

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

A KISS IS JUST A KISS... OR IS IT?

PLUS: • Best Days to Do Things • Gardening by the Moon's Sign
• Monthly Calendar • Astronomy • Weather



FEBRUARY 2024

PHOTO: MARABIRD/GETTY IMAGES

FEBRUARY

Holidays, Full Moon Names, and More

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

- Feb. 1:** First day of Black History Month
- Feb. 2:** Groundhog Day
- Feb. 10:** Lunar New Year (China)
- Feb. 12:** Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- Feb. 13:** Mardi Gras
- Feb. 14:** Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 14:** Valentine's Day
- Feb. 15:** National Flag of Canada Day
- Feb. 19:** Presidents' Day
- Feb. 22:** George Washington's Birthday
- Feb. 29:** Leap Day

FEBRUARY BIRTH FLOWERS

VIOLET AND PRIMROSE

- The violet may signify modesty, humility, loyalty, or faithfulness.
- The primrose can symbolize youth, young love, innocence, or new beginnings.



EYE ON THE SKY

FEBRUARY'S FULL MOON NAMES

Snow Moon, Eagle Moon,
Groundhog Moon

MOON PHASES

- Last Quarter:** Feb. 2, 6:18 P.M. EST
- New Moon:** Feb. 9, 5:59 P.M. EST
- First Quarter:** Feb. 16, 10:01 A.M. EST
- Full Moon:** Feb. 24, 7:30 A.M. EST



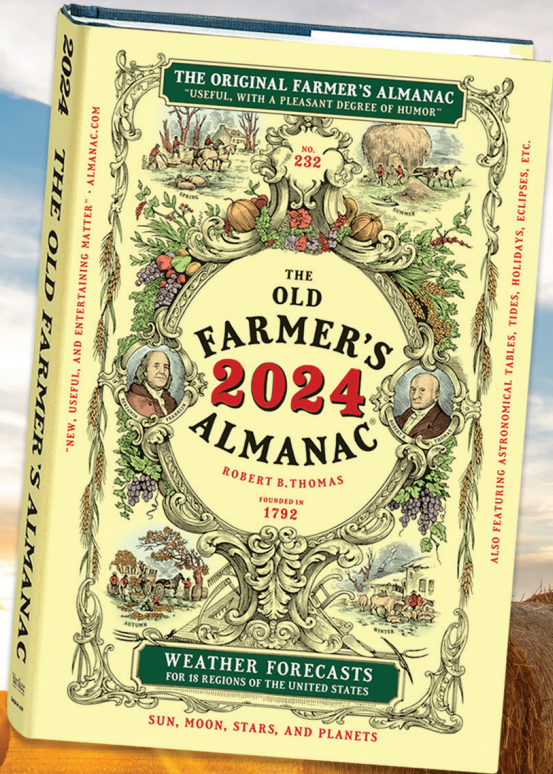
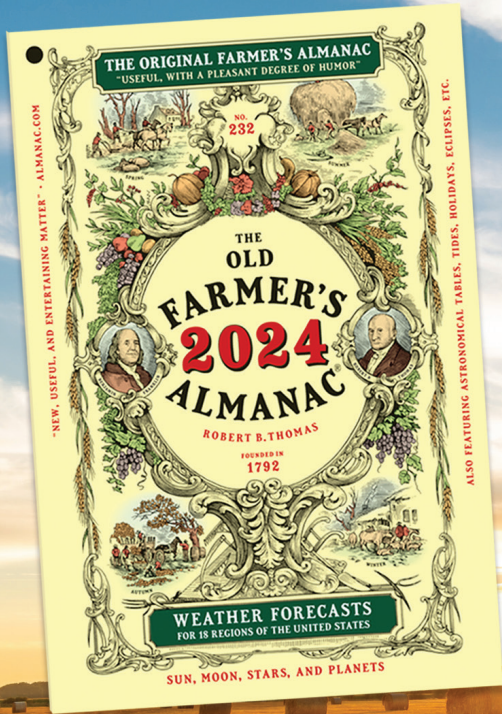
TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT FEBRUARY'S
FULL MOON

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ORDER YOUR 2024 ALMANACS!



