
Presidential Documents

Proclamation 9520 of October 7, 2016

Columbus Day, 2016

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In October of 1492, Christopher Columbus completed the first of his expeditions that would land him on the shores of North America. Sponsored by Isabella I and Ferdinand II, Columbus embarked on a 10-week voyage he had hoped would lead to Asia. But when his ships instead landed in the Bahamas, a new story began to unfold. The spirit of exploration that Columbus embodied was sustained by all who would follow him westward, driving a desire to continue expanding our understanding of the world.

Though Columbus departed from the coast of Spain, his roots traced back to his birthplace of Genoa, Italy. Blazing a trail for generations of Italian explorers and Italian Americans to eventually seek the promise of the New World, his voyage churned the gears of history. The bonds between Italy and the United States could not be closer than they are today—a reflection of the extraordinary contributions made by both our peoples in our common efforts to shape a better future. Across our Nation, Italian Americans continue to enrich our country's traditions and culture.

As we mark this rich history, we must also acknowledge the pain and suffering reflected in the stories of Native Americans who had long resided on this land prior to the arrival of European newcomers. The past we share is marked by too many broken promises, as well as violence, deprivation, and disease. It is a history that we must recognize as we seek to build a brighter future—side by side and with cooperation and mutual respect. We have made great progress together in recent years, and we will keep striving to maintain strong nation-to-nation relationships, strengthen tribal sovereignty, and help all our communities thrive.

More than five centuries ago, one journey changed the trajectory of our world—and today we recognize the spirit that Christopher Columbus's legacy inspired. As we reflect on the adventurers throughout history who charted new courses and sought new heights, let us remember the communities who suffered, and let us pay tribute to our heritage and embrace the multiculturalism that defines the American experience.

In commemoration of Christopher Columbus's historic voyage 524 years ago, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934, and modified in 1968 (36 U.S.C. 107), as amended, has requested the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 10, 2016, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of our diverse history and all who have contributed to shaping this Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-first.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, consisting of a large 'B' followed by a circle and a horizontal line.