Help Index

Introducing *On This Day for Windows*

Have you ever been curious about events that happened on this day in history?   *On This Day for Windows* can generate a list of just such items of note.

Some of the types of information which may be displayed are:

Astronomical Events

Birthdays of Famous People

Historical Events

National Observances

Religious Holidays and Events

In addition, a <u>personal database</u> may be created to contain events important to each specific user. Events such as birthdays of relatives and friends may be appropriate for this file.

To clarify, the question this software was written to answer is:

What historical events, religious holidays, etc. happened on a particular date?

It is not intended to answer questions like:

What date is Easter next year?

When was John Wayne born?

Event Types

The currently available event types are:

Birthdays

Events

Religious Events

Personal Events

Monthly Events - these are generated only on the first day of each month

Blanks

This indicates that one or more spaces can be placed here.

Fast Day

A fast day in the Hebrew calendar is one which if it occurs on a Saturday will be moved to the following day (i.e., Sunday).

The Software Construction Company

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We may also be reached via phone (24 hours per day) at

(508) 851-6204

We may also be reached electronically via one of the following addresses

CompuServe   70313,3615
Internet   softcons@world.std.com

The Association of Shareware Professionals

You may contact the Association of Shareware Professionals via mail at

545 Grover Rd
Muskegon, MI   49442-9427
USA

Or via phone at:

(616) 788-5131

(616) 788-2765 FAX

Controlling Output Options

There are several different categories of events that can be selected individually.   Select the **Event Types ...** command under the **Options** menu selection.   A dialog box will appear allowing you to choose which <u>event types</u> should be included in the output of *On This Day for Windows*.

Select those event types you would like to have included in *On This Day for Windows*' output.

The settings you select will be remembered until you change them.

Controlling Output Destination

On This Day for Windows' output can be directed to appear in either a window or a disk file.   The default destination is a window.

To determine the current setting, select the **Options** menu.   There will be a check mark next to either the **Output to File ...** command or the **Output to Window** command.

To change the setting, select the **Output to File ...** command or the **Output to Window** command under the **Options** menu.   The **Output to File ...** command will cause a dialog box to appear to specify the pathname of the file to which to send the output.

Generating Output at Startup

If you'd like to see the current day's events automatically each time you start *On This Day for Windows*, select the **Output Today's Info on Startup** choice from the **Options** menu.   A checkmark will appear next to this choice if it has already been selected.   Selecting it again will remove the checkmark (and no longer cause this option to be in effect).

To have this happen automatically when you start Microsoft Windows perform the following steps (depending on your version of windows):

Version 3.0

Add the command WINOTD to the 'load=' line if you'd like *On This Day for Windows* to be started as an icon.   Add it to the 'run=' line otherwise.   Note that you'll have to specify the complete pathname (e.g., c:\otd\winotd) unless you installed *On This Day for Windows* in a directory specified in your PATH environment variable.

Version 3.1

The instructions for Version 3.0 will continue to work for Version 3.1.   However, Microsoft has suggested that you use the Startup group for this purpose instead.

Select the WINOTD icon (but don't start the application).   Select **Copy...** from the **File** menu and select the Startup group in the resulting dialog box.   If you are successful, you should see a new icon in the Startup group.

To check to see if it will be started as an icon or not, select the WINOTD icon in the Startup group (again, don't start the application).   Select **Properties...** from the **File** menu.   The resulting dialog box will have a checkbox for starting the application as an icon.

Other Configuration Controls

OTDDIR

On This Day for Windows will first search the directory where the executable resides for the <u>databases</u>. If they aren't found in that directory, the environment variable OTDDIR will be used to search other directories.   The OTDDIR environment variable has the same syntax as the MSDOS PATH variable. See your MSDOS manual for more information on how and where to set environment variables.

One way you can use this environment variable is allow you to place all BIRTHDAY databases in one subdirectory and all EVENTS databases in another subdirectory specifying all these subdirectories in the OTDDIR environment variable.   For example:

```
SET OTDDIR=C:\OTD\BDAY;C:\OTD\EVT
```

Or, you might want to place some of the databases on a disk in each of two floppy drives on a system without a hard disk.   In this case, you might want to use the following setting to enable *On This Day for Windows* to search two floppy drives for data:

```
SET OTDDIR=A:\;B:\
```

Typically, however, this environment variable will be set so that *On This Day for Windows* command may be invoked from anywhere on your disk and it will find the appropriate data files in one directory.   For example:

```
SET OTDDIR=C:\OTD
```

TZ

Some of the events that are automatically calculated (e.g., phases of the moon) display a time associated with the event.   If the TZ environment variable is set, the time printed will be your local time. If it is not set, the program will assume that it is being run in the Eastern time zone of the United States.

