

Cultural News



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National Native American Heritage Month

Information courtesy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

November is Native American Heritage Month, or as it is commonly referred to, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

The month is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. Heritage Month is also an opportune time to educate the general public about tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and in the present, and the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S., has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose.

One of the very proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans" and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kans., formally approved a plan concerning American Indian Day. It directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to observe such a day. Coolidge issued a proclamation on Sept. 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor Indians. On December 14, 1915, he presented the endorsements of 24 state governments at the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a national legal holiday.

In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations, under variants on the name (including "Native American Heritage Month" and "National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month") have been issued each year since 1994.



NOVEMBER 2014 CALENDAR

EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH

MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION MONTH

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

- 1 - Dia de Los Muertos - Day of The Dead (Mexico)
- 2 - All Souls' Day (Christian)
- 2 - Day Light Savings Ends (US)
- 3 - Ashura (Muslim)
- 4 - Election Day (US)
- 5-12 - Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (US)
- 6 - Birthday of Guru Nanak (Sikh)
- 7-13 - Dear Santa Letter Week (US)
- 9-15 - Geography Awareness Week (US)
- 11 - Veterans Day (US)
- 12 - Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
- 13 - Lhabab Duchen (Tibetan, Buddhist)
- 15 - America Recycles Day (US)
- 16-22 - International Fraud Awareness Week (US)
- 23-30 - National Bible Week (International)
- 24 - Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh)
- 27 - Thanksgiving Day (US)
- 28 - Black Friday (US)



Day of the Dead Altar - an Important Cultural Tradition

Once a little-known and misunderstood tradition celebrated in Southern Mexico and Latin America, the Day of the Dead is crossing over into mainstream U.S. culture with a whirlwind of exhibitions, parties, educational projects, art classes and parades throughout the country.

In parts of Latin America, Dia de los Muertos is celebrated on November 1-2, with families remembering the dead with graveside picnics, all-night vigils and prayer gatherings. They decorate the graves of loved ones with marigolds, candles, sugar-coated skulls and the favorite dishes of the departed.

Common Day of the Dead traditions include creating altars to honor the dead, laying out offerings, sharing stories of the deceased, as well as cleaning and decorating gravesites.

Because Day of the Dead is a very festive, creative holiday, current Day of the Dead customs also include festivals, parades, and the making of Dia de los Muertos crafts.

The key purpose behind these Day of the Dead customs is to make contact with the spirits of the dead, to let them know that they are not forgotten and that their loved ones on earth still care about them. It is a way of keeping the connection between loved ones alive, though they may be physically separated by death.

Day of the Dead traditions can vary from town to town, with each community embracing their own unique blend of rituals, customs, and celebrations. Although the Day of the Dead customs in a small village in Mexico may differ from the Day of the Dead customs in a large American city like San Francisco, there are still several common Day of the Dead traditions that are carried out no matter what the location.

Here are the most common and important Day of the Dead traditions:

- Creating an altar with offerings (known as ofrenda)
- Visiting, cleaning, and decorating gravesites
- Telling stories about the deceased
- Making food for the deceased, to be placed on altars
- Making or buying sugar skulls and pan de muerto



<http://www.celebrate-day-of-the-dead.com/day-of-the-dead-traditions.html>

Traditional Remedies: the Cupping Therapy

Cupping therapy is an ancient Chinese form of alternative medicine, in which a local suction is created on the skin; practitioners believe this mobilizes blood flow in order to promote healing. Suction is created using heat (fire) or mechanical devices (hand or electrical pumps). Modern science has not found any benefits of cupping.

Through either heat or suction, the skin is gently drawn upwards by creating a vacuum in a cup over the target area of the skin. The cup stays in place for five to fifteen minutes. It is believed by some to help treat pain, deep scar tissues in the muscles and connective tissue, muscle knots, and swelling.

History:

There is reason to believe the practice dates from as early as 3000 B.C.; the earliest record of cupping is in the Ebers Papyrus, one of the oldest medical textbooks in the world, describes in 1550 B.C. Egyptians used cupping. Archaeologists have found evidence in China of cupping dating back to 1000 B.C. In ancient Greece, Hippocrates (c. 400 B.C.) used cupping for internal disease and structural problems. This method in multiple forms spread into medicine throughout Asian and European civilizations.

Methods:

Broadly speaking there are two types of cupping: dry cupping and bleeding or wet cupping (controlled bleeding) with wet cupping being more common. The British Cupping Society (BCS), an organisation promoting the practice, teaches both. As a general rule, wet cupping provides a more “curative-treatment approach” to patient management whereas dry cupping appeals more to a “therapeutic and relaxation approach”. Preference varies with practitioners and cultures.

Traditional Chinese medicine cupping

According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) cupping is a method of creating a vacuum on the patient’s skin to dispel stagnation— stagnant blood and lymph, thereby improving qi flow— to treat respiratory diseases such as the common cold, pneumonia

and bronchitis. Cupping also is used on back, neck, shoulder and other musculoskeletal conditions. Its advocates say it has other applications as well. Cupping is not advised over skin ulcers or to the abdominal or sacral regions of pregnant women.

Effectiveness:

In their 2008 book “Trick or Treatment”, Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst write that no evidence exists of any beneficial effects of cupping for any medical condition.

Cupping is widely used as an alternative treatment for cancer and is considered relatively safe. However, according to the American Cancer Society, it can leave temporary bruised marks on the skin and there is a small risk of burns, additionally: “available scientific evidence does not support claims that cupping has any health benefits”.

A 2012 review of the evidence in an article published in PLOS ONE said that studies appeared to show that cupping therapy was effective for treating a number of conditions, but that “nearly all included trials were evaluated as high risk of bias” – better designed studies would be needed in order to reach definitive conclusions.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cupping_therapy