

Colombia National Day **Facts**

Colombia

National

Day

Colombia National Day is an annual celebration of the beginning of Colombia's independence movement against colonial Spain in 1810. Although actual independence was only gained after Simón Bolívar's triumph in the Battle of Boyacá in 1819, Colombians commemorate their independence every 20th of July.

Historical Background and Significance

- ★ In 1499, Spanish conquistadors arrived in Colombia and established their first settlement in 1510. By the mid-1800s, resentment of the empire continued to grow when the Spanish, under the reign of King Charles III, insisted that all colonies could only trade with Spain.
- ★ In 1808, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Spain and imprisoned King Ferdinand VII. Most parts of Spanish America, including New Granada (now Colombia), were handed to Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte.

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- ★ After a year, Camilo Torres Tenorio of New Granada wrote repeated Spanish offenses against Creoles (natives born from Spanish descent) in his *Remembrance of Offenses* or *Memorial de Agravios*. He reiterated that the people of New Granada were unhappy with Spanish rule. Tenorio specifically mentioned that Creoles were unable to hold high offices, thus restricting them to trade.
- ★ Prior to July 1810, insurrections in Quito, Caracas and Cartagena continued to grow. Citizens of Quito overthrew the government and held leaders in a dungeon. In Caracas, people declared provisional independence on April 19, after a successful revolt. By May, the seaside city of Cartagena also declared independence, which was followed by other regions. Such steps pressured Bogota, the seat of the Viceroy.

Leading to Colombia's Independence Day

- ★ On July 20, 1810, Bogota patriots planned a riot that would force the Viceroy to hand power to the Creoles. A flower vase for the celebration honoring Antonio Villavicencio was used to start a fight. Another patriot, Joaquin Camacho, proceeded to the home of Viceroy Antonio José Amar y Borbón in petition for an open meeting due to the rudeness of the Spanish merchant Joaquin Gonzalez Llorente over borrowing a flower vase. When the Viceroy declined, the patriots ran through the streets of Bogota claiming that Llorente and Borbón had been rude.
- ★ As a result, the people of Bogota filled the streets and protested against Spanish arrogance. During the riot, patriot Jose Maria Carbonell gathered some men and took over the city's cavalry and infantry barracks.

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- ★ On the other hand, patriots tried to convince the Viceroy to give them a peaceful resolution. When the Viceroy hesitated, patriot Jose Acevedo y Gomez directed the angry mob towards the Royal Audiencia, where the Viceroy was in a meeting with the Creoles. Without any choice, Borbon signed the act, which permitted local ruling and, later, independence.
- ★ Like Quito and Caracas, Bogota established a local rule, which aimed to restore the power of King Ferdinand VII.
- ★ New Granada's independence culminated in 1819 after the Battle of Boyaca and the entry of Simon Bolivar in Bogota.

Observances of Colombia National Day



Annual Colombian Independence Day parade in Queens, New York

- ★ Colombia National Day, also known as Colombian Independence Day, is now celebrated with military parades, parties, folk music and feasts of traditional food. It is not only celebrated throughout Colombia but also in many parts of the United States with a Colombian population.
- ★ Independence Day is a public holiday in Colombia, which means people do not go to work so they can participate in various activities.

- ★ Colombians celebrate this day with food like empanadas, arepas, tamales and picada.

Colombia National Day Facts

Additional Colombian Facts

- ★ Aside from Colombian Independence Day, there are more things to love about this country. Here are some additional Colombian facts:
 - The name Colombia is derived from the surname of the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus.
 - The children's games and animated film *El Dorado*, is a mythical city of gold in ancient Colombia.
 - In terms of geography, it is the only South American country with coastlines on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It shares land borders with Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil and Venezuela.
 - The Cano Cristales, known as the Liquid Rainbow, is a river found in Colombia. The river's bed changes color between yellow, blue, green, black and red.
 - The country is sunny throughout the year because there is no winter near the equator.
 - After Brazil, Colombia is the next megadiverse country in the world because of the amount of existing species. Endemic species of butterflies, amphibians, orchids and birds found here are more than all of Europe and North America combined.
 - Famous people like Gabriel García Márquez, Fernando Botero, Juan Pablo Montoya, and Shakira are Colombians.
 - Along with Colombia National Day, Colombians celebrate 17 more national holidays making them second in the "countries with the most number of holidays", next to India with 21.

Name: _____

Road to Independence

Colombia
National
Day

Colombia National Day is celebrated to commemorate Colombia's independence from Spanish rule. Using the year, briefly describe their timeline to independence.

1819

1810

1808

1510

1499

