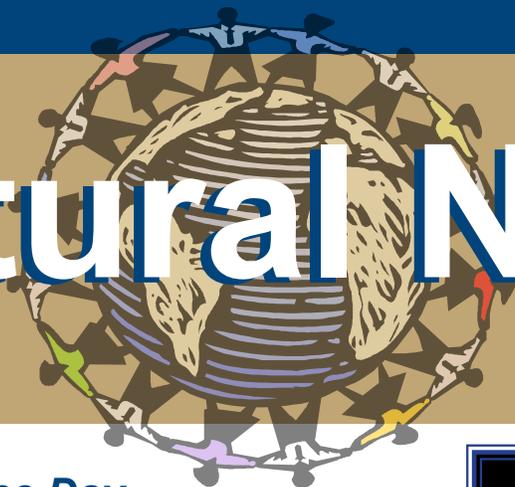


Cultural News

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History of Independence Day

Variouly known as the Fourth of July and Independence Day, July 4th has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the American Revolution (1775-83). In June 1776, representatives of the 13 colonies then fighting in the revolutionary struggle weighed a resolution that would declare their independence from Great Britain. On July 2nd, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence, and two days later its delegates adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by Thomas Jefferson. From 1776 until the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with typical festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues

The Birth of American Independence

When the initial battles in the Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did were considered radical. By the middle of the following year, however, many more colonists had come to favor independence, thanks to growing hostility against Britain and the spread of revolutionary sentiments such as those expressed in Thomas Paine's bestselling pamphlet "Common Sense," published in early 1776. On June 7, when the Continental Congress met at the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall) in Philadelphia, the Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the colonies' independence. Amid heated debate, Congress postponed the vote on Lee's resolution, but appointed a five-man committee—including Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York—to draft a formal statement justifying the break with Great Britain.

"JOHN ADAMS BELIEVED THAT JULY 2ND WAS THE CORRECT DATE ON

WHICH TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, AND WOULD REPORTEDLY TURN DOWN INVITATIONS TO APPEAR AT JULY 4TH EVENTS IN PROTEST. ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON BOTH DIED ON JULY 4, 1826--THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE".

On July 2nd, the Continental Congress voted in favor of Lee's resolution for independence in a near-unanimous vote (the New York delegation abstained, but later voted affirmatively). On that day, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 "will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival" and that the celebration should include "Pomp and Parade...Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other." On July 4th, the Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence, which had been written largely by Jefferson. Though the vote for actual independence took place on July 2nd, from then on the 4th became the day that was celebrated as the birth of American independence.

July 4th Becomes A National Holiday

The tradition of patriotic celebration became even more widespread after the War of 1812, in which the United States again faced Great Britain. In 1870, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday; in 1941, the provision was expanded to grant a paid holiday to all federal employees. Over the years, the political importance of the holiday would decline, but Independence Day remained an important national holiday and a symbol of patriotism.

Falling in mid-summer, the Fourth of July has since the late 19th century become a major focus of leisure activities and a common occasion for family get-togethers, often involving fireworks and outdoor barbecues. The most common symbol of the holiday is the American flag, and a common musical accompaniment is "The Star-Spangled Banner," the national anthem of the United States.

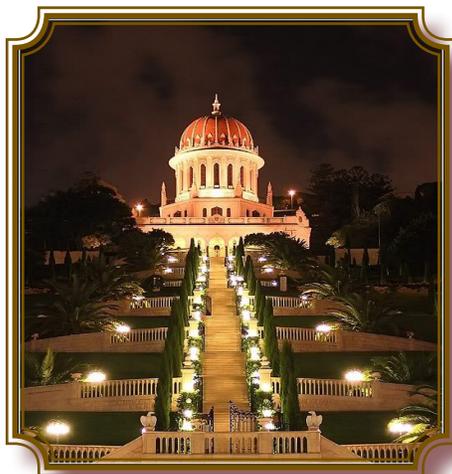


JULY 2015 CALENDAR

NATIONAL BLACK FAMILY MONTH
FRAGILE X AWARENESS MONTH
NATIONAL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CHILDREN MONTH

- 1-7- National Unassisted Homebirth Week
- 2- Asalha Puja day (Buddhist)
- 4- Independence Day
- 4-10- Freedom Week (US)
- 9- Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)
- 11- World Population Day (World)
- 13- Ulambana (Obon) (Buddhist)
- 14- Shark Awareness Day (US)
- 15-18- National Baby Food Week
- 18-21 Eid al Fitr (Islam)
- 19- Anne Hutchinson Memorial Day (US)
- 20- Space Exploration Day (US)
- 22- Fragile X Awareness Day (US)
- 23- Emperor Haile Selassie birthday (Rastafari)
- 24- Pioneer Day (Mormon Christian)
- 26- Tish'a B'av (Jewish)
- 27- National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28- World Hepatitis Day (World)
- 30- Health Care Now! Medicare's Birthday (US)

Bahá'í Holy Day – July 9 – Martyrdom of the Báb



On July 9, Baha'is around the world commemorate the date in 1850 that the Báb - one of two main figures in the founding of their Faith - was executed by a firing squad in Iran, then called Persia.

