

Indigenous Peoples Day

Note that this is not a comprehensive timeline of historic events, but is a selection of notable events in the development of Indigenous Peoples Day.



Time Immemorial

Many Indigenous nations have celebrated their culture and heritage around June 21 because of the significance of the summer solstice.

1982

The National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations) first suggested establishing “National Aboriginal Solidarity Day” as a day of recognition.

1995

Following the Ipperwash Crisis, the Sacred Assembly, a national meeting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous spiritual leaders organized by Elijah Harper, encouraged the federal government to establish “National First Peoples Day” as a day of unity and acknowledgment.



1945

A call for recognition of “Indian Day” came from First Nations leaders who attended Huron Wendake First Nation member Jules Sioui’s two conventions during World War II, which were held to counteract new challenges to the rights of Indigenous Peoples at the time.

1990

In the wake of the Oka Crisis, Quebec becomes the first province or territory to establish 21 June as a day to celebrate Indigenous cultures.

1996

The first National Aboriginal Day.
On 13 June 1996, Governor General Roméo LeBlanc announced the government’s intention to have an annual, national celebration of Indigenous peoples, which was celebrated on June 21st.

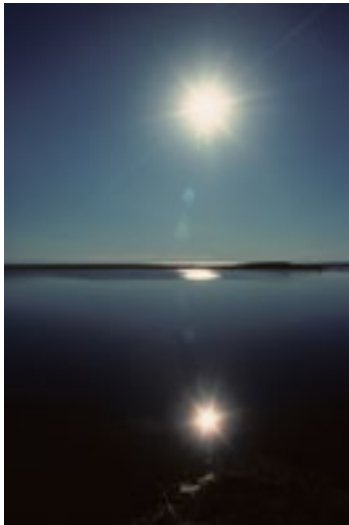


Image details (left to right): Sun reflection in Beaufort Sea, Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. Photo — Winston Fraser, courtesy of Alamy; Elijah Harper at the Mennonite World Conference. 1990, Winnipeg, Canada. Photo — MEC Collection, courtesy of Alamy.

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2001

The Northwest Territories becomes the first province or territory to declare National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday.

2015

Release of the Final Report and Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

2017

Aboriginal Peoples Day is officially renamed Indigenous Peoples Day alongside the renaming of National Indigenous History Month.

Yukon declares Indigenous Peoples Day a statutory holiday.



Present Day

Indigenous Peoples continue to exert their self-determination through National Indigenous Peoples day events.

2009

Canadian Federal Government declares June National Aboriginal History Month.

2016

Canadian government endorses United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo holds up a copy of UNDRIP.



2021

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act receives royal assent in Canadian parliament on National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Image details (left to right): Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo holds up UNDRIP during a news conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, January 24, 2013. Photo — REUTERS/Andy Clark, courtesy of Alamy; Aboriginal Solidarity Day (Indigenous Peoples Day) is celebrated in London, Ontario. Photo — Jonny White, courtesy of Alamy.