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BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These February dates, deemed to be propitious in astrology, are based on the astrological passage of the Moon. However, consider all indicators before making any major decisions. —*Celeste Longacre*

PERSONAL

Advertise to sell: 14–16

Ask for a loan: 2, 3, 29

Begin diet to gain weight: 12, 16

Begin diet to lose weight: 4, 29

Buy a home: 14–16

Color hair: 14–16

Cut hair to discourage growth:
1, 26–28

Cut hair to encourage growth:
14–16

Entertain: 21–23

Get married: 1, 26–28

Have dental care: 24, 25



Move (house/household): 17, 18

Perm hair: 8, 9

Quit smoking: 4, 29

Straighten hair: 4, 5

Travel for pleasure: 21–23

Wean children: 4, 29

AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 19, 20

Brew: 2, 3, 29

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 2, 3, 29

Demolish: 2, 3, 29

Dry fruit, vegetables, or meat: 4, 5

End projects: 23

Lay shingles: 21–23

Make jams or jellies: 10, 11

Paint: 14–16

Start projects: 10

Wash floors: 10, 11

Wash windows: 12, 13

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 6, 7

Go camping: 4, 5

Go fishing: 9–24

Set posts or pour concrete: 6, 7

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 12, 13

Graft or pollinate: 19, 20

Harvest aboveground crops: 14–16

Harvest belowground crops: 6, 7, 25

Mow to promote growth: 10, 11

Mow to slow growth: 2, 3, 29

Pick fruit: 24, 25

Plant aboveground crops: 10, 11

Plant belowground crops: 2, 3, 29

Prune to discourage growth: 4, 5

Prune to encourage growth: 12, 13

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 2, 3, 29

Castrate animals: 8, 9

Cut hay: 12, 13

Purchase animals: 19, 20

Set eggs: 18, 25–27

Slaughter livestock: 2, 3, 29

Wean animals: 4, 29



GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the February dates shown in the Moon's Astrological Place calendar below to find the best days for the following garden tasks:

PLANT, TRANSPLANT, AND GRAFT: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, or Taurus

HARVEST: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Gemini, or Aquarius

BUILD/FIX FENCES OR GARDEN BEDS: Capricorn

CONTROL INSECT PESTS, PLOW, AND WEED: Aries, Gemini, Leo, Sagittarius, or Aquarius

PRUNE: Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius. During a waxing Moon, pruning encourages growth; during a waning Moon, it discourages growth.

THE MOON'S ASTROLOGICAL PLACE IN FEBRUARY

1 Libra	9 Aquarius	17 Gemini	25 Virgo
2 Scorpio	10 Pisces	18 Gemini	26 Libra
3 Scorpio	11 Pisces	19 Cancer	27 Libra
4 Sagittarius	12 Aries	20 Cancer	28 Libra
5 Sagittarius	13 Aries	21 Leo	29 Scorpio
6 Capricorn	14 Taurus	22 Leo	
7 Capricorn	15 Taurus	23 Leo	
8 Aquarius	16 Taurus	24 Virgo	



TAP FOR
MERCURY IN
RETROGRADE
DATES



TAP FOR
FEBRUARY
MOON
PHASES

MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

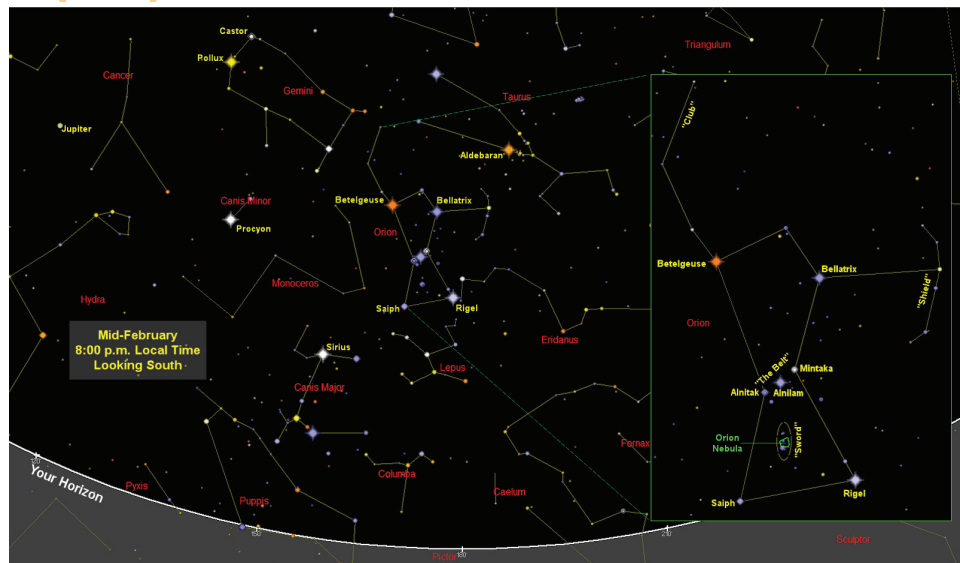
Mercury's retrograde periods can cause our plans to go awry. However, this is an excellent time to reflect on the past. Intuition is high during these periods, and coincidences can be extraordinary.