The Báb, whose name means "gate" in Arabic, had declared in 1844 that He was a messenger of God sent to prepare the way for the long-awaited promised one of all religions who would come to establish an age of universal peace. In 1863 Baha'u'llah announced publicly that He was that promised one.

The Báb attracted tens of thousands of followers, and the unease and commotion created by His message led the authorities to put him to death on a charge of heresy. He and a disciple who begged to share His martyrdom were executed by a firing squad of 750 soldiers in a public square in Tabriz.

The remains of the Báb were rescued by His followers from a ditch near the execution site and were carefully hidden in Iran for nearly half a century.

In 1899, at the behest of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the remains were transported - under great threat from civil and religious authorities and others - by way of Isfahan, Kirmanshah, Baghdad and Damascus, to Beirut and then by sea to Acre north of Haifa where 'Abdu'l-Baha lived.

'Abdu'l-Baha hid the remains for another decade before presiding over an emotional ceremony on Mount Carmel where he himself placed the sacred trust at a specially prepared site that had been designated by

Baha'u'llah for the final resting place of the Báb. Much later, an exquisite shrine with a golden dome was built over the tomb. This building has become one of the best known landmarks of northern Israel and is a place of pilgrimage for Baha'is from all over the world.

Article by: Patricia Tanrioger Training Analyst, IT Education, UC Davis Health System

Tisha B'Av in United States

Many Jewish Americans observe Tisha B'Av, which is the ninth day of the month of Av in the Jewish calendar. It is a day of mourning to remember various events such as the destruction of the First Temple and Second Temple in Jerusalem. When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat (Saturday), it is deferred to Sunday, 10th of Av. To help bring attention to this long and diverse history Dr. Claire Nelson founded The Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) in 1993 to bring attention to and advocate for the concerns of the Caribbean-American community in both the private and public sector. This effort included national recognition of the Caribbean-American Heritage and in 1999 ICS sent a letter to President Clinton requesting a month dedicated as Caribbean-American History Month.

What do people do?

Many Jewish people in the United States observe various restrictions during Tisha B'Av. These restrictions may include:

- Fasting.
- Avoiding washing, bathing, shaving or wearing cosmetics.
- Not wearing leather shoes.
- Avoiding certain types of work.
- Abstaining from sexual activities.

Many traditional mourning practices are observed, such as refraining from smiling and laughing. Those who observe Tisha B'Av are allowed to study only certain portions of the Torah and Talmud on Tisha B'Av. The book of Lamentations is read and mourning prayers are recited in the synagogue. The ark (cabinet where the Torah is kept) is draped in black.

Some universities or learning centers give those who observe Tisha B'Av the chance to sit exams at other dates, on the proviso that certain requirements are met. Some Jewish centers offer a program for observing Tisha B'Av. People who are sick are exempted from fasting on the day.

Public life?

Tisha B'Av is not a federal public holiday in the United States. However, some Jewish organizations may be closed or have restricted opening hours.

Background?

Tisha B'Av, also known as the Jewish Fast of Av, is a period of fasting, lamentation and prayer to remember the destruction of the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem. The Jewish people still continued the fast day even after they rebuilt the First Temple after the Babylonians destroyed it in 586 BCE. The Romans destroyed the Second Temple by burning it in 70 CE and this marked the start of a long exile period for Jewish people. These are two of five sad events or calamities that occurred on the ninth day of the month of Av. The other three were when:

- Ten of the 12 scouts sent by Moses to Canaan gave negative reports of the area, leading to the Israelites' despair.
- The Romans captured the fortress city of Beitar, the last stronghold of the leaders of the Bar Kochba revolt, and thousands of Jewish people, including Bar Kochba (or Kochba), were massacred in 135 CE.
- The city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 136 CE.

Tisha B'Av is a sad day that observes other major disasters and tragedies that Jewish people experienced throughout history, including the expulsion of the Jewish people from England in 1290 and from Spain in 1492, as well as the mass deportation of Jewish people from the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II.

Tisha B'Av begins at sunset on the previous day and lasts for more than 24 hours. It is the culmination of a three-week period of mourning. Weddings and other parties are generally not permitted and people refrain from cutting their hair during this period. It is customary to refrain from activities such as eating meat or drinking wine (except on the Shabbat) from the first to the ninth day of Av.



<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/tisha-b-av>