



Outdoors and Chill



Summer - hot days and calm evenings are the perfect time to relax outside with your family. Try to stay cool on a porch, a front stoop, at a park, in your yard, or even in the water. Make time to think about your day, notice changes in nature, share stories, and appreciate how long the daylight lasts. And then, when it's dark, there are amazing things to see in the sky!

Special Sky Dates in Summer

June 20: Summer Solstice

This is the longest day of the year! People around the world have been celebrating this day for millennia (thousands of years). Although it's already happened, you can still notice how long it stays light in the evening, and celebrate it with your family. You could make a floral wreath, which is traditional in Sweden, sit in a circle around a campfire (see Day 62 Campfire Songs), or wave sparklers in a spiral pattern. Traditionally, different groups of people have danced in spirals to celebrate the solstice.

June 21: New moon

The new moon begins (see Day 40 Moon Search about looking for the new moon)

July 4-5: Penumbral Lunar Eclipse

A penumbral lunar eclipse takes place when the Moon moves through the faint, outer part of Earth's shadow. This type of eclipse is often mistaken for a regular Full Moon. On July 4th, around 11pm, the almost Full Moon will look dimmer than a typical full moon. If you're curious and want to read more go here: [Penumbral Lunar Eclipses](#)

July 5: Full moon

The Full Moon in July is the Buck Moon, named after the new antlers that emerge from a buck's forehead around this time of the year. It is also called Thunder Moon, Hay Moon, and Wort Moon. Can you think why those names might be used?

July 20: New moon

August 3: Full moon

The Full Moon in August is named after North America's largest fish, the lake sturgeon. Other names for this Full Moon include Grain Moon, Green Corn Moon, Fruit Moon, and Barley Moon.

Moonlight reflected on a lake.

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August 11-12: Peak nights for the Perseid Meteor Shower

A meteor shower is a time at night when you can see dozens of “shooting stars” or meteors burn up as they enter our earth’s atmosphere. The Perseid meteor shower starts around July 17th and goes until August 26th.



Keep an Eye Out For

Fireflies



Also called lightning bugs, these are beetles that glow and fly where there is a lot of water, or moisture. Fireflies can be seen in Eastern and Southern states of the U.S. but in the dryer Western States they don’t glow! Every species has a certain pattern of lighting up and some even blink on and off together (synchronous)! Can you create a pattern of on and off lights with your family using a flashlight? In the Day 55 Outside Animal Watching activity we said that the best way to treat animals is to leave them be,

so please don’t catch fireflies. In fact, fireflies need our help. Click here to learn more:

<https://www.firefly.org/how-you-can-help.html>

Honeysuckle

This blooms in early summer and has a wonderful scent, reminding you that summer is here. It grows everywhere - along the road, up fences, by buildings, and in gardens.



Thunderstorms and Rainbows

The warm weather creates the right conditions for exciting storms. From the safety of your home and with a family member or stuffed friend, watch the dark sky for lightning and then count the seconds until you hear the thunder. Feel the temperature drop as the rain cools the air. At the end, you might just see a rainbow where the sun lights up the water droplets still in the air. Rainbows happen later in the day when the sun is more than halfway to the horizon.



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Butterflies

These insects come in many sizes, patterns, and all the colors of the rainbow. They can be found in cities, suburbs, and the countryside flying around and landing on flowers. You will also see moths in the summer which are less brightly colored, fly around lights at night, and have feathery antennae. Butterflies have very slender antennae which get thicker at the end. It would be fun to keep track of all the different butterflies you see by taking photos or drawing them.



Photo courtesy of Lindsey Brendel.

Here is a link to common butterflies in North America:

<https://ih0.redbubble.net/image.389555376.0885/flat,800x800,070,f.u2.jpg>

Summer Celebrations

Summer is also a time for outside celebrations. While this summer will be very different with large celebrations being cancelled, you could have a small celebration with your family or just learn about how other people celebrate when they can gather in large groups.

Fourth of July

This is the day when American citizens celebrate the reading of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1776. Americans remember the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) that allowed the thirteen colonies to govern themselves and not be ruled by England. Families gather to share food, there are parades in cities and towns, and the day ends with displays of fireworks, big and small. What are your family's Fourth of July traditions?

Obon/Bon Festival

Dates vary - July 15th through August 15th

The Obon festival is held every year in Japan in July. On this special day people put candles in rivers and lakes and watch them float away. This is one way they honor the memories of their ancestors. Since its outset in the U.S., Obon Festival has remained one of the most important Japanese-American traditions of folk culture. Today, there are large Obon Festivals held in numerous locations around the world. (photo source: [Obon Festival 2020 in Japan: Travel Guide | JRailPass](#))





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International Day of Friendship/World Friendship Day

July 30th/August 2nd

These are days for everyone to spend time with close friends and to understand how important friendship is for all us. People may give small gifts to their friends. Take some time to call, text, video call, or safely see friends from a distance with a mask on.

A popular gift for a friend is a friendship bracelet. If you'd like to make a friendship bracelet, here is a video to get you started:

https://youtu.be/n2rq-btMNFI?list=PL2vt_TPKQbZrn2PvccoSkiszZfEIs5RRA

Here is a little history on the two days and how they began:

[International Day of Friendship in 2020/2021 - When, Where, Why, How is Celebrated?](#)

