

## **NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the significance and diversity of national holidays across different countries. It examines how historical events, cultural traditions, and national identity shape these celebrations. The study highlights notable examples from around the world, comparing customs, rituals, and social practices. By understanding national holidays, we gain insight into the values, heritage, and collective memory of different societies.

**Keywords:** National holidays, cultural traditions, history, celebrations, customs, rituals, national identity, global diversity.

### **Introduction**

Holidays occupy a unique and important place in the life of every society. They are not merely days off from work or school; they are occasions for celebration, reflection, and the reinforcement of national identity. National holidays, in particular, carry profound significance as they commemorate historical events, honor cultural achievements, and highlight the values that define a nation. These days serve as a bridge between the past and present, connecting citizens with their history, heritage, and shared experiences. They also provide an opportunity for individuals to come together, strengthen social bonds, and foster a sense of unity and belonging within the community.

Around the world, national holidays vary widely in their origins, customs, and forms of celebration. Some holidays commemorate independence or the establishment of a nation, such as the Fourth of July in the United States or Independence Day in India, while others honor significant historical events or national heroes, like Bastille Day in France or Germany's Unity Day. Religious and cultural traditions also influence national holidays, adding layers of meaning and ceremonial practices. For example, in many Muslim-majority countries, Eid al-Fitr

and Eid al-Adha are national holidays that combine spiritual observance with communal celebrations, while Christmas and Easter in Christian countries are both religious and cultural festivities.

The study of national holidays provides valuable insight into the social, cultural, and political life of different countries. They reflect not only historical milestones but also the collective memory and identity of a nation, serving as a mirror of societal values, beliefs, and priorities. Moreover, national holidays play a role in education and socialization, particularly for younger generations, who learn about their country's history, traditions, and cultural heritage through school programs, community events, and family practices [1].

In addition, national holidays often have economic and social implications. They stimulate tourism, create opportunities for local businesses and artisans, and provide workers with a necessary break from daily routines, promoting mental health and family cohesion. The ways in which people celebrate these holidays—through parades, ceremonies, feasts, or public performances—highlight the diversity and richness of cultural practices worldwide.

This article explores a variety of national holidays from different regions of the world, examining their historical backgrounds, customs, and the role they play in shaping national identity. By understanding these celebrations, we gain a deeper appreciation of the cultural diversity and shared human experiences that unite societies across the globe. National holidays, therefore, are not only occasions for joy and festivity but also vital expressions of heritage, identity, and social cohesion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

National holidays are more than just days off from work or school; they are significant cultural events that reflect a country's history, values, and collective identity. These holidays serve as a time for citizens to come together, celebrate their heritage, and honor important historical events or cultural milestones. Across the globe, national holidays vary widely in terms of their origins, customs, and significance, yet they share the common purpose of uniting people and fostering a sense of belonging. Understanding national holidays offers valuable insight into the traditions and social fabric of different societies [2].

In the United States, Independence Day, celebrated on July 4th, commemorates the country's declaration of independence from Britain in 1776. This holiday is marked

by fireworks, parades, barbecues, and patriotic displays. Families and friends gather to celebrate freedom and national pride, while historical reenactments and educational programs highlight the country's struggle for independence. Similarly, Thanksgiving, observed on the fourth Thursday of November, has deep cultural and historical significance. Originating from early colonial celebrations of harvest and gratitude, Thanksgiving has evolved into a day for family gatherings, feasting, and reflection on the blessings of life. Traditional foods such as roast turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie play a central role in the celebrations. These holidays not only commemorate history but also reinforce shared cultural values and familial bonds [3].

