Holidays celebrated in the U.S.

A selection of American holidays (adapted from www.usa.gov)

New Year's Day: January 1st. Celebrations often begin the night before, when families & friends gather to wish each other a happy and prosperous coming year. Many Americans also make New Year Resolutions to improve their health, manage their finances, help others, reduce stress, & more.

Martin Luther King Day: 3rd Monday in January. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was an African-American clergyman who spent his life working to win civil rights and equality for all people through nonviolent means.

Groundhog Day: February 2nd. This tradition started in 1887, where crowds gather in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to see whether the local groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, will see his shadow after emerging from his burrow. If he does, six more weeks of winter weather are predicted.

Valentine's Day: February 14th. This American holiday celebrates love and affection, when many people exchange cards and presents of candy or flowers.

Presidents Day: 3rd Monday in February. This date is tied to the birthday of George Washington, the first President of the United States, but the holiday is intended to honor the legacy of all past American presidents.

Easter: A Sunday in April or May. Easter is a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. Many Americans attend religious services and gather with family. Children often receive baskets of candy and hunt for colored eggs.

Earth Day: April 22nd. First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day is designed to promote ecology, encourage respect for life on earth, and highlight concern over pollution of the soil, air, and water.

Mother's Day: 2nd Sunday in May. This is a day to recognize mothers and mother figures, and to appreciate their contributions to family and society.

Memorial Day: Last Monday in May. This holiday is to honor those American soldiers who have died in war and to remember others who have passed.

Flag Day: June 14th. This day is observed to honor the history and heritage the American flag represents. The flag is flown at many businesses and homes.
Father's Day: 3rd Sunday in June. This is a day to recognize fathers and father figures, and to appreciate their contributions to family and society.

Independence Day: July 4th. This holiday celebrates America's birthday, with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. It is a day of picnics and patriotic parades, a night of concerts and fireworks. Many people will display the American flag outside their homes.

Labor Day: 1st Monday in September. This holiday honors the nation's working people, typically with parades. For many, it also marks the end of the summer vacation season and the start of the school year.

Columbus Day: 2nd Monday in October. The day commemorates October 12, 1492, when Italian navigator Christopher Columbus landed in the 'New World'.

Halloween: October 31st. Most American children dress up in funny or scary costumes and go "trick or treating", by knocking on doors in their neighborhood to receive small gifts of candy or money. Other traditional activities include bonfires, visiting a “haunted house” and carving pumpkins.

Veterans Day: November 11. This holiday honors veterans of all wars where U.S. soldiers have fought and is marked by parades and ceremonies.

Thanksgiving Day: 4th Thursday in November. This is a day to give thanks for family, friends, and other blessings. Many Americans celebrate with a Thanksgiving feast, serving traditional foods such as roast turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. Thanksgiving parades are also common.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day: December 7th. This is a day of national observance to honor military service personnel who died during the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, which caused the U.S. to enter World War II.

Christmas Day: December 25th. This is a Christian holiday marking the birth of Jesus Christ and celebrated with religious services and family gatherings. Many Americans, including non-Christians, will decorate their homes with colored lights, put up a Christmas tree, send greeting cards, and give gifts.

This list represents common U.S. holidays. There are many ethnic & religious events celebrated throughout America, even if they are not necessarily considered national holidays! Other celebrations include the Jewish high holy days, Ramadan among Muslims, Kwanzaa within the African-American community, St. Patrick’s Day for those of Irish heritage, Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) recognized by Mexican-Americans, & many more!