



# Freedom's Feast MEMORIAL DAY

On-line resources to get the most out of your AMERICAN holiday Celebrations.

## TAKING ACTION FOR THOSE WHO ACT FOR US

### MEMORIAL DAY FACTS

- Memorial Day was originally called "Decoration Day," taken from the practice of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths, and flags.
- Federal law declared "Memorial Day" the official name of the holiday in 1967.
- It is customary on Memorial Day to fly the flag at half staff until noon, and then raise it to the top of the staff until sunset.
- Check [here](#) for flag etiquette.

### REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED and SACRIFICED

Memorial Day has its roots in the aftermath of the Civil War, when surviving family members decorated soldiers' graves. The first national observance took place at Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 1868. After World War I, observance expanded to include members of the armed forces who died in all wars. The **National Holiday Act of 1971** shifted Memorial Day from May 30 to the last Monday in May. The Act made Memorial Day a federal holiday and three day weekend.



### MEMORIAL DAY

On Memorial Day, take time to stop and remember what others have done for us through their military service. Recall their sacrifices. Many experienced permanent life changes, while others made the ultimate sacrifice. Here are a few ways to honor and remember this special group of men and women:

1. Visit a military cemetery near you. Take time from your day or weekend to attend scheduled ceremonies or just walk on the grounds. You can locate the grave of a loved one or friend who served in the military as long as their burial spot carries a government grave marker.

*Here are some suggestions:*

- ★ Visit and thank the fallen for their service; they fought so that we would have this and so many other freedoms.
- ★ Conduct the brief Freedom's Feast **Memorial Day ceremony** at a quiet place in the cemetery.
- ★ Recite a memorial prayer from your faith tradition.
- ★ Read a poem fitting for the occasion. This [collection](#) has some excellent options.

2. Participate in the **National Moment of Remembrance** at 3:00 p.m. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, pause for a minute. Remember and thank those who have fought to defend our freedoms at home and abroad. Think of the families who have lost their loved ones in service to our country. Play the melody of [Taps](#) to accompany your observance.

3. Watch one of these during the holiday weekend and discuss it with friends and family:

**Memorial Day Tribute:** a YouTube video that captures the meaning of the holiday

**Memorial Day concert** on the national mall

**Memorial Day suggested movies**



Image: Library of Congress