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**#JUNETEENTH**

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# Introduction



**Freedom  
Day!**



Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day and short for "June Nineteenth", commemorates and celebrates the day the last enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas were informed of their freedom on June 19, 1865. While many see the 4th of July as their Independence Day, for many African Americans that day does not hold the same meaning.

The following information is meant to inform readers of an important day in our history that should not only be recognized but celebrated. Please continue reading to gain more insight on the historical relevance of June 19th, ways to celebrate, and ways to support the Black community in America beyond just one day out of the year.



# The History Behind The Day

The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4th, 1776. That day has been synonymous with the idea of freedom and independence for many Americans, but not all. In 1852, abolitionist Frederick Douglass was invited to give a 4th of July speech in New York. He instead chose to speak on July 5th given that the celebration of American independence on the 4th felt hypocritical. July 5th was a more appropriate date given that about 30 years prior, African Americans paraded around New York City to celebrate the end of slavery in New York.

Frederick Douglass's speech went on to discuss what it felt like to see such a celebration on the 4th of July, knowing not all people within America knew independence.



*What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. - Frederick Douglass, Full Speech*

For enslaved African Americans, freedom and independence did not come until former President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. However, the Emancipation Proclamation did not instantly free all enslaved people.



Slavery continued in Texas given a lack of resistance and presence of Union troops to enforce the new law.

Every enslaved person was not free until about two and half years later when the 250,000 enslaved people of Galveston, Texas were informed of their freedom by U.S. General Gordon Granger on June 19th, 1865.

A year after, freemen in Texas organized what would later be recognized as the first of the annual celebration "Jubilee Day" on June 19th. As Black people moved throughout the country, the celebration spread to other areas. In 1980, Texas became the first state to recognize Juneteenth as an official holiday. Florida in 1991, Oklahoma in 1994, Minnesota in 1996, and many more thereafter. Connecticut did not officially recognize it until 2003.

**Please watch this video for a recap  
on the history of Juneteenth!**

## Early Photographs of Juneteenth Celebrations





# How to Celebrate Juneteenth

Celebrating Juneteenth originated in Texas, and as more African Americans migrated across the country, word spread and more cities began to celebrate. Yet, it was not until June 17, 2021, that it officially became a federal holiday.

Celebrating this day of freedom can take many forms. Parties, community celebrations, and barbecues with friends, family, and neighbors are customary, as well as drinking red-colored drinks to symbolize the blood that was shed by our African American ancestors. Supporting and shopping at Black-owned businesses is another way to honor this holiday.

Another important form of celebrating is remembering the past and all that was sacrificed to obtain freedom. Educate yourself on the history of this day, African American history in general ([click here for the link to my Black History Month Resource Packet](#)), and those who have lost their lives in pursuit of racial equality. It is both a happy and sad day, as we have come so far as a nation but still have farther to go to achieve true equality and justice. That is why one of the most important ways to honor this day is to support and contribute to the fight for justice within America for not only Black people but all marginalized people.

Please celebrate, remember, honor, learn, acknowledge, and uplift the voices of African Americans.



[Music to Move You](#)

# How to Support Beyond One Day



Celebrating and honoring Juneteenth on the actual day is important and encouraged. However, the essence of this holiday is bigger than just one day. While Black people in America may be free, we are still not yet equal. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously support the fight for racial equity beyond just one day of the year.

A key facet of the CCT Anti-Racism Alliance's mission is education. Continuing to educate yourself on the racial injustices that are still plaguing the Black community is essential to being an ally and supporter. [Please visit our website and subscribe to our newsletter](#) for additional resources to either help you begin or continue your education.

In the same spirit of education, please check out the reading list compiled by the [Center for Racial Justice in Education](#) as well as Ibram X. Kendi, one of America's foremost historians and leading antiracist scholars, [Anti-Racist Reading List](#).

It is also important not to allow ourselves to be silent or complicit when we see any form of racial inequality. Have the difficult conversations, support Black-owned businesses, participate in protests, and [amplify Black voices](#). Be an ally through your presence, action, self-reflection, and education **EVERY** day of the year.



# Sources

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/juneteenth-celebration-history.html>
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3. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R44865.pdf>
4. <https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/juneteenth-photographs>
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**Thank you  
for reading!**