When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

Mercury's remaining 2024 retrograde periods: **April 1–24, August 4–27, and November 25–December 15.**

—Celeste Longacre

Celebrating its 47th anniversary in 2024, the best-selling *Old Farmer's Almanac* Gardening Calendar is filled with beautiful art, helpful tips, insightful quotes, and an easy-to-use grid with holidays and Moon phases. Order yours today at [Almanac.com/Shop](https://www.almanac.com/Shop).



ALL HAIL, THE MIGHTY HUNTER!

There is no brighter constellation in the night sky than Orion, the Hunter. And there is no better time to view Orion than an early evening in February, so bundle up!

When you look to the south in February, your view is dominated by Orion, standing tall and proud. Let's examine the Hunter in detail. This month's Sky Map includes a close-up view of Orion on the right-hand side of the map.

The main figure of Orion consists of seven bright stars. The brightest of these are Betelgeuse on his right shoulder and Rigel on his left knee. Both are among the sky's 10 brightest stars, and they have distinctly different colors. At a glance, it is easy to see that Betelgeuse is a yellowish orange star while Rigel is a dazzling blue-white. In general, the colors of stars are very subtle, but the colors of these two bright stars are easy to see.

Betelgeuse and Rigel are both classified as "supergiant"

TAP TO GET
A PRINTABLE
**FEBRUARY
SKY MAP**

TAP TO
FOLLOW
OHIOAN JEFF
DETRAY'S SKY
ADVENTURES



stars, having about 8 and 21 times the mass, respectively, of our Sun. Where Betelgeuse really excels, however, is in its sheer size—as much as 1,000 times larger than our Sun!

On Orion's left shoulder lies the very blue star Bellatrix, meaning “female warrior.” It's no coincidence that the Bellatrix LeStrange character in the Harry Potter books is extremely warlike (and not in a good way!). Bellatrix (the star) is even bluer than Rigel, but because Bellatrix is dimmer, its color is less apparent except on especially clear, dark nights.

Completing the main outline of Orion is Saiph, marking the Hunter's right knee. This is another supergiant star, 22 times the mass of our Sun.

The three stars of the Belt are a prominent feature of Orion. These stars span the midsection of the Hunter, forming a straight bright line. Although we call it the Belt, this asterism (unofficial star pattern) has many names in various cultures and religions, including the “yardstick,” the “wand,” and the “Three Kings” (after the Christmas story).

If you are viewing Orion from a dark location, you'll be able to see his right arm rising upward from Betelgeuse. The arm is often depicted as holding a weapon of some sort, often a club. Orion's other arm extends to the right of Bellatrix and holds a shield to fend off the Hunter's enemies.

Finally, you may notice a group of three stars hanging downward below the Belt. These are said to represent Orion's sword. The middle “star” in the sword isn't a star at all, but is instead a giant cloud of glowing gas and dust known as the Orion Nebula or the Great Nebula in Orion.

This nebula is a stellar nursery, where new stars are being born at this very minute. The cloud glows because many young stars are still embedded within it. With binoculars, the Great Nebula looks like a small, glowing cloud. It is the closest star-forming region to Earth, a mere 1,300 light-years away!

-Jeff DeTray



AMUSEMENT

A Kiss Is Just a Kiss . . . or Is It?

Throughout history, the kiss has been used to express a range of emotions. What makes a pucker so powerful?

AMUSEMENT

HOW THIS LIP-SMACKING BEHAVIOR BEGAN

Anthropologists differ in their opinions about who (or what) planted the first kiss, and why:

- Many cite the behavior of an ancient human ancestor from 125 million years ago. The ratlike animal *Eomaia scansoria* sniffed and rubbed its nose on a potential mate to sample pheromones and signal desire. (*Eomaia*, a Greek word, means “dawn mother,” and *scansoria*, a Latin word, means “climber”—a hint at its behavior.)

