What is Pi Day? Why is 3-14-15 so special?

Take any circle and draw a line from one side to the other, going through the center point of the circle. Take a string and use it to go all around the circle, cutting the string so it fits exactly. Then measure the string. You've just measured the distance around the circle. Next, divide the length of the string by the length of the line, and you'll get a number just bigger than 3. In fact, you would get something around 3.14, if you could measure that accurately. Now, here's the cool part: if you draw another circle, much bigger than the first, and do the same thing, you'll get…about 3.14. Or draw a tiny circle, barely big enough to measure, and try again…still about 3.14. No matter what size the circle, you always get the same number, about 3.14… This number is so special, it was given its own name, "pi." Pi represents the relationship between the distance around the circle and the distance through it, and it's the same for all circles. Isn't that cool?

But wait…there's more. It turns out that pi isn't exactly 3.14…it's about 3.1415…but it's not exactly that, either…it's about 3.1415926…it's about 3.141592653…in fact, these digits go on forever, never ending and never repeating. (Numbers with this property are called "irrational.")

Sometimes, people celebrate March 14 – 3/14 -- as Pi Day. It's a day to celebrate the coolness of math, and to think about all the ways pi shows up in the world around us. But this year, there's something even more special: At 9:26:53 on March 14, the date and time will represent the first ten digits of pi: 3.141592653… So this year, pi enthusiasts will be celebrating *Pi Day of the Century*!

MoMath will celebrate *Pi Day of the Century* on March 14: pidaycentury.momath.org.