

# Fact File: Labor Day

## What does Labor Day celebrate?

Labor Day celebrates American workers and how hard work has helped this country to do well and prosper. When is Labor Day celebrated? Labor Day is celebrated on the first Monday in September.

## Who celebrates this day?

Labor Day is a national federal holiday in the United States. Many people get the day off of work and, since it always falls on a Monday, this gives many people a three day weekend.

## What do people do to celebrate?

Labor Day is often the last day that kids have off in the summer. Many people treat the day like the last day of summer. They go swimming, to the beach, have barbecues, or take weekend trips. For many people, it's the last day that the local outdoor pool is open and the last chance to go for a swim. A lot people host or go to a party or picnic on or around the Labor Day weekend. This weekend also is around the start of football season in America. Both college football and NFL football begin their season around Labor Day. There are also some parades and speeches given by labor leaders and politicians.

## History of Labor Day

No one is quite sure who first came up with the idea of a Labor Day holiday in the United States. Some people say it was Peter J. McGuire, a cabinet maker, who proposed the day in May of 1882. Other people claim that Matthew Maguire from the Central Labor Union was the first to propose the holiday. Either way, the first Labor Day was held on September 5, 1882 in New York City. It wasn't a government holiday at the time, but was held by the labor unions. Before the day became a national federal holiday it was adopted by a number of states.

The first state to officially adopt the holiday was Oregon in 1887. Becoming a Federal Holiday In 1894 there was a labor strike called the Pullman Strike. During this strike union workers in Illinois who worked for the railroads went on strike, shutting down much of the transportation in Chicago. The government brought army troops in to restore order. Unfortunately, there was violence and some workers were killed in the conflict. Not long

after the strike ended, President Grover Cleveland tried to heal relations with labor groups. One thing he did was to quickly have Labor Day established as a national and federal holiday. As a result, on June 28, 1894 Labor Day became an official national holiday.

### **Fun Facts About Labor Day**

- Labor Day is said to be the third most popular day in the United States for grilling. Number one is the Fourth of July and number two is Memorial Day.
- Labor Day is considered the end of hot dog season.
- Around 150 million people have jobs and work in the United States. Around 7.2 million of them are school teachers.
- Many other countries celebrate Labor Day on May 1st. It's the same day as May Day and is called the International Worker's Day.
- The first Labor Day parade was in protest to poor working conditions and long 16 hour work days.