

## Things You (Probably) Don't Know About the Fourth of July

Find the audio and the full text on

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/fourth-of-july-fun-facts/3923641.html>.

**1. BEFORE YOU LISTEN** Some raindrops have fallen on Josh's brochure about the Fourth of July, and now some words are illegible. Try and "repair" the text with the words from the box!

flag – celebrate – barbecue – Independence – parades – fireworks – holiday – Britain



July 4, also known as \_\_\_\_\_ Day, is the  
national \_\_\_\_\_ of the USA. On that day in 1776,  
the US became independent from \_\_\_\_\_.  
People \_\_\_\_\_ it in different ways. Some  
have a picnic or a \_\_\_\_\_ with delicious  
food. Also, you can go and see big \_\_\_\_\_ with  
marching bands and floats. And as soon as it gets dark, you  
can watch stunning \_\_\_\_\_ in the sky. And of  
course there's one thing you'll see a lot on July 4: The  
American \_\_\_\_\_ !

**2. AS YOU LISTEN FOR THE FIRST TIME** a) Tick the questions that are answered in the text.

- ☐ What is the history of July 4?
- ☐ Who died on July 4?
- ☐ How do Americans celebrate July 4?
- ☐ Who can drink the most beer?
- ☐ Who can eat the most hot dogs?
- ☐ Who invented fireworks?
- ☐ Where do most of the fireworks in America come from?
- ☐ Which groups in America do **not** celebrate July 4?

b) Can you already answer some of the questions? Compare what you understood with a partner.

**3. AS YOU LISTEN FOR THE SECOND TIME** A, B or C? Tick the correct answer.

a) According to John Adams, which day would be “the most memorable in the history of America”?  
A. July 1                                      B. July 2                                      C. July 4

b) On that day,  
A. the Declaration of Independence was signed.      B. George Washington was born.      C. the Continental Congress voted for independence from Britain.

c) Calvin Coolidge  
A. was the 13<sup>th</sup> US president.      B. died on July 4.      C. was born on July 4.

d) Since the 1970s, the restaurant Nathan’s Famous has organized an event. It is ...  
A. a competition                              B. a barbecue                              C. a show of fireworks

e) The event takes place in ...  
A. New York                                      B. New Jersey                                      C. New Orleans

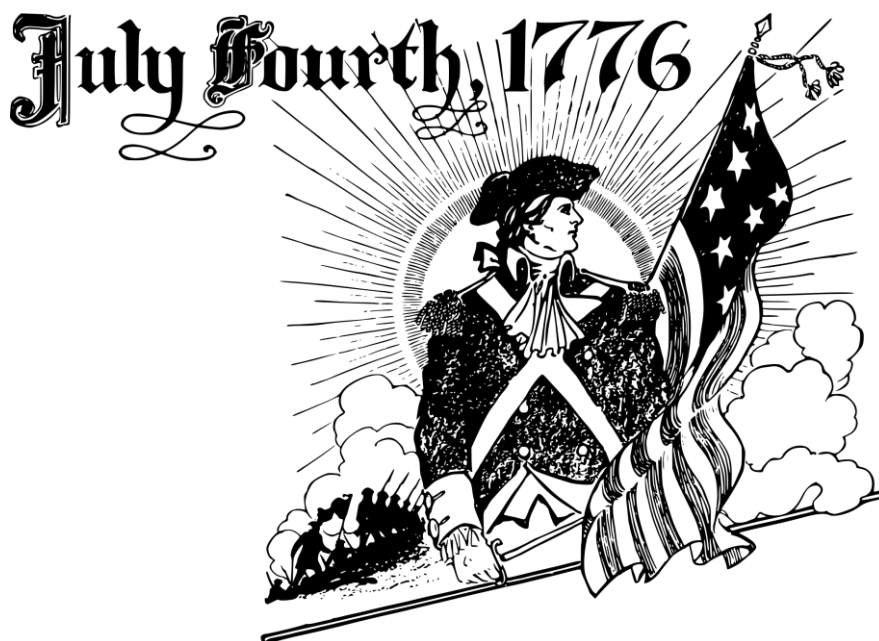
f) What is Miki Sudo famous for?  
A. eating a lot                                      B. drinking a lot                                      C. spending a lot on fireworks

g) How much money do Americans spend on fireworks?  
A. \$825 million                                      B. 80 million                                      C. 850 million

h) What is said about American flags?  
A. They are expensive.                              B. They are not made in America.                                      C. On July 4, they are more important than fireworks.

