



President's Day or Washington's Birthday?

The answer to the question depends on what state you live in. There are 24 states that observe Presidents' Day, 9 that recognize George Washington's Birthday, 4 that observe both George Washington's Birthday and Presidents' Day, 11 that don't observe any holiday, and 2 that celebrate Washington & Lincoln Day. Why does America celebrate different holidays? How do they start, and are they even official holidays?

George Washington's Birthday

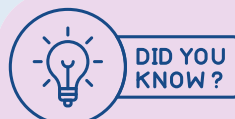
- George Washington's Birthday is February 22, 1732. It became a federal holiday in 1879 and was recognized every year on February 22nd.
- Congress moved the annual federal celebration of Washington's birthday from February 22 to the third Monday in February with the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. Many states have taken the opportunity to celebrate all presidents with the name "Presidents' Day," due to the proximity of Lincoln's Birthday, however the federal designation of the holiday remains officially "Washington's Birthday."



Washington's Birthday has not been celebrated on his actual birthday, February 22nd, since the Uniform Monday Holiday Act took effect in 1971.

What is the Uniform Holiday Monday Act?

- The Uniform Monday Holiday Act was passed in 1968, moving multiple holidays (Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, and Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day) to Mondays. The reason they passed this bill was to create more 3-day weekends and avoid disruptions during the workweek.



While Veterans Day was one of the four original holidays moved to a Monday under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, it was later reversed in legislation signed by President Ford in 1975, due to the unpopularity of the date change among states and veterans groups.

The Uniform Holiday Monday Act

- The Uniform Monday Holiday Act became a law by first being a bill that was presented by a member of Congress. The House of Representatives first passed the bill, followed by the Senate's vote to pass it into law. Once Congress had passed the bill, it was sent to the President to either veto or sign. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act on June 28, 1968, which then took effect on January 1, 1971.



DID YOU KNOW?

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which was designated a federal holiday in 1983, also follows this legislation and falls on the third Monday of January every year, though his actual birthday is on January 15th.

Presidents' Day

- Presidents' Day is a day when we, as a country, unofficially celebrate presidents, especially Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, for their contributions to the United States. It is generally celebrated every year on the third Monday in February.
- While the Uniform Monday Holiday Act was being created, the name "Presidents' Day" was brought up, but never officially applied to the holiday.
- Though the legislation did not officially change the name, it may have played a part in the popularity of the unofficial name. While considering the bill, lawmakers understood three-day weekends would boost travel and sales. Due to advertising and holiday sales campaigns, the term "Presidents' Day" grew more popular, becoming widely accepted and even made into state holidays.



DID YOU KNOW?

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday is February 12, 1809. Though it is a holiday in some states, like Illinois, Missouri, Connecticut, and New York, his birthday has never been declared a federal holiday.

Questions

- George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were both Presidents of the United States. What is it about them that has inspired Americans to commemorate their birthdays?
- What other presidents do you think could be recognized for their impact? Why?
- Which holiday does your state celebrate? Why do you think they chose to celebrate that holiday?
- What is a holiday, and why do we observe them?
- Why do governments get involved in creating or celebrating holidays?



Check out our website to see the Uniform Monday Holiday Act!