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Picking Up Women Day, Grilled Meat Day and many more – adapted from rocketnews24.com

Did you know that July 4 was Pear Day and Oct 8 was Tofu Day? If you live in Japan, you may have seen special sales on yakiniku (grilled meat) on Aug 29, Yakiniku Day.

In Japan, every month is sprinkled with special commemorative days that have been created using the Japanese and Chinese reading of the numbers. For example, the reading for “eight” can be pronounced as either hachi, ha, pa, ba, or ya depending on how the word is used. Because there are so many pronunciations to choose from, August in particular gives rise to a flurry of special day names using numbers.

Take Honey Day (Aug 3) for example. In this case, 8 is read as hachi and 3 is read as mitsu. Put the two together and you get “hachimitsu,” the Japanese word for honey.

Venturing out of August, other months throughout the year have some interesting days. May 30 is Gomi Zero Day - No Garbage Day (5=go 3=mi 0=zero) and one of Japan’s most well-known and poisonous fishes, the fugu (blow fish), has its own day on Feb 9 (2=fu 9=gu). There’s even a day to commemorate “nanpa,” or picking up women -July 8 (7=nana 8=pa).

There are also clever commemorative days that use the shape of the numbers instead of their readings.

For the romantics, there’s Enkyori Renai no Hi, or Long Distance Relationship Day, on Dec 21. If you look at the numbers 1221, the ones are separated by a long distance between the two’s.

My favorite day has to be Pocky Day, Nov 11. Pocky is a popular chocolate covered pretzel stick snack sold in Japan. Each individual Pocky looks like a one, so it was only natural for 11/11 to become Pocky Day. Last year on 11/11/2011, Pocky went crazy with special campaigns and giveaways.

Sometimes organizations create special days to bring more awareness to their group or cause. Gomi Zero Day (No Garbage Day) was made to encourage people to reduce the amount of garbage they produce (and in some neighborhoods people get together to pick up trash).

Sometimes commemorative days are created for the purpose of advertising, like in the case of Pocky Day. But sometimes, these days are created just because it's fun to wordplay. Whatever the reason, you're certain to never go a week in Japan without a special day dedicated to something.

Questions:

1. Did you know about any of these days? Which ones? Did you do something special on those days?
2. What do you think about each of the days mentioned in the article? Do they sound like fun? Are they stupid?
3. What days would you like to see commemorated?
4. Can you think of any new days using numbers? (e.g. 8/3 – hachimitsu – honey day)
5. What do you think about more traditional days such as Valentines day, mothers day etc?

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