- Others believe that kissing may have evolved from prehistoric times as a way for mothers to feed pre-chewed food to their children.

- In humans, kissing may have evolved from sniffing: The area around the mouth and nose contains scent glands that produce pheromones, our

personal perfumes. Kissing is a way to sample a person’s unique aroma, detect his or her sexual chemistry, determine his or her health, and discern whether he or she is a potential mate.

THE SCIENCE OF THE SMOOCH

Philematology is the study of kissing. Osculation is the act of kissing.

The orbicularis oris is the circular muscle of the lips, or the kissing muscle. It is responsible for closing the lips and making them protrude into a pucker. A quick peck on the lips uses just two parts of one muscle: the upper and lower orbicularis oris. A passionate lip-lock uses up to 34 facial muscles.

The act of kissing produces powerful hormones, including adrenaline, serotonin, dopamine, and oxytocin. When combined, these

increase our sense of well-being, reduce stress, leave us feeling weak in the knees, and encourage us to establish intimacy and bonding relationships.

Kissing produces extra saliva, which contains immunoglobulins, antibodies that wash the teeth of bacteria that could lead to tooth decay.

Deep kissing exercises underlying face muscles, which can help you to look younger.

BIRDS DO IT . . . AND SO DO FISH

Birds tap beaks, turtles touch noses, elephants slip their trunks into each other’s mouths, prairie dogs rub noses, and chimps slip their tongues into other chimps’ mouths. Male “kissing” gourami fish occasionally fight by locking lips: They press their mouths together, sometimes for up to 25 minutes.

AMUSEMENT

ITCHING FROM A KISS?

Kissing bugs (*Triatoma* spp.), common in the southern United States, are attracted to light in houses at night. Once inside, they hone in on their prey—sleeping humans—by detecting exhaled carbon dioxide and body heat. The bugs often bite, or “kiss,” people around the mouth while they sleep. Usually, the bites cause only a minor irritation and itching that soon disappears. Occasionally, the bites produce an extreme allergic reaction leading to anaphylactic shock.

APPARENTLY, THERE IS A “RIGHT” WAY

In 2003, Onur Güntürkün, a Turkish-born psychologist, reported the results of a survey of 124 couples kissing in public places in the United States, Germany, and Turkey. He found that when

they kissed, they tilted their heads to the right twice as often as to the left. More than a century earlier, French sculptor Auguste Rodin captured a similar pose in *The Kiss* (c. 1880s). Both lovers in this marble sculpture have their heads turned to the right.

SAY IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT (WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS)

Kiss-me-quick refers to a woman’s hat, popular in the 1850s, that had no brim and was worn on the back of the head, which made it easy for a suitor to plant a kiss on the wearer.

A kiss-me-if-you-can was a hat with a wide brim that made it difficult for a suitor to dip under it to plant a kiss.

IF IT’S WORTH DOING, IT’S WORTH OVERDOING

Annual kissing contests,

often conducted to celebrate Valentine’s Day, are a test of endurance rather than romance.

On February 14, 2009, in Mexico City, 39,897 friends, couples, and family members kissed for 10 seconds, establishing a world record for the most simultaneous kisses.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

The kiss of peace originated in the Christian mass and, yes, people kissed each other. In the 13th century, parishioners in England instead began kissing an osculatorium, a wooden or metal disc with a holy picture in the center.

Eventually, the kiss of peace became secularized and signified a truce between warring parties—or at least that was the idea.

In 1792, during the French Revolution, Bishop Antoine-Adrien Lamourette urged



arguing factions of the Legislative Assembly to set aside their differences and swear everlasting fraternity.

Inspired, assembly members embraced, kissed, and vowed to conduct quarrel-free sessions.

The next day, however, arguments resumed. Two years later, Lamourette was guillotined.

In French, the

expression *baiser de Lamourette* (“Lamourette’s kiss”) refers to a short-lived truce.

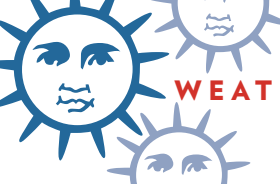
FRIENDS, ROMANS, BUSINESSMEN, LEND ME YOUR . . .

Ancient Romans greeted each other with kisses on the hand, cheek, or mouth. Roman statesman Cato encouraged soldiers

returning home to kiss their wives to see if they had been drinking.

When it comes to business relationships, the Emily Post Institute encourages the use of a handshake, as a kiss might be misconstrued, especially between members of the opposite sex.

