



The History of July 4th

Use this blog post, online exhibitions, teacher resource, and images of historic events and people leading to the Declaration of Independence (located in July image set) to talk about the historic nature of July 4th:

[You asked, we answered: How did soldiers commemorate the first Fourth of July?](#)

What happened when American soldiers heard about the Declaration of Independence?

Use this blog post to spark discussion on the speed of news today compared to the time of the American Revolution. Perhaps talk about the Arab Spring revolutions and the importance of social media in spreading the word today.

[The War of Independence](#)

Online exhibition about The War of Independence. Use different sections of the exhibition to spark discussion on different aspects of the revolution. For instance use the “Legacy of Washington” section to talk about the importance of a strong, selfless leader following a revolution.

[War of Independence Teacher Resource](#)

Use the cards in this resource to talk about the differences of war then and now and to give participants a greater idea of what life was like during the Revolution. You can use it in conjunction with the sections on fighting the war in the online exhibition, *The War of Independence*, to go into further detail.

[A Letter from George Washington](#)

What was Washington’s role after the Revolution? Use this letter in conjunction with the “Legacy of Washington” section of *The War of Independence* online exhibition to go deeper into the potential pitfalls after the American Revolution that Washington helped overcome.

History of the Star Spangle Banner:

Use this online exhibition and teacher resources, the images of the stars and stripes quilt and flag stamps (located in July images), and blog post to talk about the importance and evolution of the American flag:

[The Star Spangled Banner](#)

Online exhibition about the Star Spangled Banner. Use the section on the history and lyrics of the song to explain the meaning of the words of the national anthem. Use the section on the making of the flag and the legacy of the flag to talk about the legends surrounding the flag and how the meaning of the flag has changed over the years. Use the quiz as a fun activity at the end of the program.





[Star Spangled Banner Teacher Resources](#)

Use the videos and the accompanying video resource to plan a program and discussion about the history of the flag. Use the “Poetry and Our National Anthem” resource to teach about the meaning behind the anthem and have participants either paraphrase the anthem in their own words or write a poem about the United States in a manner like the anthem. Use the other resources as you see fit.

[Founding Fragments – Star Spangled Souvenirs](#)

The giant Star-Spangled Banner flag is one of our most popular artifacts, and a centerpiece of the Museum. Why then are pieces of it kept locked away in storage? Host Tory Altman talks with textile conservator Suzanne Thomassen-Krauss to find out. Use this video to spark discussion about people taking pieces of famous artifacts or leaving their mark on them.

[Happy birthday, America! \(Like my t-shirt?\)](#)

A blog post about flag-inspired clothing. Use this blog post to spark discussion about the way Americans use and wear their flag and how that differs from the practices in the host country.

FOOD: Transforming the American Table 1950-2000

Use the online exhibition and information on American food origins to talk about American food practices and link them to the host countries’ food practices. You can also use the popcorn activity (“[Play with Your Food](#)”) to lead a hands-on activity creating an iconic American snack.

[FOOD: Transforming the American Table 1950-2000](#)

Use parts of this online exhibition to talk about the evolution of food culture in America. The exhibition covers Julia Child and the rise of TV chefs, automated food production, ready to eat meals and the rise of snacks, the transformation of American food and how we cook it, and the history of wine in the U.S. Pull information from the exhibition on any of these topics to help lead sessions on food in America.

[Smithsonian Explores the History of Fourth of July Food](#)

Use this press release with information on native foods to talk about traditional American foods (perhaps with samples of some of the foods to taste).

[Play with Your Food: Experiment with a Truly American Treat](#)

Use this popcorn activity to let participants experiment with popping and flavoring popcorn as they learn about this typical American treat.





Mexican-American Food

Use this webcast and the section on Mexican-American food in the FOOD exhibition to discuss the evolution of Mexican American Food and its popularity.

[Taco Nation/Planet Taco: How Mexican American Food Conquered the World](#)

Celebrate, discover, and savor the legacy of Mexican food in the United States and the world in this webcast. Learn about the popularity of Mexican food in the US, from its indigenous origins in Mesoamerica to the present era of global commercialization. Use sections this symposium to talk about different aspects of Mexican-American food. You can also discuss how Mexican American food differs from the Latino food present in your country.

FOOD exhibition's Mexican-American food sections. Use these sections to better understand the evolution of Mexican-American food and lead discussion on the ways food cultures mix in different countries or to host a food tasting educational program.

[Fritos](#)

[Resetting the Table](#)

[Mexican Food Revolution](#)

[Tortillas in the Supermarket](#)

[Tex-Mex Invasion](#)

[Frozen Margaritas](#)

Asian-American Food

Use these blog posts, articles, and the webcast to discuss how Asian food has evolved in America.

["Who Will Chop Your Suey When I'm Gone?"](#)

Can you believe that chop suey was once the most famous Chinese dish in America? The dish's popularity helped fuel the growth of Chinese restaurants throughout the U.S. during the early 20th century. Use this blog as a jumping off point to discuss local dishes that were once popular, but now are not.

