



WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?



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The Fourth of July: America's Independence Day

The Fourth of July, also known as Independence Day, is a significant holiday in the United States, celebrated annually on July 4th. This day commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, when the thirteen American colonies declared their independence from British rule.

Why is the Fourth of July Celebrated?

The Fourth of July is celebrated to honor the birth of American independence. The Declaration of Independence, primarily authored by Thomas Jefferson, was a bold assertion of the colonies' right to self-governance and freedom from British tyranny. This document not only announced the separation from Great Britain but also articulated the fundamental principles of liberty and equality that would shape the new nation.

When Was it First Declared a Holiday and By Whom?

Independence Day was first celebrated in 1777, but it wasn't until 1870 that the U.S. Congress made it an official unpaid holiday for federal employees. It became a paid federal holiday in 1938. The early celebrations included concerts, bonfires, parades, and the firing of cannons and muskets, reflecting the joyful spirit of newfound freedom.

The Significance and History of the Fourth of July

The Fourth of July marks the anniversary of the historic moment when the United States took its first steps towards becoming a sovereign nation. The Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress, outlined the colonies' grievances against King George III and expressed the colonies' desire for self-determination. This declaration was a turning point in American history, leading to the Revolutionary War, which ultimately secured American independence.

Over the years, the Fourth of July has become a day for Americans to celebrate their freedoms and remember the sacrifices made by those who fought for independence. Traditional celebrations today, include fireworks, barbecues, parades, and patriotic displays. It is a time for communities to come together, reflect on their shared heritage, and express their national pride.

Fun Fact Sheet about the Fourth of July

1. **Early Celebrations:** The first annual commemoration of Independence Day took place on July 4, 1777, with thirteen gunshots fired in salute, once at morning and once again as night fell, in Bristol, Rhode Island.
2. **John Adams' Prediction:** John Adams, one of the Founding Fathers, believed July 2nd, the day the Continental Congress actually voted for independence, would be celebrated as Independence Day. However, the final wording of the Declaration of Independence was approved on July 4th.

3. **Fireworks Tradition:** Fireworks have been a part of Independence Day celebrations since the earliest celebrations in 1777. They symbolize the "rocket's red glare" mentioned in the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."
4. **Liberty Bell:** Every Fourth of July, the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is tapped (not actually rung) thirteen times in honor of the original thirteen colonies.
5. **Hot Dogs Galore:** Americans consume about 150 million hot dogs on the Fourth of July each year, enough to stretch from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles more than five times.

Critical Thinking Multiple Choice Questions

1. **Why is the Fourth of July considered an important holiday in the United States?**
 - A) It marks the end of the Revolutionary War.
 - B) It commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.
 - C) It celebrates the signing of the Constitution.
 - D) It is the day the Bill of Rights was ratified.
2. **Who was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence?**
 - A) George Washington
 - B) John Adams
 - C) Thomas Jefferson
 - D) Benjamin Franklin
3. **Which of the following activities is a traditional part of Fourth of July celebrations?**
 - A) Easter egg hunts
 - B) Pumpkin carving
 - C) Fireworks displays
 - D) Christmas caroling
4. **When did the Fourth of July become a paid federal holiday?**
 - A) 1777
 - B) 1870
 - C) 1938
 - D) 1945
5. **What did John Adams predict about the future celebration of Independence Day?**
 - A) It would be celebrated with military parades.
 - B) It would be marked with fireworks and festivities on July 2nd.
 - C) It would become a day of solemn reflection.
 - D) It would be remembered with the reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Critical Thinking Question

Discuss the significance of the Declaration of Independence and how its principles of liberty and equality have influenced other movements for freedom and equality around the world.



