

The History on Calendar Timing

Do you ever find the spring forward / fall back of daylight savings time to be annoying? Do you find yourself late or out of it because of the time change? Imagine if it were a change of 11 days instead of one hour. That happened to our Founders in 1752.

For centuries the western world had operated on the Julian Calendar introduced by Gaius Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. His calendar featured 365 days divided into 12 months. This was an improvement on the old Roman calendar of 355 days. But a year is actually 365.25 days. To account for this, and keep the calendar in sync with the seasons, Caesar introduced a leap day every four years. The leap day was added to the end of February, the last month of the Roman calendar.

But the Julian calendar contains a mistake. Every 128 years we end up with one day too many. That meant that the calendar was now getting ahead of the seasons where before it had fallen behind.

So in 1582 a new calendar was created, the Gregorian. Countries across Europe began to adopt it. But by the mid 1700s Protestant Great Britain has not as they had considered the calendar too "popish." However, it appears common sense overcame religious differences and in 1752 the entire British Empire made the change. But we were certainly not the last. The Gregorian calendar was not adopted by Japan until 1872, Bulgaria in 1916, Estonia and Russia in 1918, Greece in 1923, and Turkey in 1926.

The jump of 11 days changed affected the birthday of many of our Founders. For example. George Washington was born on February 11th, but we celebrate his birthday as the 22nd. He never did.



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