—Martie Majoros



IF IN FEBRUARY YOU HEAR THUNDER,
YOU WILL SEE A SUMMER'S WONDER.

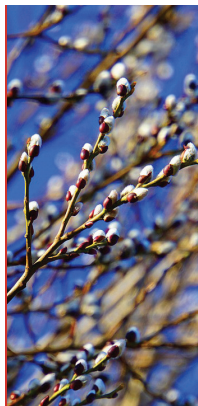
HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

Over the years, we have refined and enhanced this formula with state-of-the-art technology and modern scientific calculations. We employ three scientific disciplines to make our long-range predictions: solar science, the study of sunspots and other solar activity; climatology, the study of prevailing weather patterns; and meteorology, the study of the atmosphere. We predict weather trends and events by comparing solar patterns and historical weather conditions with current solar activity.

Our forecasts emphasize temperature and precipitation deviations from averages, or normals. These are based on 30-year statistical averages prepared by government meteorological agencies and updated every 10 years. Our forecasts are based on the tabulations that span the period 1991 through 2020.

We believe that nothing in the universe happens haphazardly, that there is a cause-and-effect pattern to all phenomena. However, although neither we nor any other forecasters have as yet gained sufficient insight into the mysteries of the universe to predict the weather with total accuracy, our results are almost always very close to our traditional claim of 80 percent.

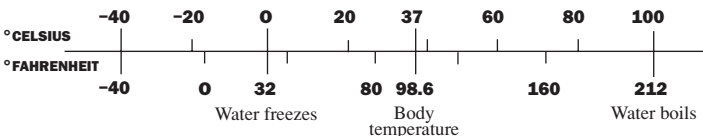


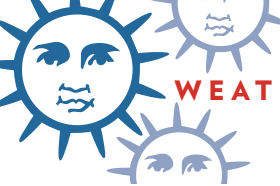
TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY

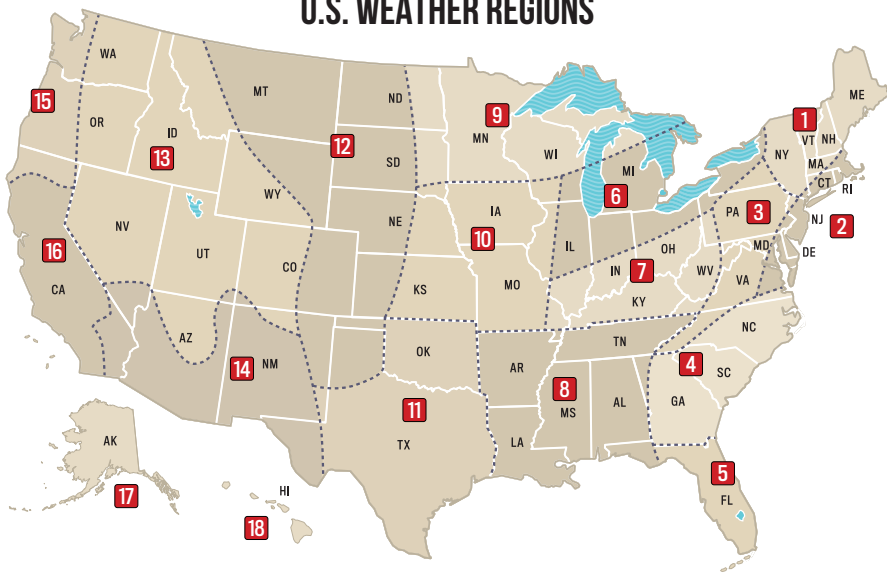
CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