In France, Bastille Day, celebrated on July 14th, marks the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789, a pivotal event in the French Revolution. This holiday symbolizes the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity that underpin French national identity. Festivities include parades, fireworks, concerts, and public dances. The largest parade takes place on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, attended by government officials and the public alike. Bastille Day is a powerful reminder of the historical struggles that shaped modern France and serves as an opportunity for citizens to express their patriotism and national pride.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Moving to Asia, Japan's national holidays reflect both historical events and cultural traditions. National Foundation Day, celebrated on February 11th, honors the legendary founding of Japan and emphasizes the importance of national unity and cultural heritage. Another prominent holiday, Golden Week, occurs in late April and early May, encompassing several consecutive holidays such as Showa Day, Constitution Memorial Day, Greenery Day, and Children's Day. Golden Week is a time for travel, family gatherings, and leisure activities. Japanese holidays often incorporate traditional customs, ceremonies, and public events that highlight the country's rich cultural legacy [4].

In India, the celebration of Independence Day on August 15th commemorates the nation's freedom from British colonial rule in 1947. The day is marked by flag-hoisting ceremonies, patriotic speeches, cultural programs, and parades across the country. Schools, government institutions, and public organizations participate in festivities that emphasize national unity and pride. Similarly, Republic Day,

observed on January 26th, celebrates the adoption of India's constitution in 1950. Both holidays serve as reminders of the country's struggle for independence, the values enshrined in its constitution, and the diversity of its population.

Australia observes Australia Day on January 26th, commemorating the arrival of the First Fleet at Port Jackson in 1788. The day is celebrated with parades, fireworks, concerts, and community events. However, it is also a day of reflection for Indigenous Australians, who refer to it as Invasion Day or Survival Day, highlighting the impact of colonization on Aboriginal communities. This dual perspective underscores the complex nature of national holidays, which can simultaneously celebrate historical achievements and provoke critical reflection on historical injustices [4].

In Mexico, Día de la Independencia (Independence Day) on September 16th commemorates the start of the Mexican War of Independence against Spanish rule in 1810. The celebrations begin on the night of September 15th with the famous "Grito de Dolores" reenactment, in which the president or local officials ring bells and shout patriotic slogans. Festivities include parades, fireworks, music, dance, and traditional Mexican cuisine. This holiday is an essential expression of Mexican identity and cultural heritage, emphasizing unity, patriotism, and pride in national history.

Many countries also observe religious holidays as part of their national calendar. For instance, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are national holidays in several Muslim-majority countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting, while Eid al-Adha commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son in obedience to God. Both holidays involve communal prayers, charity, festive meals, and family gatherings. In predominantly Christian countries, holidays such as Christmas and Easter are celebrated with a mix of religious ceremonies, cultural traditions, and family-centered activities. These holidays reflect the moral, ethical, and spiritual values that are central to the national identity of these societies [5].

European countries often have national holidays that commemorate historical milestones or national heroes. In Italy, Festa della Repubblica on June 2nd celebrates the birth of the Italian Republic in 1946 following a referendum that abolished the monarchy. In Germany, Tag der Deutschen Einheit (German Unity Day) on October 3rd marks the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990.

These holidays are characterized by official ceremonies, speeches by political leaders, parades, and public celebrations that emphasize national cohesion, democratic values, and historical memory.

In South America, Brazil's Independence Day on September 7th celebrates the country's declaration of independence from Portugal in 1822. The day is marked by military parades, concerts, cultural events, and fireworks. Similarly, Argentina observes Independence Day on July 9th, commemorating the declaration of independence from Spain in 1816. These holidays highlight the historical struggles for sovereignty and the ongoing importance of national identity in shaping cultural and political life [6].

National holidays are not only times for public celebration but also opportunities for education and reflection. They help citizens, especially younger generations, learn about their country's history, achievements, and values. Schools often organize special lessons, performances, and projects related to national holidays, fostering a sense of pride, citizenship, and historical awareness. Beyond the educational aspect, holidays also stimulate social cohesion by bringing together people from different backgrounds to participate in shared cultural rituals.

In today's globalized world, the influence of international holidays has grown, with celebrations such as New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, and International Women's Day being observed in multiple countries, sometimes alongside local traditions. These global holidays complement national celebrations, providing opportunities for cultural exchange, commercial activity, and social interaction. However, national holidays remain distinctive in that they are deeply rooted in a country's unique historical and cultural context, reinforcing a sense of identity that transcends mere festivity [7].

