The gods rotate through the day's hours, each day's first hour sacred to that god.

**SATURDAY**
Mars
Success in battle, linked with the Roman god, Mars

**SUNDAY**
Sun
Love and fertility in men and women, linked with the Roman goddess, Venus

**MONDAY**
Moon

**TUESDAY**
Tiw
Success in battle, linked with the Roman god, Mars

**WEDNESDAY**
Woden
Teutonic god, linked with the Roman god, Mercury

**THURSDAY**
Thor
Possessor of the thunderbolt, linked with the Roman god, Jupiter

**FRIDAY**
Frigg, Freyja
Love and fertility in men and women, linked with the Roman goddess, Venus

* Saturn, the bringer of bad luck, evaded by doing nothing on his day. In 321 AD the 1st Christian Roman emperor Constantine the Great shifted the “day of rest” to Sunday.
**CHALDEAN ASTRONOMY 2300–1600 BC**

Hexagon inscribed in circle divides to 6 equal parts; sexagesimal number system (base 6) developed; year = 360 days and degree symbol˚indicates suns; circles assigned 360˚; zodiac divided into 12 regions

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**JEWSH EXILE IN BABYLON 586–444 BC**

Nebuchadnezzar sacks Jerusalem; First Temple Period ends; Jewish survivors removed to slave labor in Babylon; Old Testament texts collated during captivity; Second Temple Period begins 444 BC

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**THOTH**

The Egyptian physician Thoth, c. 3000 BC, proposed a decimal-like system of arranging time. A month of 30 days was divided into 3 groups of 10.

**HOUR**

Thoth divided a day into 10 hours

**MINUTE**

And divided an hour into 100 minutes

**SECOND**

And divided a minute into 100 seconds

Later Egyptians worshiped Thoth as a deity. As part of rationalizing systems of measure, the National Convention of Revolutionary France adopted Thoth's system in April 1795. It was repealed in 1805.

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**HOUR**

Chaldeans (Babylonians) divided a daily cycle into 24 units (hours)

Romans divided daylight into 12 equal parts and darkness into 12 equal parts. Note seasonal variation of lengths. Guards stood watch for four parts, a tradition retained in nautical clocks, which chime 1 bell for each half-hour and repeat at 8 bells.

**MINUTE**

Chaldeans divided an hour into 60 minutes

**SECOND**

And divided a minute into 60 seconds

Later Egyptians worshiped Thoth as a deity. As part of rationalizing systems of measure, the National Convention of Revolutionary France adopted Thoth's system in April 1795. It was repealed in 1805.

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In 820 AD Hrabanus Maurus, a monk, divided the hour into 22,560 atoms. 1/288th of an atom was a scrupulus.
IANUARIUS
Janus
god of crossing places, esp. bridges, later gates

FEBRUARIUS
Februus
god of the dead, ritual of purification for the new year

+ MONTH OF MERCEDONIUS
inserted into Feb. every 2 years

MARTIUS
Mars
first an agricultural deity, spring; later, god of battle; Charlemagne renamed to Lentzinmanoth; with his son it reverted

APRILIS
Pales
a + prilius toward the festival of Pales, namesake of Palatine Hill; anniversary of Rome's founding

MAIUS
Maia
daughter of Atlas, associated with cult of the dead; considered an unwise month for marriage

Divisions of a Month

KALENDS
appearance of the new moon; e.g., IV Kalends = 4 days before the new moon; length varies in full and empty months

NONES
the 9th day before the ides; e.g., II Nones = 11 days before the full moon

IDES
appearance of the full moon; sacred to Jupiter; a festival day; debt payments were due on the Ides

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Followed a lunar calendar that aligned to the solar year: first 2 years of 12 lunar months, then 1 year of 13 lunar months.

**THE ANCIENT GREEKS** followed a lunar calendar that aligned to the solar year: first 2 years of 12 lunar months, then 1 year of 13 lunar months.

**THE MUSLIM CALENDAR**'s 12 lunar months fell short of the solar year by about 11 days. In 33 lunar years the two calendars aligned again.

Beginning c. 3000 BC Egypt followed a solar calendar that began with the fall equinox (when the Nile’s annual flood recedes and planting begins): 6 numbered months of 30 days to the spring equinox, then 6 numbered months of 30 days plus 5 named days: Osiris, Horus, Set, Isis, Nephthys (leap day? not known). The Chaldeans (Babylonians) used a similar plan.

After the exodus Moses devised a year of 52 weeks, 7 days each, that began on the fall equinox. An extra 1 day of celebration (2 on leap years) ended the year. Each of the 4 seasons had the same number of weeks. The year began on the 1st day of the week and ended on the last day of the week.

In 45 BC Julius Caesar adopted Egypt’s solar cycle and reformed the Roman calendar, which began with ten lunar months (these ended after the harvest season and picked up at the spring equinox), then added January and February, and then inserted the month of Mercedonius into February every 2 years. An “improvement” by Julius sprinkled the extra 5 days among full and empty months. A nice feature (from Egypt) was that each year started and ended on the same day. The Romans counted the years since the city’s founding in 753 BC; but the more common reference was to a given leader’s reigning year (e.g., I Philip = 1000 Rome = 248 AD).

**CHRISTIANS (AND EASTER)** Following Christian symbology, Christ was born on the winter solstice, the day of greatest darkness. He was resurrected on the first full moon following the spring equinox, the day of greatest light. Ergo Easter. Early and middle Christians showed tremendous concern about the correct dating of Easter, the error of celebrating Easter twice in one year, and the desirability that all churches use the same date. Thus each year the bishops of Rome and Alexandria set an Easter date and notified all the churches in Christendom (for a time, Rome charged a fee). The Jews celebrate Passover on Nisan 14. This lunar date shifts through the solar calendar and at one time coincided occasionally with Easter. To avoid this, early Christians fixed Easter to their sabbath and moved that to Sunday. Then the Nicene Council of 325 AD forbade Easter falling on Passover and affirmed the heretical nature of the Quartodecimans (eventually slaughtered) who celebrated Easter on Nisan 14. The current odd system of dating Easter is a final patch. The Easter problem spurred the church to develop tables assigning Easter dates; these tables tended to propagate local errors long after their intended usefulness. A sampling; table of Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus (16-year cycle); improved Hippolytan tables by Cyprian (16-year cycle, 112 years); octaëteris used by Epiphanius (8-year cycle); Laterculus of Augustalis (84-year cycle); the older Supputatio Romana (84-year cycle); Theophilus (100 years); Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria (95 years); Victorius of Aquitaine (19-year cycle, 532 years); and Dionysius Exiguus (19-year cycle, 114 years). Dionysius notes in his prologue (525 AD = 1277 Rome = CCXLI Diocletian): “I did not wish to preserve the memory of the impious persecutor in my cycles but rather chose to denote the times from the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Thus began our (slightly incorrect) system of dating from the birth of Christ. Note that revisions by Constantine I in 321 AD adopted the 7-day week with 52 1/7 weeks in the year, setting off a shift of days from one year to the next. By 1582 AD the Julian calendar had wandered off 14 days as a result of the church’s imprecise attention to leap years. To compensate, Pope Gregory XIII suppressed 10 days (shifting the spring equinox from historical March 25 to March 21 and leaving Christmas out of whack) and fixed the current system of adding leap days (1 every four years, except on the centuries, except centuries divisible by 400). This “Gregorian” calendar gradually spread through Europe. England adopted the calendar reform in 1752, suppressing 11 days and moving its new year from March 25 to January 1 (requiring the recalculation of early American dates).