Holidays

**United Kingdom**

Bank holidays

In the United Kingdom, we call official days off bank holidays. The banks close for a day, and so do most businesses and services. New Year’s Day is the first bank holiday in the year. May Day is in early May, Spring Bank Holiday at the end of May and then finally Summer Bank Holiday at the end of August, when there is a mass rush to the seaside. Christmas and Easter are also considered bank holidays. In Northern Ireland, there is also the Orangeman’s Day on July 12th. This commemorates the victory of the protestant Prince William of Orange over Catholic King James in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, which strengthened the Protestant dominance of Ireland. When the Orangemen try to march with pipes and drums through protestant residential areas, serious rioting occurs. Most people try to be away on holiday at this time.

**British Holidays:**

January 1: New Year‘s Day.
February 14: St. Valentine‘s Day.

First Sunday after the first full moon in Spring: Easter: also a holiday on the following Monday.

April 1: All Fool‘s Day: same as April Fool‘s Day in the United States.

May 1: May Day: Honors workers.

May 1st Monday: May Day Bank Holiday.

May 2nd Sunday: Mother‘s Day.

May last Monday: Spring Bank Holiday.

June 2nd Saturday: The Queen‘s Official Birthday.

June 21: Midsummer Day: Longest day of the year celebrated with fires.

August last Monday: August Bank Holiday.

October 31: Halloween.

November l: All Saints Day: Honor dead family members.

November 5: Guy Fawkes Night/Bonfire Night: Remembers execution of Guy Fawkes (1570-1606), a Catholic who tried to blow of House of Parliament.

November 11: Armistice Day: Celebrates the end of World War I.

November Sunday closest to November 11th: Remembrance Sunday: Honors dead of all wars.

December 24: Christmas Eve.

December 25.:Christmas Day.

December 26: Boxing Day: Day on which people who do you a service (postman, garbage collector, milkman, paperboy collect their Christmas Box (usually money, and now-a-days given before Christmas).

December 31: New Year‘s Eve: Especially important in Scotland.

**United States**

There are 10 federal or national holidays in the US. These are designated by the federal government, but each state can decide if they want to honor them, or have different ones. Here’s a list of them by month.

In January, we celebrate New Year’s Day on the first, as well as Martin Luther King Day. This day remembers a man who worked for equal rights among all races and is celebrated on the third Monday of the month. In the US, most federal holidays don’t have specific dates, but are celebrated on a certain day. That way, states and companies who celebrate it will have a long weekend.

In February, the third Monday of the month is President’s Day, which honors all our Presidents. It was originally held in honor of the birthday of our first president, George Washington, on February 22.

Then we have to wait until May, when we celebrate Memorial Day on the last Monday of the month. This is also the unofficial start to summer. This holiday is held to remember the soldiers who were killed in wars.

July brings us Independence Day, or as it is more commonly known, the Fourth of July! This is when we remember our beginnings as an independent nation, free from British rule. Independence Day is always held on July 4, and if it falls on a weekend, either the Friday or the Monday is a day off.

On the first Monday in September, we have Labor Day, which celebrates working people. Sadly, it also often signals the end of summer and the start of a new school year for students.

The second Monday in October is Columbus Day, which commemorates explorer Christopher Columbus’ landing in the New World in 1492.

Veteran’s Day is celebrated on the second Monday in November, and was originally established to honor people who served in World War I. Now, it honors all veterans of any war. Also in November is one of Americans’ favorite holidays – Thanksgiving. It’s held on the fourth Thursday of November and was historically held as thanks for a good harvest. We still get together with friends and family for a good meal. Thanksgiving also brings us the unofficial start to the Christmas shopping season, which is followed by Christmas celebrations.

**American Holidays:**

January 1: News Year’s Day.

January 3rd Monday: Martin Luther King Day. Commemorates Civil Rights leader.

February 14: St. Valentine‘s Day: Day of lovers.

February 3rd Monday: Presidents‘ Day: Remembrance of all former Presidents.

March 17: St. Patrick‘s Day: Honors the patron saint of Ireland.

First Sunday after the first full moon in Spring: Easter: Commemorates the resurrection of Jesus.

April 1: April Fool‘s Day: People play tricks on each other.

May 2nd Sunday: Mother‘s Day.

May last Monday: Memorial Day: Honors dead family members and war dead.

June 3rd Sunday: Father‘s Day.

July 4. Independence Day: Birthday of the United States. On July 4, 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed.

September 1st Monday: Labor Day: Honors workers, unofficial end of summer vacations.

October 2nd Monday: Columbus Day: Commemorates Columbus‘s arrival in the Americas in 1492.

October 31. Halloween: Children dress up and go to neighbors for sweets, trick or treat.

November 11: Veteran‘s Day: Honors the dead of all wars.

November 4th Thursday: Thanksgiving: First celebrated in 1621 by settlers in Plymouth colony to give thanks for their first harvest following a winter of starvation.

December 25: Christmas Day: Celebrates the birth of Jesus, who was really born in the Spring.