The syntax of the TZ environment variable is:

```
SET TZ=zzz[+/-]d[d][lll]
```

zzz is the name of the current time zone (e.g., EST, PST).

[+/-]d[d] is an optionally signed number of one or more digits.   It is the local time zone's difference from GMT in hours.   Negative numbers adjust westward from GMT. (e.g., 5=EST, +8=PST, -1=continental Europe).

lll is an optional name that represents the local time zone's daylight savings time (e.g., EDT, PDT). Don't include this field if your time zone does not observe daylight savings time.

Databases

On This Day for Windows reads event data from a subset of the following databases:

BIRTHDAY.JAN	EVENTS.JAN
BIRTHDAY.FEB	EVENTS.FEB
BIRTHDAY.MAR	EVENTS.MAR
BIRTHDAY.APR	EVENTS.APR
BIRTHDAY.MAY	EVENTS.MAY
BIRTHDAY.JUN	EVENTS.JUN
BIRTHDAY.JUL	EVENTS.JUL
BIRTHDAY.AUG	EVENTS.AUG
BIRTHDAY.SEP	EVENTS.SEP
BIRTHDAY.OCT	EVENTS.OCT
BIRTHDAY.NOV	EVENTS.NOV
BIRTHDAY.DEC	EVENTS.DEC
RELIGION	EVENTS.OTH
PERSONAL	

If birthday information was requested, BIRTHDAY.<current-month> will be read.   If event information was requested, EVENTS.<current-month> and EVENTS.OTH will be read.   If religious information was requested, RELIGION will be read.

See Controlling Output Options for more information on requesting different event types.

Entries are displayed in the order in which they appear in the database.   If you want your events to occur in a particular order, place them in that order in the database.

On This Day for Windows is distributed with all the above databases with the exception of PERSONAL. Note that registered users receive a set of databases with a much larger collection of data.   See Registering *On This Day for Windows* for more information on the benefits of registration and how to register.

The database named PERSONAL is used to add any personal information you care to track with the program but do not wish to get lost in our data.   You are, of course, free to intersperse your data with ours.   It is entirely up to you and what you wish to do with the program.

See also Compressing Databases.

Navigating Through the Calendar

If the correct month and year are already displayed, simply select the square representing the day in which you are interested (see <u>Selecting the Day to Display</u> for more information).

If the month displayed is not correct or is from the wrong year, there are several ways of changing it to the correct month and year ...

To move forward and backward a month at a time:

Use the << and >> buttons.

Use the Page Up and Page Down buttons.

Use the "Previous Month" and "Next Month" choices on the "Go To" menu.

To change the month and year at the same time:

Use the button between the << and >> buttons.

Use the "Month/Year ..." choice on the "Go To" menu.

Selecting the Day to Display

On This Day for Windows displays a conventional "month at a time" calendar.   The currently selected day will appear red.   Pressing the enter key will generate output for the currently selected day.

There are a number of ways to select a different day:

Use the "Today" choice on the "Go To" menu to jump immediately to today's date.

Use the left and right arrow keys to move forward and backward a day.

Use the up and down arrow keys to move forward and backward a week.

Click on the date desired.   Note that this will also generate output.   The above methods of movement require that you press enter to actually generate output.

Frequently Asked Questions

This section will attempt to answer some of the more frequent questions we've gotten.

[How can I print a copy of the output?](#)

[How can I create a copy to share with my friends?](#)

[How do I register On This Day for Windows?](#)

[What are your sources for this information?](#)

How Can I print a copy of the output?

The easiest way to print a copy of *On This Day for Windows*' output is to send the output to a file (see Controlling Output Destination) and then print the file.   You can print the file from File Manager, Notepad, Write, etc.

What are your sources for this information?

I have used a great many sources to amass this collection of information.   Virtually everything I've read since sometime in 1985 has been used as a source from one time or another.   Less frequently, I use radio and TV broadcasts as sources.   I find them to be a bit less reliable for dates than printed media.

It is important to state here that we do not guarantee the information's accuracy in any way.   You may find duplicate entries or other mistakes.   We do our best to keep the data as "clean" as possible and appreciate hearing about any mistakes (or additions) you find.

When writing about mistakes or new entries, please try to give supporting evidence.   We are trying to keep track of sources in order to arbitrate any possible discrepancies in the dates.

