

The Significance of Flag Day

Each year on June 14, Americans celebrate National Flag Day to commemorate the inception of our flag. This day reminds Americans that our flag is more than just a banner but speaks for America's rich history and development as a free country.

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed the Flag Resolution which stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

While today's flags still alternate red and white, the number of stars has increased as new states came into the union. The current version featuring 50 stars was introduced in 1960, when the Admission Act officially recognized Hawaii as the 50th state of the United States.

Flag Day History

The National Flag Day Foundation credits Bernard J. Cigrand for the first public celebration of Flag Day.

In 1885, Cigrand displayed a 38-star flag on his desk at the school in which he taught. He then assigned his students to write essays about the flag and in its importance.

It wasn't until 1916 that President Wilson issued a proclamation stating that a nation-wide observance was in order. Many states and communities held Flag Day celebrations after Wilson's proclamation. It wasn't until 1949 that President Truman signed an act of Congress declaring the 14th of every June as National Flag Day.

How to Celebrate

There are many ways to show your respect to the American flag on National Flag Day. Properly displaying the flag outside your home or business is a great



way to celebrate Flag Day. Look around for local Flag Day ceremonies. This is a good chance to celebrate an American tradition and have the chance to donate to a great cause. Have a community barbecue with neighbors to honor Old Glory. You also might be able to find a flag burning ceremony. It can be a humbling experience to watch an American symbol being properly retired.

Showing the Flag Respect

It is common to see American flags flying high during summertime. Recreational areas such as parks, banquets and festivals typically feature several flagpoles throughout the property.

Learning how flags are cared for and properly displayed can give you a new perspective on the respect the American flag deserves. The Flag Code specifies the traditional ways in which we give respect to the flag. Here are a few of the specific instructions on how the flag is to not be used, as reported by usflag.org.

- The flag should never be dipped to any person. It is only allowed to be flown upside down as a signal of distress.
- Never use the flag for any advertising purposes. It should not be embroidered, printed on or otherwise impressed on articles such as cushions, boxes or anything intended to be thrown away after use.
- No part of the flag should ever be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform. Military personnel, fireman, police officers or members of patriotic organizations may use a flag patch.
- The flag should never have something attached to it, such as a letter, word, number, figure or drawing of any kind.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.
- When lowering the flag, it should never contact the ground and should be received by waiting hands and arms.

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