Uzbekistan, with its rich history and diverse cultural heritage, celebrates a variety of national and religious holidays that reflect its traditions, values, and social life. These holidays serve as occasions for family gatherings, public celebrations, and national pride. They combine elements of ancient customs, historical milestones, and contemporary social practices, making them an integral part of Uzbek society. One of the most important and widely celebrated holidays in Uzbekistan is Navruz, the Persian New Year, observed on March 21st. Navruz marks the beginning of spring and symbolizes renewal, growth, and harmony with nature. Celebrations include cooking traditional dishes such as *sumalak*, a sweet paste made from wheat

sprouts, as well as public performances, music, dance, and community events. Families gather to share meals, visit relatives, and exchange greetings. Navruz is not only a festive occasion but also a reflection of the country's deep-rooted cultural and historical connections to the broader Central Asian region.

Another significant holiday is Independence Day, celebrated on September 1st, which commemorates Uzbekistan's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. This day is marked by official ceremonies, parades, concerts, and fireworks. Citizens reflect on the nation's journey toward sovereignty, political stability, and development. Schools and universities organize cultural programs, exhibitions, and performances to educate younger generations about the importance of independence, national unity, and civic responsibility. Independence Day is an expression of patriotism and pride in the achievements of the Uzbek people [8].

Constitution Day, celebrated on December 8th, is another key national holiday that honors the adoption of Uzbekistan's Constitution in 1992. This day emphasizes the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Various cultural events, conferences, and educational programs are held to highlight the importance of constitutional values and civic duties. It is a time for citizens to reflect on their rights and responsibilities within the framework of national law.

Religious holidays also play an important role in Uzbekistan. Eid al-Fitr, known locally as *Ramazon Hayiti*, marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. It is a time for spiritual reflection, charity, and family gatherings. On this day, people attend communal prayers, give zakat (charity) to the needy, and celebrate with festive meals. Similarly, Eid al-Adha, or *Qurban Hayiti*, commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son in obedience to God. Traditional rituals, communal prayers, and family feasts are central to these celebrations, reinforcing religious devotion, social solidarity, and moral values [2].

Other notable holidays in Uzbekistan include International Women's Day on March 8th, which celebrates the achievements and contributions of women in society, and Teacher's Day on October 1st, which honors the dedication and role of educators. These holidays emphasize social appreciation and strengthen community values.

In addition to these formal holidays, Uzbekistan also celebrates local and regional festivals that highlight specific cultural, artistic, or historical aspects of the country. For example, the Silk and Spices Festival showcases traditional crafts, culinary heritage, and cultural performances, attracting both locals and tourists. These

festivals play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting social cohesion.

National holidays also have economic and social impacts. They boost tourism, as people travel to participate in major celebrations or visit historical sites associated with the holiday. Festivals and public events create opportunities for local businesses, artisans, and performers, contributing to the economy. Additionally, holidays provide much-needed breaks for workers, promoting mental health, relaxation, and family bonding. By combining cultural significance with social and economic benefits, national holidays serve multiple essential functions in modern societies [3].

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, national holidays around the world reflect the rich tapestry of human history, culture, and identity. They commemorate historical events, celebrate cultural achievements, and provide moments of reflection, education, and social cohesion. From the United States' Independence Day to France's Bastille Day, Japan's Golden Week to India's Independence Day, each holiday carries unique customs, symbols, and rituals that define the nation and its people. While globalization has introduced shared celebrations across borders, the significance of national holidays lies in their ability to preserve heritage, honor collective memory, and strengthen the bonds that unite citizens. By studying and participating in these holidays, we gain a deeper understanding of the values, history, and cultural diversity that shape our world. National holidays are, ultimately, not just days of leisure but vital expressions of identity, unity, and shared human experience.

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