Lastly, we must point out that we reserve the right to ignore any and all suggestions related to our data. As a registered user, you will have access to all the files that we have and may remove events you don't like, add ones you think should be added, and improve the wording of others.   We hope you will understand.

See Also Bibliography

Creating a Copy to Share with Your Friends

There are two versions of *On This Day for Windows* in circulation:

The Evaluation Version

The Registered Version

If you've paid the registration fee to The Software Construction Co. (see <u>Registering *On This Day for Windows*</u> for more information) *you have* **The Registered Version**.   If you have not registered your copy and see only a handful of birthdays and events when you request a date, you have **The Evaluation Version**.   If you have not registered and see a large number (i.e., 30 or more events per day), you have **The Registered Version** (which you shouldn't have).

To share a copy with your friends, perform the following steps, depending on which version you have:

The Evaluation Version

Copy the directory containing the executable and data files to a diskette (e.g., COPY c:\otd*.* a:).

The Registered Version

Make certain you are in MSDOS (either an MSDOS shell within Microsoft Windows or at the MSDOS prompt prior to entering Microsoft Windows.

Change your directory to the directory where *On This Day for Windows* was installed (e.g., cd c:\otd).

Execute the OTDSHARE batchfile specifying the diskette drive containing the diskette onto which you'd like the software copied (e.g., otdshare a:).

Year

This is a decimal digit indicating the year.   All digits should be indicated (e.g., 1992 should **not** be abbreviated 92).   *On This Day for Windows* will attempt to extrapolate most years even if the calendar currently being used was not yet in existence.

Day

This is a decimal digit indicating the day.   Valid values depend on the <u>calendar</u> currently being used and the <u>month</u> specified.

Calendars

On This Day for Windows can currently calculate dates in the following calendars.   Use the characters following the calendar name to create a <u>relative date specifier</u>.

<u>Gregorian</u>   G

<u>Hebrew</u>   H or HF to specify a <u>fast day</u>

<u>Islamic</u>   I

<u>Julian</u>   J

Month

This is a decimal digit indicating the month.   Valid values depend on the calendar currently being used.

Weekday

Valid weekday values are:

Monday	M
Tuesday	T
Wednesday	W
Thursday	R
Friday	F
Saturday	S
Sunday	U

Date Specifiers

Date specifiers may have one of the following forms:

Absolute dates

> month

If the specified month matches that in the date specifier and the monthly event type has been chosen, then the item is output.

> month/day

If the specified month and specified day matches that in the date specifier, then the item is output.

> month/day/year

If the specified month, specified day, and specified year matches that in the date specifer, then the item is output.   Note that this is the only one of the three formats that will include a year in the output.

Relative dates

> alternate calendar absolute date

This indicates to use the specified calendar to evaluate the absolute date following.   See above for a discussion of absolute dates.

> absolute date + days

Add the specified number of days to the absolute date.   For example, 1/3+37 in the Gregorian calendar is the same as 2/9.   See above for a discussion of absolute dates.

> absolute date - days

Subtract the specified number of days from the absolute date.   For example, 1/3-21 in the Gregorian calendar is the same as 12/13.   See above for a discussion of absolute dates.

> weekday(month/day)

This indicates the first weekday occurring on or before the date specified by month and day.   For example, W(8/14) specifies the second Wednesday occurring in the month of August in the Gregorian calendar.

> weekday(*)

This indicates every occurrence of weekday.   For example, M(*) specifies every Monday.

> E

This indicates the Christian holiday Easter.

> E + days

Add the specified number of days to the date of Easter.

> E - days

Subtract the specified number of days from the date of Easter.

> *

This indicates every day.

> * + days

This indicates to add the specified number of days to the current date requested.   This is useful in the command line version of the product in order to be able to ask for tomorrow's data.

> * - days

This indicates to subtract the specified number of days to the current date requested.   This is useful in the command line version of the product in order to be able to ask for yesterday's data.

Database Format

A line in a database may be in one of the following forms:

`#:`*stuff*

    This line is ignored.   It is useful to add commentary to a file.

<u>`date specifier`</u>`:`*stuff*

    Should the date requested match the relative date, stuff will get output.

<u>`blanks`</u>`:`*stuff*

    This format indicates a continuation of the preceding line.

Compressing Databases

On This Day for Windows can read either normal text databases or those that have been compressed with the included compression program (CMP). *On This Day for Windows* determines automatically whether a database is compressed or not and uses the appropriate method to read it.

You may replace any or all uncompressed databases with compressed ones and vice versa.   The compressed databases are smaller but take longer to read.   Therefore, if you value disk space more than execution speed, you should try to compress as many databases as possible.   If you value execution speed more than disk space, uncompress as many databases as possible.

