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10 Fun Facts to Know About Independence Day

The Fourth of July is "proof" that summer is in full swing. However you choose to celebrate The Fourth this year, there are a few fun facts you should know about this iconic American holiday:

ONE: The first American flag only had thirteen stars, representing the original thirteen colonies. The blue square with the stars is called 'the union' on the flag and should always be displayed at the peak of a flagstaff or, if hung on a wall, on the uppermost right side.

TWO: The first Fourth of July was celebrated in 1777 with fireworks and parades.

THREE: One president (Calvin Coolidge) was born on July 4th and three presidents died on July 4th: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe.

FOUR: Massachusetts was the first state to declare July 4th as an official holiday in 1781. It didn't become a federal holiday until 1870.

FIVE: There were only 2.5 million original United States citizens as of July 4, 1776. Today the U.S has a population of over 336 million. That's a 13,200% growth rate since the first Independence Day!

SIX: The White House held its first Fourth of July party in 1801 for people that could attend in person. Now, each Fourth of July, a televised concert and fireworks show is presented from the National Mall in Washington D.C. for all Americans to enjoy, no matter where they live.

SEVEN: The 'Star-Spangled Banner' didn't become the National Anthem for over a hundred years. The song was penned by Francis Scott Key in 1814 as he witnessed British troops overcome Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The song finally became the national anthem a hundred years later in 1931. Now it's played before all Fourth of July shows and celebrations.

EIGHT: The Fourth of July wasn't a federal holiday until 1870, after the War of 1812 when the U.S. faced Great Britain again and patriotic sentiments were at an all-time high. Because of this, Congress declared it an official holiday in 1870 and in 1941, made the day a paid holiday for all federal employees.

NINE: Apple pie is considered the most American dessert. How did this happen? As a final rebuff to Britain the colonists ditched their traditional scones and cakes and replaced them with apple pie. The idea was borrowed from Dutch immigrants who preferred flaky pastry crust enclosing a variety of fillings. In this case, apples were plentiful and thus the tradition of apple pie was born.

TEN: The first person to sign the Declaration of Independence was never president. John Hancock was famously the first person to sign, which is where the phrase 'put your John Hancock here' originates.

Trivial, but notable statistics on the Fourth include: Americans eat 155 million hot dogs each Fourth of July and they spend \$1 billion a year on fireworks.

July Calendar

July 4 - Independence Day

July 1- 7 - Clean Beaches Week

July is Family Fun Month

Homeowner Tips



6 Ways to Prevent Porch Theft

1. Track your deliveries.
2. Select the signature required option.
3. Install a lockable delivery box.
4. Install a security camera.
5. Team up with your neighbors.
6. Pick up packages at a secure location.

7 Timely Home Maintenance Tips for July

1- MAKE THE BASEMENT COMFY: The beauty of basements is that they tend to be the coolest room in the house in the heat of summer. As well, they provide a safe place to go during storms. Easy ways to spruce up the basement include painting the concrete floor, adding area rugs, comfy furniture, a TV, and gaming centers.

2- KEEP THE POOL CLEAN: As the heat increases, so does the necessity of keeping effective chlorine levels in your pool to fight algae invasion. Summer is the time to enjoy the pool, and nobody wants to swim in one that's turned green.

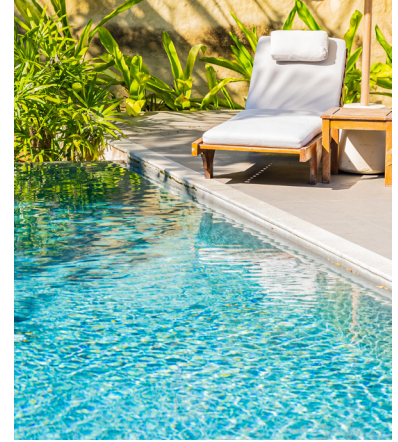
3- BE PREPARED FOR NATURAL DISASTERS: Whether you live in tornado alley or a high fire risk area, make sure you have a plan and your "go bag" is ready to go.

4- UP SECURITY FOR VACATION TIME: Make sure your house continues to look occupied during your absence. Continue yard maintenance, put mail on-hold, use automatic light timers, and an outdoor security camera system that can be remotely accessed.

5- DE-BUG OUTDOOR LIGHT FIXTURES: Now's the time to hangout on the porch. Don't let dirty light fixtures filled with dead bugs kill the mood.

6- CLEAN THE FRIDGE: There is no better time to address this odious task than during the blazing heat of summer.

7- FERTILIZE YOUR LANDSCAPING: After the initial blush of spring, your yard plants will appreciate some extra help during the long, hot days of July.



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Classic American Apple Pie

INGREDIENTS

1 recipe for pie dough and/or purchase pre-made for double crust pie

1 egg, lightly beaten (for top crust)

3/4 c. sugar

2 tbsp. flour

1/2 tsp. cinnamon and nutmeg

6 c. thinly sliced & peeled apples

1/3 c. cranberries

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. water

1/8 c. raw sugar for top crust

DIRECTIONS

Line the bottom of your glass or ceramic pie pan with one half of your pie crust.

Mix remaining ingredients (except egg) in a large mixing bowl until the apples are fully coated. Dump the apple mixture into the crust-lined pie pan. Gently lay the upper crust over the apple mixture and pinch the edges to seal the apple mixture in the crust. Score the top middle of the pie shell 4 times with a knife so it vents when cooking. Brush egg mixture on the top and sprinkle the raw sugar. Lightly cover with foil and cook at 375 degrees in a pre-heated oven for 40 minutes; remove the foil and bake for 20 more minutes. Cool for two hours before eating. Add vanilla ice cream if desired.

