

Fact File: Independence Day

What does Independence Day celebrate?

The Fourth of July celebrates the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted declaring the United States as an independent country no longer under the rule of Great Britain.

When is it celebrated?

Independence Day is celebrated each year in the United States on July 4th. The day is often referred to as the Fourth of July.

Who celebrates this day?

Independence Day is a national federal holiday in the United States. Most citizens of the United State celebrate in some way.

What do people do to celebrate?

There are a lot of ways that people celebrate. Perhaps the most popular is to have a cookout with friends and then view fireworks. Some people purchase and light their own fireworks, while others will attend large gatherings with huge public displays of fireworks. The day is a day of national pride and patriotic displays as well. This includes flying the US flag and wearing red, white, and blue. Many bands play patriotic songs like The Star Spangled Banner, America the Beautiful, and God Bless America.

Other ways to celebrate include parades, baseball games, musical concerts, and outdoor picnics. Since the holiday is in the middle of summer much of the celebration takes place outdoors.

History of Independence Day:

Independence Day celebrates July 4, 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was approved by the 2nd Continental Congress of the United States. This occurred during the Revolutionary War with Great Britain. The anniversary of the day was celebrated as early as the next year in 1777. Celebrations continued in future years, but it wasn't until nearly 100 years later in 1870 that the federal government gave employees the day off without pay.

In 1938, Congress made the day a paid federal holiday.

Fun Facts About Independence Day.

- Each year around 500,000 people gather to watch fireworks and listen to patriotic music in Washington DC on the Capitol lawn.
- There were around 2.5 million people living in the United States when independence was declared in 1776. Today there are well over 300 million people in the country.
- John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both presidents and signers of the Declaration of Independence, died on the 50 year anniversary on July 4, 1826.
- President James Monroe also died on July 4th and President Calvin Coolidge was born on July 4th.
- The Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta, GA is a 10k running race held every year on this day.
- Each year there is a famous hot dog eating contest at Coney Island, New York. Around 40,000 people show up to watch and millions watch it on TV. In 2011 the winner was Joey Chestnut who ate 62 hot dogs in ten minutes.
- The longest running celebration is said to be the Bristol Fourth of July Parade in Rhode Island which has been running since 1785.
- One of the more popular celebrations to watch on TV is the music and fireworks show put on by the Boston Pops Orchestra.