 11	Recollect the founding of the nation, and cultivate the patriotic spirit.	Instituted in 1966
Vernal Equinox <i>Shunbun no Hi</i>	Vernal Equinox	Praise nature and cherish living creatures.	
Green Day <i>Midori no Hi</i>	April 29	Cultivate generosity by feeling close to nature and being grateful for its benefits.	Celebrated as the emperor's birthday until 1988
Constitution Day <i>Kenpō-Kinen Bi</i>	May 3	Commemorate the introduction of the Constitution of Japan, and celebrate national development.	

Children's Day <i>Kodomo no Hi</i>	May 5	To respect children's individual personalities, and to encourage them to be happy and grateful to mothers.	
Respect for the Aged Day <i>Keirō no Hi</i>	September 15	Revere the aged people who have contributed to the society for a long time, and celebrate their long life.	Instituted in 1966
Autumnal Equinox <i>Shūbun no Hi</i>	Autumnal Equinox	Commemorate ancestors and the spirits of the deceased.	
Health Sports Day <i>Tai'iku no Hi</i>	October 10	Get familiar with sports, and cultivate a healthy body and mind	Instituted in 1966
Culture Day <i>Bunka no Hi</i>	November 3	Love liberty and peace, and promote culture.	
Labor Thanksgiving Day <i>Kinrō-Kansha no Hi</i>	November 23	Esteem labor, celebrate production and be grateful for each other.	
The Emperor's Birthday <i>Tennō-Tanjō Bi</i>	December 23	Celebrate the emperor's birthday.	Instituted in 1989