



# Indigenous Peoples' Day Boston, MA

## Why Celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day?

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- **It's a matter of respect: Indigenous people have been asking for a change for several decades. It is time to join other cities and support justice for Native Americans.**
- **Indigenous Peoples Day recognizes and celebrates the heritage of Indigenous people from throughout the Americas as well as the history and contribution of Native Nations/Tribes in the region.**
- **Indigenous Peoples Day honors Indigenous people who live here and brings public awareness to the modern-day presence of Native people in the community. Many non-Native people continue to believe that Native people all live on reservations, even though more than 75% do not.**
- **By changing the holiday from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day, the holiday recognizes the historic and ongoing painful impacts that the arrival in the Americas of Columbus and other European colonists had on Indigenous people.**



- **Enacting an officially recognized Indigenous Peoples Day would shed light on the history of European colonialism and Indigenous genocide, which still impacts Native peoples today:**
  - Native Americans have disproportionately higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and incarceration.
  - Native youth have the highest suicide rate in the US, more than 3 times the national average.
  - Nationally, Native students have the highest drop-out rates and more than 1/3 of Native students will not complete high school. Native students are also disproportionately likely to be disciplined, suspended and expelled from school.
  - Native Americans have a shorter life expectancy than the rest of the population, partly because of less access to quality health care and inadequate funding for health programs.
  - Violence and assault are common for Native women. One in three Indigenous women reports having been raped in their lifetime.
  - Native people nationally are 38% more likely to be incarcerated than the general population, and are more likely than any other racial group to be killed by police, according to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice.
  - Up until the 1980s and 1990s, thousands of Native children in the US & Canada were removed from their families and sent to "Indian Boarding Schools" where they were forced to assimilate to European standards of living, which often included beatings and psychological and sexual abuse for infractions such as speaking their tribal language. Native families & tribal communities suffer intergenerational trauma as a result.
  - Indigenous peoples are virtually erased in mainstream media, government statistics, and in many discussions of equity and racism.
  - Indigenous peoples continue to be subject to multiple racial stereotypes and slurs, including racist sports team names and mascots.

## What Is Wrong with Columbus Day?

- Honoring Columbus Day celebrates a legacy of genocide of Indigenous people and perpetuates ongoing racism against Indigenous peoples. This is harmful to Indigenous children as well as to non-Native children.
- Celebrating Columbus Day perpetuates the myth that these lands were empty and waiting to be “discovered” by Europeans. It intentionally ignores the immense suffering of millions of Indigenous people who were killed, enslaved and raped by European colonists, and ignores their heroic resistance to colonialism.
- A true and accurate account of the history of Indigenous people, beginning long before Christopher Columbus sailed, is necessary to set the historical record straight and to respect the traditional cultures and languages of Indigenous peoples.
- Modern historians recognize that Columbus’s policies, including forced slave labor, starvation and slaughter, resulted in the near-complete genocide of the Indigenous peoples of Hispaniola, Haiti and other places.
- Columbus enslaved Indigenous people and is estimated to have shipped approximately 5,000 enslaved Indigenous Peoples across the Atlantic—filling his pockets and setting the stage for the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Many thousands more Indigenous people were enslaved in their homelands.
- Columbus and his men sold Indigenous women and young girls into sexual slavery.
- Columbus had Indigenous people hunted down with dogs that tore them apart and devoured them, and had his men test the sharpness of their blades by cutting off the hands of Indigenous people.



### A Few Points About Italian Heritage

One argument against replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day is that it would take attention away from the important contributions that Italian-Americans have made to the US. However,

- Italian-American heritage can be celebrated without any mention of Columbus. In fact, Boston and Cambridge already celebrate Italian Heritage Month in October. Boston also sponsors at least a dozen Italian festivals during the year.
- Progressive Italian-Americans are increasingly discussing and opposing the celebration of Columbus.



## Select Media Links

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**John Oliver: Columbus Day: How Is That Still a Thing?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKEwL-10s7E>

**Washington Post: More Cities Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day Amid Efforts to Abolish Columbus Day** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/10/11/more-cities-celebrating-indigenous-peoples-day-as-effort-to-abolish-columbus-day-grows/>

**CNN: Instead of Columbus Day, Some Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day**

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/09/living/columbus-day-feat/>

**Think Progress: Why These Cities Are Dropping Columbus Day for Indigenous Peoples Day**

<http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/10/12/3711539/Indigenous-peoples-day/>



# Select List of US Cities That Now Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day

(as of 11-1-2015)

- Berkeley, CA
- San Fernando, CA
- Santa Cruz, CA
- Sebastapol, CA
- Anderson, Redding, and Shasta Lake,CA
- Denver, CA
- Lawrence, KS
- Minneapolis, MN
- Red Wing, MN
- Grand Rapids, MN
- St. Paul, MN
- Carrboro, NC
- Albuquerque, NM (
- Newstead, OH
- Anadarko, OK-
- Portland, OR-
- Bexar County/San Antonio, TX
- Seattle, WA-October 6, 2014

## States:

- South Dakota [Native American Day in 1990]
- Alaska (Indigenous Peoples Day in 2015)

Thank you for your support!

