

## Special Days (USA) P1

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Traditions from other parts of the world!



It is February and there are huge parades and amazing Street parties to celebrate Mardi Gras. However, despite the French name, these celebrations are not taking place in France. They are, in fact, in New Orleans in southern USA. The USA is a multi cultural society. All the different nationalities who have emigrated there have continued traditions from their country of origin. The festival Mardi Gras, for example, comes from the French immigrants who first settled in New Orleans in 1840. Irish Americans have always celebrated St Patrick's Day on 17 March because he is the patrón saint of Ireland. There are hundreds of different celebrations all over the USA, and they are a reminder of the history and origins of the American People.

### **Independence Day**

Independence Day has been celebrated in America since 1776. In that year, the thirteen colonies of North America signed the Declaration of Independence. This meant that they were no longer under British control, and they were an independant country. This declaration, which marked the birth of the USA, is celebrated every year with a national holiday on 4 July. It is a day of picnics, parades and flying the flag.



## **Columbus Day**

Columbus Day is a national holiday in the USA and in many other parts of the world, including countries in central and south America. It celebrates the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus on 12 October, 1492. Although most countries celebrate it on 12 October, in the USA the national holiday takes place on the second Monday in October.

## **Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving Day is the fourth Thursday in November. Many people have a four-day weekend, and they often travel long distances to visit relatives. Thanksgiving has been celebrated since 1621, the year after the Pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts. After a terrible Winter, in which nearly half of the Pilgrims died, they turned for help to the Native Americans, who taught them how to plant corn and other crops. The next autumn's harvest was wonderful and the Pilgrims gave thanks by having a feast. Thanksgiving dinners have always included some of the foods served at the first feast: roast turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. Before the meal begins, families pause to give thanks for their good fortune, and for being together for the occasion.



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