[The mysterious can of fortune](#)

In her non-fiction exploration of the Chinese food industry in America, Fortune Cookie Chronicles, Jennifer 8. Lee finds a mystery in Chinese American food culture: what's inside a 1930s can of Hong Kong brand Tea Cakes? Use this blog post in conjunction with the next two resources to talk about the Asian-American tradition of fortune cookies and how immigrant cultures adapt to country norms to transform their own cuisine.

[Cracking Open the History of Fortune Cookies](#)

July 4th





Article about the history of the fortune cookie. Use this article with the two blog posts on fortune cookies to plan a program around the transformation of native cuisine.

[Origins of a fortune cookie](#)

Blog post about the history of the fortune cookie. Use this blog post with the other two on fortune cookies to plan a program around the transformation of native cuisine.

[Gourmet Intersections: Asian-Latino Food Crossings](#)

The Gourmet Intersections: Asian-Latino Food Crossings webcast considers Asian-Latino foodways through a broad lens, tracing connections across a range of histories, geographies, and cultures. Use this webcast to strike up conversation about foodways in your own country that have merged to create a new type of cuisine.

Food for Tomorrow

Use the summaries and webcasts from the 2010 Symposium on the Food for Tomorrow, and the podcasts to spark discussion about the issues facing food production, preparation and consumption now and in the future:

[Food for Tomorrow](#)

How do invention and innovation shape the ways we grow, prepare, and enjoy food? Discover the history and future of food and related technologies in these webcasts. Use different talks in this symposium to talk about the future of food and how technology is changing what we eat and the way we eat it.

[Documentary filmmaker Ian Cheney imagines a future food system](#)

In this podcast, Ian Cheney, documentary filmmaker of Truck Farm expresses the need for more creativity in agriculture, in terms of sizes and types of farms; methods of farming; and what food we grow. Use this podcast to strike up conversation about the importance of agriculture and how farming is changing.

[Warren Belasco studies food for tomorrow](#)

In this podcast, Warren Belasco, professor and pioneer of the academic food-studies movement explores a history of the future of food, showing how futuristic visions appear in invention, economic theory, science fiction, policy debates, and more. Use this podcast to talk about what participants think food in the future will be like.

Space Food

Use this online exhibition section on space food and the following two blog posts and the podcast to talk about how they prepare and eat food in space. If possible, get some space food – like ice cream – to try. Maybe talk about space food in conjunction with a movie set in space, especially if that movie shows the astronauts eating.





[Apollo to the Moon – Astronaut Life – Food in Space](#)

A brief History of Food in Space from the Air and Space Museum’s exhibition, “Apollo to the Moon.”

[Unpack a Meal in Space](#)

Space-age spaghetti and meatballs, along with other tastes of home, gave Apollo astronaut crews a boost.

[Squishy gunk in tubes](#)

An exploration of what astronauts eat in space.

[Vickie Kloeris creates meals for outer space](#)

Vickie Kloeris, manager of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Space Food Systems Laboratory, develops food for shuttle and International Space Station astronauts. Kloeris addresses the complex challenges of creating tasty, nutritious, long-lasting, easy-to-prepare meals that support the dietary and psychological needs of astronauts. She also discusses possibilities for gardens in space.





IMAGE GUIDE

Find all the images [here](#).

Star Spangled Banner, Flag Stamps, and Quilt Images

Use these images to talk about the history and importance of the flag and flag imagery in American culture.

Discussion questions:

- *What changes do you see in the flag's design over time?*
- *What is the significance of the stars and stripes? What about the colors?*
- *How do the American flag and the uses of its imagery compare to what we use our flag for in this country?*
- *What do Americans do on July 4th? How is this similar or different than our own practices on a similar national holiday?*

Star Spangled Banner Images credit lines:

- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image 91-3680.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image MAH-35079.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image MAH-27462.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image MAH-27897.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image MAH-P6427.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image MAH-P6427A.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA82-9994-9A.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2010-3453.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2010-3452.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2010-3454.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2009-0306.
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image SIA2008-1905.

Flag Stamps credit lines:

- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 4c 48-Star Flag single. Image 1980_2493_5209.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 4c 50-Star Flag single. Image 1980_2493_5326.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 6c Fort McHenry Flag single. Image 1980_2493_5681.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 6c Bennington Flag single. Image 1980_2493_5685.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 6c First Stars and Stripes Flag single. Image 1980_2493_5689.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 8c American Revolution Bicentennial single. Image 1980_2493_5835.

July 4th





Smithsonian Institution

- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Patriotic Banner single. Image 2007_2025_10.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. Flag Over Mt. Rushmore Issue. 1993_2015_0057

Mary Teter's Stars and Stripes Quilt Credit line and information:

- Smithsonian Institution. National Museum of American History. Mary Teter. Stars and Stripes Quilt. Gift of Eugene A. Teter and Martha Brown Teter. Image 74-7901.