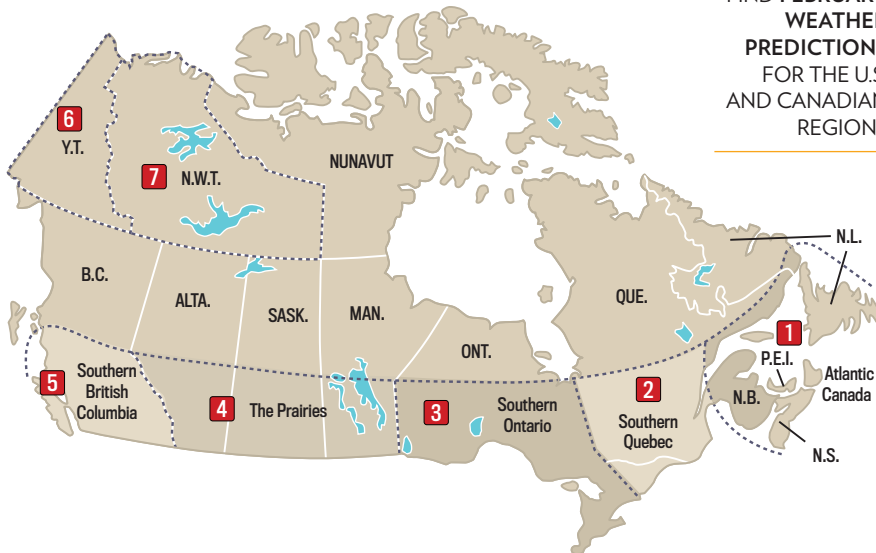


WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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FIND FEBRUARY
WEATHER
PREDICTIONS
FOR THE U.S.
AND CANADIAN
REGIONS





PUDDLING UP MEANS CUDDLING UP!

On Groundhog Day, February 2, cloudy skies and snow showers and flurries in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, and Wiarton, Ontario, will keep Phil and Willie, respectively, from seeing their shadows. Legend says that this will mean an early end to winter in these locations. Elsewhere, groundhogs will see their shadows across southern New England, from Georgia and Florida westward into Texas and Oklahoma, across the central Rockies, and over much of the southwestern U.S. In the rest of the U.S., as well as southern Canada, no shadows will be seen.

February 11, Super Bowl Sunday, will see sunny skies and mild conditions for fans tailgating at the big game inside domed Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nevada. Meanwhile, a snowstorm could alter Super Bowl travel plans from southern New England westward through the Appalachians and southward across Tennessee and Georgia.

Making plans for eating indoors at a nice restaurant or going to a movie would be a good idea to avoid the rainy conditions that will prevail on Valentine's Day, February 14, from much of the East Coast westward through the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley, along the West Coast, and across Hawaii. A mix of rain and snow will arrive from Tennessee through the Heartland and into the Upper Midwest, while a snowstorm may put a damper on date night from the northern Plains and northern Rockies into the Great Basin. Across Canada, there will be a mix of rain and snow from Nova Scotia through



southern Quebec and into southern Ontario, as well as in southern British Columbia; cold with flurries will be the norm elsewhere.

On Presidents' Day, February 19, skies will be rainy in Quincy, Massachusetts; Clinton, Pennsylvania; Coolidge, Arizona; and across much of the state of Washington—while a snowstorm will be under way in Cleveland, Ohio. Expect sunny conditions in Washington, Georgia; Lincoln, Nebraska; Roosevelt, Minnesota; and Grant, Oklahoma. February 19 is also Family Day in Canada, where it will be stormy with rain or snow across Atlantic Canada and southern Quebec and from the Canadian Prairies into southern British Columbia. In between, the Sun will be shining over southern Ontario.

February 22 will mark the first spring training baseball game, when the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres play in Arizona, where fans can expect cool conditions with a few showers. When all 30 MLB teams play the first full slate of games on February 24, sunny and mild weather can be expected for Florida's Grapefruit League action, while sunny and cool conditions will favor Cactus League play in Arizona.

February temperatures will be warmer than normal in the deep Deep South, southern Plains, and Pacific Northwest and colder than normal elsewhere across the U.S. Precipitation will be near to above normal from the East Coast all the way through the Rockies to the California coast, as well as in Hawaii, and below normal in southern Florida, Texas–Oklahoma, the southern Pacific Southwest, and southern Alaska. In Canada, temperatures will be near to below normal across much of the country, with the exception of southern British Columbia, where warmer temps will prevail. Precipitation will be near to below normal from Atlantic Canada through southern Quebec and across the Northwest Territories and above normal elsewhere.

Important factors for the rest of the winter will include El Niño, a negative PDO (Pacific Decadal Oscillation), a positive AMO (Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation), and a neutral to negative NAO (North Atlantic Oscillation). Oscillations are linked ocean–atmosphere patterns that influence the weather over periods of weeks to years. Another consideration is that we are heading toward a solar maximum, with an increase in sunspot activity that could impact the polar vortex toward the end of winter and into early spring. These teleconnections suggest a stormy end to winter, especially across the southern U.S.

–Bob Smerbeck and Brian Thompson, *Old Farmer's Almanac meteorologists*