**4. AFTER LISTENING** a) What were the three “surprising facts” presented in the text?

b) Which did you find the most / the least surprising?



**5. ROLE PLAY – PARTNER WORK** Imagine you're spending Independence Day with your host family. Your host brother or sister asks you what you'd like to do. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different options.



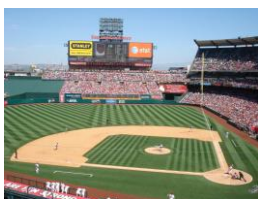
1. Drive to the nearest city, see a parade with bands and floats and attend a live concert afterwards.



2. Join a community picnic with typical 4<sup>th</sup> of July foods (burgers, hot dogs, barbecue, corn on the cob ...) and fun activities like dancing, water-gun fights and food eating contests.



3. Visit a historic re-enactment where actors put famous historical events on stage.



4. Attend a baseball game and watch the fireworks afterwards.



5. Stay at home and invite friends over. You can make your own food, have a barbecue and play games.

#### Phrases for the exchange student

Hmm, I'm not sure. What options are there?

#### Asking for information

Can you tell me more about ...?

What is ... like?

What can you do there?

Do they also offer / have ...?

Is it expensive / difficult to get there ...?

What else is there?

#### Pros and Cons

... sounds lots of fun to me because I love ...

I've never been to a ... before.

... would be a good opportunity to try ...

I think ... would be better because ...

I (don't) really like ...

I guess ... could be difficult because ...

I'd rather go to ... than ... because ...

#### Phrases for the host brother / sister

What would you like to do on July 4?

#### Describing activities

There are quite a few events in the area, like ...

We could also drive to ... and ... there.

They **have / offer** different activities, like ...

I think it's **awesome / lots of fun / okay / kind of lame** because ...

One thing I really like about ... is ...

#### Pros and Cons

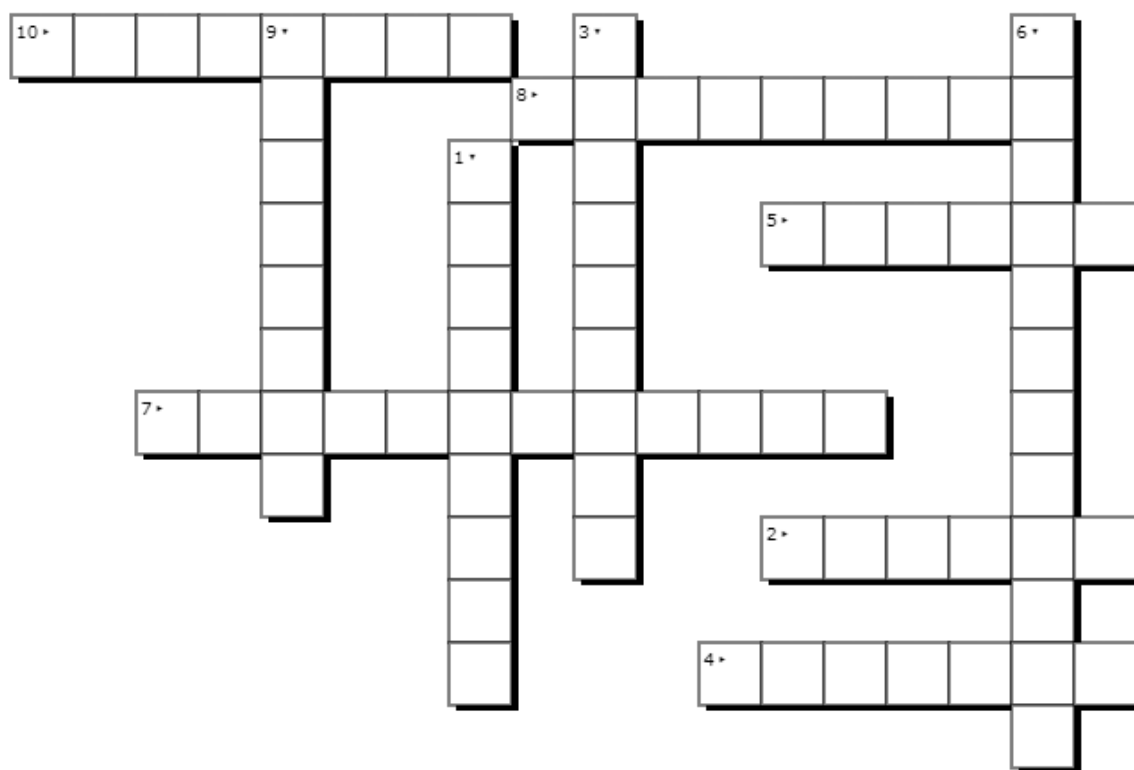
Well, ... is fun, but on the downside ...