In 1940 Eugene Teter donated to the Museum this patriotic quilt made by his great-grandmother in 1861 for his grandfather, a Union soldier from Indiana. Mary Rockhold Teter based her pieced and appliquéd quilt on a design published in the July 1861 issue of *Peterson's Magazine*, a popular women's periodical published in Philadelphia. She personalized it by quilting the name of her son, George Teter, and the names of Generals Scott and Taylor under whom he served. Also found in the quilting are "Abe "and "Ab Lyncoln," "Genral Lyon," the word "Cat" and the year "1861." There are thirty-four stars appliquéd in the center diamond and the same number appliquéd in the border. They represent the number of states in the Union from July 4, 1861 until July 4, 1863, the Civil War years.

Mary Rockhold was born in Ohio in 1817 and married Thomas E. Teter in 1838. They moved to Indiana in 1846 and had seven children; four daughters died in infancy, three sons attained adulthood. Mary and Thomas were fortunate enough to celebrate their Golden Anniversary in 1888. Mary died in 1897 in Noblesville, Indiana. This "Stars and Stripes" patriotic quilt is a reminder of her devotion to family and country.

"She was of a family of strong, patriotic Revolutionary stock, and inherited a willingness to do and to labor that the country might grow. Her grand-father was Capt. John Rockhold a native of Pennsylvania, who served in the War for Independence. Her father, Joseph Rockhold, moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio in 1800. He was a captain in the War of 1812. This trait of patriotism was one of the strongest in the character of Mrs. Teter. During the late war she showed her great love for the soldier boys in many ways, aiding in every way she could to encourage and help in the country's peril."

(From the obituary of Mary Rockhold-Teter, 1897)





Declaration of Independence and War of Independence Images

Use these images to talk about the history of the Declaration of Independence, the War, and events leading to the war.

Discussion questions:

- *Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? What did it say? Who signed it?*
- *What events led up to the Declaration of Independence and the War?*
- *What can you see in these images? What is the imagery trying to convey?*

Stamp credit lines:

- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Independence Hall single. Image 1980_2493_5103.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 13c Declaration of Independence strip of four. Image 1980_2493_6325_1-4.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 8c British Merchantman single. Image 1980_2493_15931.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 8c British Three-master single. Image 1980_2493_15937.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 8c Boats and Ship's Hull single. Image 1980_2493_15944z.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 8c Boat and Dock single. Image 1980_2493_15950.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c "Deriving Their Just Powers..." single. Image 1985_0482_20044.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Independence Hall single. Image 1985_0482_20045.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Continental Navy single. Image 1985_0482_20062.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Continental Army single. Image 1985_0482_20062z.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c Continental Marines single. Image 1985_0482_20071.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 10c American Militia single. Image 1985_0482_20072.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 13c Seamstress single. Image 1985_0482_20129.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 13c Blacksmith single. Image 1985_0482_20130.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 13c Wheelwright single. Image 1985_0482_20131.
- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 13c Leatherworker single. Image 1985_0482_20132.





Smithsonian Institution

- Smithsonian Institution. National Postal Museum. 24c Declaration of Independence re-issue single. Image 260305_152_65_4.

Thomas Jefferson wood engraving credit line:

- *Thomas Jefferson, Writing the Declaration of Independence*. Henry Wolf. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Transfer from the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.





July 4th Images

Use these images to talk about the traditions of Americans on July 4th.

Discussion questions:

- *What do Americans do on July 4th?*
- *What are the parades like? Are they different than our own parades?*
- *What do you see in the fireworks engraving? How do you think viewing fireworks and celebrating July 4th has changed since 1868?*
- *What do you see in the painting of the American house and flag? What does the style and the subject of painting convey to you? What feeling do you get from the painting? Does it coincide with your understanding about the 4th of July?*

Fourth of July parade credit line:

- Fourth of July Parade, Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Charles Isaacs. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the artist.

People at fireworks wood engraving credit line:

- *Fire-Works on the Night of the Fourth of July, from Harper's Weekly, July 11, 1868.* Winslow Homer. Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Ray Austrian Collection, gift of Beatrice L. Austrian, Caryl A. Austrian and James A. Austrian.

House with American flag credit line and information:

- Fourth of July. A. Brockie Stevenson. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of the Woodward Foundation.

Brockie Stevenson paints distinctly American subjects, from lobster pots and flags to trains and firehouses. In Fourth of July the verticals and horizontals of the clapboard house create a dramatic stage for the large American flag, which hangs almost to the ground. The rectangular flag appears part of the building itself, the white stripes blending seamlessly with the vertical posts of the porch. The bright colors and clean lines suggest a well cared for house, but the window and door reveal only a blank interior with no evidence of life. This dark, silent view contrasts with our expectations of the Fourth of July, a day traditionally filled with color, noise, and crowds.