Registering *On This Day for Windows*

Registering *On This Day for Windows* costs just $25 (US funds).   Massachusetts residents must include 5% sales tax.

Registered users of *On This Day for Windows* receive the following benefits:

  Notification of any updates
  The latest version of the software
  A much more extensive collection of data
  Several other utilities which make the maintenance of the databases easier
  A collection of quotations and a program to display them

Although we encourage copying and sharing of *On This Day for Windows*, we must insist that registered users **NOT** share the larger databases, the quotation database and program, and any utilities not included in the evaluation version.   We retain full copyrights to these files.   It is an infringement of copyright law to distribute copies of these files.

In order to make this easier, registered copies of *On This Day for Windows* contain a batch file which will create an evaluation diskette that you may freely share.   See the README.TXT file on your registered diskette for more details.

You can, of course, register *On This Day for Windows* directly from The Software Construction Company (click on our name for how to contact us).   We accept cash, checks, money orders, and purchase orders.   Please specify 5¼ or 3½ diskettes (If you don't specify, we'll ship 3½ diskettes).   We have made this as easy as possible by providing a "Register" command under the Help menu.

We have arrangements with two companies to take credit card orders on our behalf:

Public (software) Library
PO Box 35705
Houston, TX   77235-5705
(800) 242-4775 Orders
(713) 524-6398 FAX
(713) 524-6394 Information and Help
CompuServe: 71355,470

will accept Mastercard, Visa, American Express, and Discover payments

BUDGETWARE
PO Box 496
Newtown NSW 2042
AUSTRALIA
(02) 519-4233
(02) 516-4236 FAX

will accept Bankcard, Mastercard, and Visacard.   Payment is $49 (Australian funds).

See also Evaluation diskettes.

Evaluation Diskettes

For $5 (US funds) to cover our costs (refunded when you <u>register</u>), we will supply you with the latest edition of the software.   Please specify 5¼ or 3½ diskettes (If you don't specify, we'll ship 3½ diskettes).

Bug Reports

Should you discover a bug in this code, please let <u>The Software Construction Company</u> (click on our name for ways to contact us) know.   Please provide us with as much of a description of the problem as you can, as well as your name and address.   If you would prefer being contacted by phone, add your phone number and the hours we can reach you.

Known Problems/Limitations

The Jewish holiday Ta'anit Esther occurs on the preceding Thursday when Purim falls on Sunday. There is no currently known way to indicate this relationship.

There is a similar problem with the Fast of the Firstborn when Passover occurs on a Sunday.

Bibliography

Special thanks to John Peyton, a friend who helped get me thinking along the right path several times.

Following is a list (no doubt partial) of items I found helpful when learning how to calculate the various calendars, astronomical events, etc. that are contained in *On This Day for Windows*:

Astronomical Formulae for Calculators by Jean Meeus, 1982, Willmann-Bell, Inc.

Calendrical Calculations by Edward M. Reingold and Nachum Dershowitz, 1989, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Practical Astronomy With Your Calculator by Peter Duffett-Smith, 3rd edition 1988, Cambridge University Press.

Many people have asked for a list of the sources for the events contained in the databases.   I have used a huge number of them and it would be impossible to list them all.   However, some of the most helpful are:

Book of Holidays Around the World, The by Alice van Straalen, E.P. Dutton.

Chase's Annual Events, Contemporary Books, Inc.

Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates, The, Harper and Row.

Glory and the Dream, The by William Manchester, Bantam Books.

Old Farmer's Almanac, The, Yankee Publishing Inc.

People's Chronology, The by James Trager, Henry Holt and Company.

This list does not include the several almanacs, numerous newspapers and magazines that have contributed to the collection of data since 1985.

Gregorian Calendar

This is the calendar currently used by much of the world (including the United States). It was designed by a commission assembled by Pope Gregory XIII in the sixteenth century. It is based on the revolution of the earth about the sun.

The months and their corresponding numbers that are legal for this calendar are:

Name	Num	Num Days
January	1	31
February	2	28 (29 on leap years)
March	3	31
April	4	30
May	5	31
June	6	30
July	7	31
August	8	31
September	9	30
October	10	31
November	11	30
December	12	31

Hebrew Calendar

This calendar was placed in operation in the mid-fourth century by Hillel II.   It is based on the moon's revolution about the earth.   However, it has solar corrections built in.   These corrections take the form of leap months that are periodically added to the calendar.

