

A few American holidays

Learn more about holidays celebrated by many Americans, such as Independence Day, Groundhog Day and Thanksgiving.



Martin Luther King Day is a federal holiday celebrated on the third Monday in January. The reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was an African-American who is recognised for his efforts to win civil rights for all people through nonviolent means.

Groundhog Day is February 2, and has been celebrated since 1887. On Groundhog Day, crowds gather in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to see if groundhog Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow after emerging from his hideaway, thus predicting six more weeks of winter weather.



Arbor Day is a holiday in which individuals and groups are encouraged to plant and care for trees. It originated in Nebraska City. The first Arbor Day was held on April 10, 1872, and an estimated 1 million trees were planted that day.

Memorial Day is a federal holiday on the last Monday of May. It originally honoured the people killed in the American Civil War, but has become a day on which the American dead of all wars, are remembered in special programmes held in cemeteries, churches, and other public meeting places.



Flag Day, celebrated June 14. Flag Day is not a federal holiday, but Americans are encouraged to display the flag outside their homes and businesses on this day to honour the history and heritage that the American flag represents.

Independence Day is July 4. This federal holiday honours the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It is a day of picnics and patriotic parades, a night of concerts and fireworks.





Labor Day is the first Monday of September. This federal holiday honours the nation's working people, typically with parades. For most Americans it marks the end of the summer vacation season and the start of the school year.

Columbus Day is a federal holiday celebrated on the second Monday in October. The day celebrates October 12, 1492, when Christopher Columbus landed in the New World. The holiday was first announced in 1937 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.



Halloween is celebrated on October 31. On Halloween, American children dress up in funny or scary costumes and go *trick or treating* by knocking on doors in their neighbourhood. The neighbours are expected to give small gifts of candy or money.

Thanksgiving Day is a federal holiday celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims held a three-day feast to celebrate a very good harvest. The Thanksgiving feast became a national tradition and almost always includes roast turkey, cranberry sauce, potatoes, and pumpkin pie.