If you ask me, ... is the best option.

There's one thing we should keep in mind: ...

## 6. JUST FOR FUN – CROSSWORD How well do you know American holidays?

1. On this holiday people decorate their living rooms with a tree and to give presents to each other. Children are often told that the presents are delivered by an old man with a white beard.
2. Martin ... King Day commemorates a famous civil rights activist who was shot in 1968. He fought for equal rights for black and white citizens.
3. ...'s Day is on February 14. On this day, lovers exchange gifts and go on romantic dates.
4. Saint ... is the patron saint of Ireland, but Saint ...'s Day is also a big event in the USA, especially in places where many people of Irish ancestry live. On this day, everybody dresses in green and many people wear a shamrock.
5. This holiday is in spring; it celebrates the resurrection of Christ. A typical ... custom is hiding eggs in the garden for the children to find.
6. ... Day is on July 4. It is famous for its firework displays and its parades.
7. ... is in November. On this day, Americans typically have a large dinner with a roasted turkey, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie and many other traditional foods.
8. On ..., people go to costume parties and kids go trick-or-treating. Many decorate their houses with scary decorations such as carved pumpkins and cobwebs.
9. ... Day commemorates all American soldiers who died in wars.
10. ... Day celebrates the discovery of America. It is named after an Italian explorer.



Pictures:

1. **Parade**: By S Pakhrin from DC, USA (4th of July Independence Day Parade 2014 DC) [CC BY 2.0

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3. **Reenactment**: By U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Matthew Bookwalter [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

4. **Baseball game**: By HerSilverHammer - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6506985>

5. **Independence Day food**: By Victorgrigas (Own work) [CC0], via Wikimedia Commons

**1. BEFORE YOU LISTEN** July 4, also known as **Independence Day**, is the national **holiday** of the USA. On that day in 1776, the USA became independent from **Britain**.

**2. AS YOU LISTEN FOR THE FIRST TIME** a) and b):

- ☒ **What is the history of July 4?** (*It's the date on the Declaration of Independence*)
- ☒ **Who died on July 4?** (*three US presidents: Adams, Jefferson, Monroe*)
- ☒ **How do Americans celebrate July 4?** (*barbecues, parades, fireworks, hotdog eating competitions*)
- ☐ Who can drink the most beer?
- ☒ **Who can eat the most hot dogs?** (*Joey Chestnut and Miki Sudo*)
- ☐ Who invented fireworks?
- ☒ **Where do most of the fireworks in America come from?** (*China*)
- ☐ Which groups in America do **not** celebrate July 4?

**3. AS YOU LISTEN FOR THE SECOND TIME** a) B. b) C. c) C. d) A. e) A. f) A. g) A. h) B.

**4. AFTER LISTENING** The three facts: Originally, July 2 was seen as a more important date because the decision to declare independence from Britain was made then. Secondly, there are weird traditions like hot dog eating competitions. Lastly, the typically “American” flags and fireworks are not produced in America, but in China.

## 6. JUST FOR FUN – CROSSWORD

