

# Independence Day Celebrated

Friday, 25 Jun 2021

Office of Executive Management / Communication



When the Continental Congress voted in favor of declaring independence from Great Britain on July 2, 1776, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail saying the day “will be celebrated, by succeeding generations, as the great anniversary festival.” Adams wrote that the celebration should include “pomp and parade ... games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other,” according to [History.com](https://www.history.com).

On July 4, 1776, the 13 Colonies formally adopted the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson.

The first celebrations included bonfires concerts, musket and cannon fire, parades and the reading Declaration of Independence aloud. With the war still ongoing, the first Independence Day commemoration was held on July 4, 1777 in Philadelphia.

Since then, the Fourth of July has been recognized as Independence Day and the birth of the United States. Present day celebrations on the Fourth of July still include fireworks and parades, with concerts, family gatherings and barbecues thrown in for good measure.

John Adams reportedly turned down repeated invitations throughout his life to attend Independence Day festivities held on July 4 since he considered July 2 the correct date to celebrate the birth of the nation's independence.

Jefferson and Adams both died on July 4, 1826, 50 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

This year, the Fourth of July will fall on a Sunday with the federal holiday observance on Monday, July 5.