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Independence Day Newsletter

The Celebration of Independence Day

Americans have long celebrated Independence Day on the 4th of July, but did you know that the Thirteen Colonies actually voted to become a new nation on July 2, 1776?

Future President John Adams was convinced that July 2 would be “celebrated, by succeeding generations, as the great anniversary festival” with “pomp and parade, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other.”

So, why do we celebrate on the 4th of July instead? Even though the vote passed on July 2, it took the Continental Congress two more days to finalize the language in the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence arrived at the printer on July 4, 1776, which is why that date appears at the top. Believe it or not, the majority of the delegates actually did not sign the document until August!

It took days for the prints of the Declaration of Independence to travel from Philadelphia to other cities and towns. The news did not reach Boston until July 18, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed from the balcony of the Old State House. Later that day, crowds of Bostonians pulled down the rooftop lion and unicorn statues, symbols of royal authority, and burned them in a bonfire. Eventually, a new State House was built on Beacon Hill and the statues were restored.

John Adams might be surprised to learn that Americans celebrate on the 4th of July today. Coincidentally, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, further enshrining the 4th of July in American history.

Independence Day was not designated as a federal holiday until 1941. But from 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence.



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The Weaver Wonders, Independence Day Newsletter

An Alien Film that became an Independence Day Tradition



After its release in 1996, the Hollywood blockbuster, the one where a rag-tag team of humans led by Will Smith courageously repel an extraterrestrial threat, has become as synonymous with Fourth of July festivities as hot dogs and fireworks.

In 1776, it was the escape from the grip of the British monarchy we Americans found cause to celebrate. Another 220 years later, the film imagined that we and the rest of humanity, moved on to fighting off a threat a little more out of this world.

Thanks in part to a title that would resonate with American audiences from coast to coast, the film has cemented itself as a cultural icon. Its annual televised re-runs around July 4 ensuring its continued relevance.

Come the Fourth of July, there aren't

that many choices for festive films, and here you've got this one sitting right in the catalogue and its called 'Independence Day'.

It almost wasn't to be, according to Dean Devlin, who co-wrote the script with the film's director Roland Emmerich. Had 20th Century Fox (the studio that distributed the film) gotten its way, Devlin said a movie titled "Doomsday" or even "Invasion Earth" could have graced the big screen, potentially falling into obscurity.



Independence Day Fun Facts

1) Jefferson changed the wording of the Declaration of Independence from "the pursuit of property" to "the pursuit of happiness."

2) John Adams and Jefferson, both signers of the Declaration of Independence, died on July 4, 1826. James Monroe also died on July 4th in 1831.

3) Only two people actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 – John Hancock and Charles Thompson.

4) Congress declared July 4th as an official holiday in 1870 as part of a bill to officially recognize other holidays, including Christmas.

5) At 27, Thomas Lynch, Jr., was the youngest signer of the Declaration of Independence; Ben Franklin, age 70, was the oldest signer.

6) The oldest, continuous Independence Day celebration in the United States is the 4th of July Parade in Bristol, Rhode Island which began in 1785.

7) Americans began observing the Fourth of July as early as 1777 with a celebration in Philadelphia that included a parade, a thirteen-shot cannon salute, and fireworks.



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How Fireworks become a July Forth Tradion

The display of pyrotechnics has been a big part of Independence Day from the outset. Founding Father John Adams saw it coming.

Commemoration of America's independence "ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more," Adams wrote in a letter to his wife, Abigail, dated July 3, 1776.

Fireworks were around centuries before America became a nation. The American Pyrotechnics Association says many historians believe fireworks were first developed in the second century B.C. in ancient China by throwing bamboo stalks into fires, causing explosions as the hollow air pockets overheated.

By the 15th century, fireworks were widely used for religious festivals and public entertainment in Europe and early U.S. settlers carried on those traditions, the association said.

How did Independence Day become a National Holiday?

The 1790s, a time of bitter partisan conflicts, the Declaration had become controversial. One party, the Democratic-Republicans, admired Jefferson and the Declaration. But the other party, the Federalists, thought the Declaration was too French and too anti-British, which went against their current policies.

By 1817, John Adams complained in a letter that America seemed uninterested in its past. But that would soon change.

After the War of 1812, the Federalist party began to come apart and the new parties of the 1820s and 1830s all considered themselves inheritors of Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans. Printed copies of the Declaration began

to circulate again, all with the date July 4, 1776, listed at the top. The deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on July 4, 1826, may even have helped to promote the idea of July 4 as an important date to be celebrated.

Celebrations of the Fourth of July became more common as the years went on and in 1870, almost a hundred years after the Declaration was written, Congress first declared July 4 to be a national holiday as part of a bill to officially recognize several holidays, including Christmas. Further legislation about national holidays, including July 4, was passed in 1939 and 1941.



So what did happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They'd been working on it for a couple of days after the draft was submitted on July 2nd and finally agreed on all of the edits and changes.

July 4, 1776, became the date that was included on the Declaration of Independence, and the fancy handwritten copy that was signed in August. It's also the date that was printed on the Dunlap Broad sides, the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. So when

people thought of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 was the date they remembered.

In contrast, we celebrate Constitution Day on September 17th of each year, the anniversary of the date the Constitution was signed, not the anniversary of the date it was approved. If we'd followed this same approach for the Declaration of Independence we'd be celebrating Independence Day on August 2nd of each year, the day the Declaration of Independence was signed.



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4th of July Food Traditions

Hotdogs are one of the most cherished dishes in America which might seem to you as all American. However, you will be surprised to know that while sausages have been around for a long time, hotdogs are said to have been brought to the country by immigrants. But they did evolve in the form that we love today in America. Hotdogs are a must-have in any 4th of July party. In fact, the National Hot Dog & Sausage Council in America has designated July to be National Hot Dog Month. July the 4th is the day when hotdog consumption is the highest. In fact,

150 million hotdogs are approximated to be consumed on July 4th.

S'mores are a staple for a July 4th party. Even though the exact origin of s'mores is not known, they are believed to have evolved from a recipe known as 'some mores'. It first appeared in a girl scout guide called 'Tramping and Trailing with Girl Scouts' in 1927. It also taught how to make campfires. An alternate belief is that s'mores came from cream-filled sandwich-like cookies first made in the Victorian era. However, people on July 4th make and enjoy s'mores while sitting with their friends

and family around a campfire.

Corn on the cob falls under the most consumed foods on the 4th of July. Easy availability of a barbeque makes it easier to make yummy variations of it. Corn was brought to America by the Native Americans, who appreciated the versatile grain. In fact, they have been eating corn on the cob much before it was discovered by Europeans coming into America.

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