

FLAG DAY 2020: CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN FLAG

LEARN THE HISTORY OF FLAG DAY AND THE STARS AND STRIPES!

By [The Editors](#)

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Flag Day is Sunday, June 14! This annual holiday celebrates the history and symbolism of the American flag. Learn about the history of this holiday and the beloved Stars and Stripes!

What Is Flag Day?

Flag Day is a celebration of the American flag that occurs each year on the anniversary of the flag's official adoption, June 14.

What we know fondly as the “Stars and Stripes” was adopted by the Continental Congress as the official American flag on June 14, 1777, in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Colonial troops fought under many different flags with various symbols and slogans: rattlesnakes, pine trees, and eagles; “Don’t Tread on Me,” “Liberty or Death,” and “Conquer or Die,” to name a few.

The first official national flag had 13 white stars on a blue field and 13 alternating red and white stripes—both representing the 13 original colonies. Today, there are 50 stars, one for each state in the Union, but the 13 stripes remain.

Flag Day was first celebrated in 1877—on the flag’s 100th birthday—and persists today. On Flag Day, many towns and cities hold parades and events to celebrate the flag, and the colors are to be flown at all government buildings. Flag Day is not an official federal holiday, but its observance is traditionally proclaimed each year by the President of the United States.

Who Made the First American Flag?

Although many people believe that Betsy Ross designed and sewed the first flag, there is no true proof of that. However, records do indicate that she made ensigns and pennants for the Philadelphia navy during the war.

When Is Flag Day?

Flag Day is celebrated annually on **June 14**.

In 2020, Flag Day will be observed on Sunday, June 14.

Year	Flag Day
2020	Sunday, June 14
2021	Monday, June 14
2022	Tuesday, June 14
2023	Wednesday, June 14

History of the American Flag

- **January 1, 1776:** The first United States flag, the “Grand Union,” was displayed by George Washington. It became the unofficial national flag, preceding the 13-star, 13-stripe version.
- **June 14, 1777:** The Stars and Stripes was adopted by the Continental Congress as the Flag of the United States.
- **June 14, 1877:** Flag Day was observed nationally for the first time on the 100th anniversary of the Stars and Stripes.



- **June 14, 1937:** Pennsylvania became the first state in the United States to celebrate Flag Day officially as a state holiday.
- **July 4, 1960:** The new 50-star flag was flown for the first time, and is the flag that still flies today.



The Grand Union Flag, the first unofficial national flag, represented here on a 1968 postage stamp.

Why Is the American Flag Red, White, and Blue?

The Continental Congress left no record as to why it chose these colors. However, in 1782, the Congress of the Articles of Confederation chose the colors for the Great Seal of the United States with these meanings:

- **white** for purity and innocence
- **red** for valor and hardiness
- **blue** for vigilance, perseverance, and justice

According to the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, the colors originated with the British flag, which is called the Union Jack and was a combination of the Scottish cross of St. Andrew (white on blue) and the English cross of St. George (red on white) at the time. (The modern British flag also incorporates the Irish cross of St. Patrick into its design.)

American Flag Etiquette

Did you know that there is a proper way to fly the American flag? The **U.S. Flag Code** is an official set of guidelines (not laws) that dictates how a flag should be flown in order to show it the respect



and honor that it deserves. Learn all about [American Flag Etiquette here](#), and be well-prepared to hoist the flag this Flag Day!

Where May the American Flag be Flown 24 Hours a Day?

The flag is usually taken indoors at night out of respect, but there are some places where flying the flag around the clock is permissible. Do you think you can guess them?

1. The Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia
2. The White House
3. The U.S. Capitol
4. The Iwo Jima Memorial to U.S. Marines in Arlington, Virginia
5. The Revolutionary War battleground in Lexington, Massachusetts
6. The site of George Washington's winter encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania
7. Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland
8. The Jenny Wade House in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (Jenny Wade was the only civilian killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, during the Civil War)
9. The USS *Arizona* Memorial at Pearl Harbor
10. All customs points of entry into the United States
11. Any US Navy ship that is under way

In truth, the flag may be flown at night anywhere that it may be flown during the day, provided it is properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

Learn More

Flag Day is just one of many patriotic celebrations in the United States. Learn about George Washington's birthday in our article on [President's Day](#), and don't forget to catch up on your [Independence Day](#) history before July 4!

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