



World Conker Championships

11 October — Swithick, Northamptonshire

"They go bonkers for conkers" wisecrackers say about the World Conker Championships that take place every October in Northamptonshire. "We do indeed," says St. John Burkett, one of the organizers. "People from all walks of life and from all parts of the world come to face the fierce competition."

The current world champion is Kelci Banschbach from America. (Conkers are called "chestnuts" in America.) A year earlier, a Canadian who had never played conkers before won the world championship.

In the game of conkers, two players face each other, a yard apart, each holding a conker on a leather string. They take turns swinging their conker at the opponent's conker, trying to hit and smash it. If both conkers are smashed, the round starts over.

Conkers is a traditional game dating back to the 1700s. It typically takes place in October, which is when conkers become available. The World Conker Championships began in 1995.

A group of Chelsea Pensioners come up from London every year. "We love it," says the group's leader, Roy Palmer. "It's simple. Just pick up a conker and have a battle. It's fun. No one gets hurt. It's a wonderful day out. That's what life's all about."

Roy, a seasoned town crier, announces the opening of the event. In 2018, a Chelsea Pensioner, John Riley, was world champion. He passed away last year.

Since their inception, the championships have raised £500,000 for charities aiding people with impaired vision.



| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|--------------------|--|--|
|  |  |  | 1 Int'l Coffee Day | 2 | 3 Kentucky Apple Festival —Paintsville, Kentucky | 4 World Pea Throwing Championships—Lewes, Sussex |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 World Egg Day | 10 | 11  World Conker Championships |
| 12 Columbus Day (USA) Indigenous Peoples' Day (USA) Thanksgiving (Canada) | 13 | 14 Int'l Spinning Top Day | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 Apple Day (UK) | 22 | 23 Mole Day | 24 | 25 Daylight saving time ends in Europe Autumn Check Your Batteries Day in Europe |
| 26 Autumn Fill Your Staplers Day in Europe | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 Halloween Nat'l Doorbell Day (USA) |  |

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