The months and their corresponding numbers that are legal for this calendar are:

Name	Num	Num Days
Nisan	1	30
Iyyar	2	29
Sivan	3	30
Tammuz	4	29
Av	5	30
Elul	6	29
Tishri	7	30
Heshvan	8	29 or 30
Kislev	9	29 or 30
Teveth	10	29
Shevat	11	30
Adar	12	29 or 30
Adar II	13	29

Note that Adar II is a leap month.   When there is an Adar II, Adar is named Adar I.

Certain holidays (fast days) must be moved to the following day (Sunday) if they fall on a Saturday. See calendar specifiers for a way to specify this in the databases.

Islamic Calendar

This calendar is based upon the moon revolving around the earth.   There are no dates in this calendar before Friday, July 16, 622 (Julian).

Much of the world does not agree with the calculations to determine this calendar.   They rely on the proclamation of the new moon by the authorities at al-Azhar in Cairo to define the calendar. Consequently, the dates computed in *On This Day for Windows* may differ by a day from those observed by much of the Islamic population of the world.

The months and their corresponding numbers that are legal in this calendar are:

Name	Num	Num Days
Muharram	1	30
Safar	2	29
Rabi I	3	30
Rabi II	4	29
Jumada I	5	30
Jumada II	6	29
Rajab	7	30
Sha'ban	8	29
Ramadan	9	30
Shawwal	10	29
Dhu al-Qada	11	30
Dhu al-Hijjah	12	29 or 30

Julian Calendar

This calendar was instituted in 45 BC by Julius Caesar.   It is based on the revolution of the earth about the sun.

The months for the Julian calendar are the same as those for the <u>Gregorian</u> calendar.

User Supported Software

This program is produced by a member of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP).   The ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you.   If you are unable to resolve a shareware-related problem with an ASP member by contacting the member directly, the ASP may be able to help.   The **ASP Ombudsman** can help you resolve a dispute or problem with an ASP member, but does not provide technical support for members' products.   Please write to

ASP Ombudsman
545 Grover Rd
Muskegon, MI   49442

or send a CompuServe message via CompuServe mail to the ASP Ombudsman at

70007,3536

See also <u>Definition of Shareware</u>, <u>Disclaimer - Agreement</u>.

Definition of Shareware

Shareware distribution gives users a chance to try software before buying it.   If you try a shareware program and continue using it, you are expected to register.   Individual programs differ on details ... some request registration while others require it, some specify a maximum trial period.   With registration, you get anything from the simple right to continue using the software to an updated program with printed manual.

Copyright laws apply to both shareware and retail software, and the copyright holder retains all rights, with   a few specific exceptions as stated below.   Shareware authors are accomplished programmers, just like authors of retail software, and the programs are of comparable quality.   (In both cases there are good programs and bad ones!)   The main difference is in the method of distribution.   The author specifically grants the right to copy and distribute the software, either to all and sundry or to a specific group.   For example, some authors require written permission before a commercial disk vendor may copy their shareware.

Shareware is a distribution method, not a type of software.   You should find software that suits your needs and pocketbook, whether it's retail or shareware.   The shareware system makes fitting your needs easier, because you can try before you buy.   And because the overhead is low, prices are low also.   Shareware has the ultimate money-back guarantee ... if you don't use the product, you don't pay for it.

See also <u>Disclaimer - Agreement</u>, <u>User Supported Software</u>.

Disclaimer - Agreement

Users of this program must accept this disclaimer of warranty:

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This program is distributed as shareware and is provided at no charge to the user for evaluation.   Feel free to share unaltered copies of it with your friends.   The essence of "user-supported" software is to provide personal computer users with quality software without high prices, and yet to provide incentive for programmers to continue to develop new products.   If you find this program useful and find that you are using it and continue to use it after a reasonable trial period, you must make a registration payment of **$25.00** (US funds) to The Software Construction Company.   Massachusetts residents must include 5% for sales tax.   This registration fee will license one copy for use on any one computer at any one time.   You must treat this software just like a book.   An example is that this software be used by any number of people and may be freely moved from one computer location to another, so long as there is no possibility of it being used at one location while it's being used at another, just as a book cannot be read by two different persons at the same time.

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You are encouraged to pass a copy of this program along to your friends for evaluation.   Please encourage them to register their copy if they find that they can use it.   All registered users will receive a copy of the latest version of the program.

If you have received this software through one of the so called "Shareware Houses" (companies whose business is selling diskettes containing other authors' software), please note that none of the money you have paid so far has (or will) make its way to the author.   You have simply paid for the duplication and distribution costs.

See also Definition of Shareware, User Supported Software.