



Independence Day

Indiana 4-H Civic Engagement Club Activity

Club Report/Activity – Fourth of July

Audience: Grades 3-12

Duration: Approximately 10 minutes (activities to try at home would add additional time)

Overview

Use the included information to give the history of the Fourth of July and its current economic aspects. Further explore the holiday using the included recipe and craft.

Objectives

Those observing and participating in discussion will:

- Learn a quick history of Fourth of July festivities
- Explore economic facts related to the holiday
- Practice cooking and craft skills

Materials

- See recipe and craft instructions for details

Activity/Report

Compiled by Marcia Parcell, Extension Educator – Dearborn County

History of Fourth of July

Historically, on July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress unanimously adopted the Declaration of Independence announcing the colonies' separation from Great Britain. Philadelphians marked the first anniversary of American independence with a spontaneous celebration, which is described in a letter by John Adams to Abigail Adams. However, observing Independence Day only became commonplace after the War of 1812. Soon, events such as groundbreaking ceremonies for the Erie Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad were scheduled to coincide with July 4th festivities.

By the 1870s, the Fourth of July was the most important secular holiday on the calendar. Congress passed a law making Independence Day a federal holiday on June 28, 1870. Even far-flung communities on the western frontier managed to congregate on Independence Day.

In 1941, Congress declared July 4th a legal Federal holiday. Today communities across the nation mark this major midsummer holiday with parades, fireworks, picnics, and family reunions and gatherings.

- What are your Fourth of July memories?
- What are your Fourth of July traditions?
- Has the celebration of Independence Day changed in your life?

Source: Today in History: July 4. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jul04.html>. 2007

Economic Aspects of the Holiday

\$190.7 million is the value of fireworks imported from China, representing the bulk of the U.S. fireworks imports (\$197.3 million) in 2010. U.S. exports of fireworks, by comparison, amounted to \$37 million, with Japan purchasing more than any other single country (\$6.3 million).

Where did your Fourth of July foods originate?

- There's a 1-in-6 chance the beef on your backyard grill came from Texas.
- The chicken on your barbecue grill probably came from one of the top broiler-producing states: Georgia, Arkansas, Alabama, North Carolina, or Mississippi.
- The lettuce in your salad or on your hamburger probably was grown in California, which accounts for nearly three-quarters of USA lettuce production.
- Fresh tomatoes in your salad most likely came from Florida or California, which, combined, produced more than two-thirds of U.S. tomatoes.
- As to potato salad or potato chips or fries, Idaho and Washington produce about one-half of the nation's spuds.
- For dessert, six states –California, Florida, Texas, Georgia, Arizona, and Indiana –combined to produce about 80% of watermelons last year.

Source: 4th of July by the Numbers. www.chiff.com/a/fun-facts-fourth.htm

Recipe to try at home:

Fourth of July Taco Salad

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- 16 ounces sour cream
- Shredded lettuce
- Black olives
- Cherry tomatoes
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

1. In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until meat is completely browned; drain. Stir in water and taco seasoning. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, according to the taco seasoning directions.
2. Spread beef mixture in the bottom of a 13x9 dish. Allow the beef mixture to cool completely. You can refrigerate the mixture, while you prepare the lettuce, olives, and tomatoes.
3. Put sour cream on top of completely cooled meat.
4. Cover sour cream with shredded lettuce.
5. Slice olives lengthwise. Arrange 5 slices of olives to form stars in upper left corner.
6. Alternate cheese and tomatoes for stripes.
7. Serve the salad with red and blue tortilla chips.

Activity to try at home:

Patriotic Fireworks

Supplies needed:

- Empty paper towel rolls and toilet paper rolls
- Aluminum foil
- Red, white, and blue curly ribbon or red, white, and blue tape
- Tape
- Poster board
- White chenille

Directions:

1. Wrap paper towel rolls and toilet paper rolls with aluminum foil.
2. Decorate rolls with a variety of patterns of red, white and blue curly ribbons or tape.
3. Cut circle from the poster board the diameter of the rolls.
4. Cut chenille for the wick of the firework.
5. Poke chenille in center of the poster board circle.
6. Put circle with wick in one end of the aluminum foil paper towel roll or toilet paper roll.