Columbus Day


Since 1971, on the second Monday in October, Columbus Day has been __________ in the United States as a national holiday. On this day, which is sometimes also called Pioneers Day or Discovery Day, people __________ the first landing of Christopher Columbus on the American continent with __________ and celebrations. Many people also see this as a sad day because it started the enslavement of the indigenous inhabitants.

Let’s go back to the origins of this public holiday.

In 1451, Christopher Columbus was born in the Italian __________ town of Genoa as the son of a weaver and wool merchant. As most Genoese boys, he went to sea on __________ voyages in the Mediterranean, to England and Ireland and as far as Iceland. He was fascinated by reports of the great voyages of _________ and explorers such as Marco Polo. In course of time, the idea of sailing __________ and reaching countries in the East such as India on this route took __________ in his mind. He tried to convince King John of Portugal of his plans and to __________ his support. When he refused, Columbus went to Spain. The King and __________ of Spain, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, had a willing ear for his plans. On 3 August 1492, he __________ sail from the port of Palos, near Huelva in southern Spain on the Atlantic __________, with three ships – the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa María. Nearly ten weeks later, one of his men __________ land. On 12 October 1492, Columbus set __________ on an island which he thought was an island off the coast of India. This is why these islands in the __________ are today called the West Indies. However, this was an island in the Bahamas – Guanahani – which he __________ San Salvador. From there he sailed on to Cuba and to Hispaniola – the Dominican Republic and Haiti today – where he founded a Spanish __________. In March 1493, he returned to Spain.

Columbus went on three more __________, which were overshadowed by rebellions of the Spanish __________ and problems with the Spanish governors of those new lands. In 1504, he returned from his fourth voyage, and two years later, on 20 May 1506, he died in Valladolid, a town in northern Spain.

Columbus’s voyages to the west __________ other navigators and explorers, one of them Amerigo Vespucci, a commercial __________ of the House of Medici. It was this merchant who gave the __________ the name ‘America’.

On 12 October 1792, 300 years after Columbus’s first __________ on the island of Guanahani, the Society of St. Tammany, which is also known as the Columbian Order, __________ this significant event in the history of America for the first time. One hundred years later, in 1892, on the occasion of the 400th __________ of the landing, US-President Benjamin Harrison celebrated the first official Columbus Day in the United States. During the following years, the idea of making Columbus Day a public __________ throughout the United States got more and more supporters. In 1907, Colorado was the first state to do so, followed by New York two years later. Since 1971, Columbus Day has been celebrated as a __________ holiday every year on the __________ Monday in October. More recently, some people have begun celebrating Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day. This holiday celebrates Native American culture and history. In 1992, on the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s landing, the city of Berkeley, California, officially began celebrating Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Since then, other cities and even states have taken it up as a public holiday as well.
Since 1971, on the second Monday in October, Columbus Day has been celebrated in the United States as a national holiday. On this day, which is sometimes also called Pioneers Day or Discovery Day, people commemorate the first landing of Christopher Columbus on the American continent with parades and celebrations. Many people also see this as a sad day because it started the enslavement of the indigenous inhabitants.

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In 1451, Christopher Columbus was born in the Italian seaport town of Genoa as the son of a weaver and wool merchant. As most Genoese boys, he went to sea on merchant voyages in the Mediterranean, to England and Ireland and as far as Iceland. He was fascinated by reports of the great voyages of seafarers and explorers such as Marco Polo. In course of time, the idea of sailing westward and reaching countries in the East such as India on this route took shape in his mind. He tried to convince King John of Portugal of his plans and to gain his support. When he refused, Columbus went to Spain. The King and Queen of Spain, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, had a willing ear for his plans. On 3 August 1492, he set sail from the port of Palos, near Huelva in southern Spain on the Atlantic coast, with three ships – the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa María. Nearly ten weeks later, one of his men sighted land. On 12 October 1492, Columbus set foot on an island which he thought was an island off the coast of India. This is why these islands in the Caribbean are today called the West Indies. However, this was an island in the Bahamas – Guanahani – which he renamed San Salvador. From there he sailed on to Cuba and to Hispaniola – the Dominican Republic and Haiti today – where he founded a Spanish settlement. In March 1493, he returned to Spain.

Columbus went on three more voyages, which were overshadowed by rebellions of the Spanish colonists and problems with the Spanish governors of those new lands. In 1504, he returned from his fourth voyage, and two years later, on 20 May 1506, he died in Valladolid, a town in northern Spain.

Columbus’s voyages to the west attracted other navigators and explorers, one of them Amerigo Vespucci, a commercial representative of the House of Medici. It was this merchant who gave the continent the name ‘America’.

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