

From Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day

The transition from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day reflects a shift in the way people view the historical significance of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas and a desire to honor and acknowledge the indigenous peoples who were already living in the Americas long before Columbus's arrival.

Columbus Day, initially known as "Discovery Day", was first celebrated in the United States in the late 19th century. It became a federal holiday in 1937, primarily as a way to honor the Italian-American community and their contributions to American society. Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer, was seen as a symbol of Italian heritage.

Over time, the perception of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas has evolved. While he is still recognized as an important historical figure for his role in connecting the Old World and the New World, there is also a growing recognition of the negative consequences of his voyages, including the displacement, mistreatment, and violence against indigenous peoples.

In the late 20th century and early 21st century, advocacy groups, indigenous activists, and communities began pushing for a holiday that would celebrate and honor the history, cultures, and contributions of indigenous peoples. They argued that Columbus's arrival marked the beginning of a period of significant hardship, displacement, and loss for indigenous communities.

The movement to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day gained momentum

in various parts of the United States. Cities and states began officially recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day as an alternative or replacement for Columbus Day. Some of the earliest adopters of Indigenous Peoples Day included Berkeley, California, and South Dakota, where the holiday was established statewide in 1990.

In recent years, there has been growing support for the transition to Indigenous Peoples Day at the national level. Some states and municipalities have officially replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, and there have been calls for a similar change at the federal level.

The transition from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day has not been without controversy and debate. Some argue that it is an important step toward acknowledging historical injustices and recognizing indigenous cultures, while others believe that Columbus Day should be preserved as a way to honor Italian heritage and history.

In addition to Indigenous Peoples Day, some places have chosen alternative names for the holiday, such as Native American Day, First Peoples Day, or Native American Heritage Day.

The adoption of Indigenous Peoples Day represents a broader cultural shift in how the history of the Americas is remembered and commemorated. It acknowledges the contributions and resilience of indigenous peoples and seeks to promote a more inclusive and accurate understanding of the complex



history of the Americas. The transition from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day is an

ongoing process, and its adoption varies by region and jurisdiction.

Answer the following questions based on the text and your knowledge of social studies.

1. Why have people advocated for replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day?
2. Why have some advocated for preserving Columbus Day?
3. Do you believe that the federal government should change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day? Why?

4. On the map below, locate and indicate the state where Indigenous Peoples Day was first established statewide in 1990.



5. On the map below, locate and indicate the country where Christopher Columbus was born (leaving aside that this country was not unified into its current state during his lifetime).

