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## ETHIOPIA: Land of Origins



### Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Head of State: Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde (First female president of Ethiopia, elected on October 25, 2018)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

Capital: Addis Ababa • Population: 116 million

National Holiday: May 28, 1991 • Currency: Ethiopian Birr

The [Kingdom of Abyssinia](#) was founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE and, transforming itself into the Ethiopian [Empire](#) via a series of military conquests, lasted until the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE. The area that is [modern-day Ethiopia](#) is rich in cultural and religious diversity

with more than [80 ethnic groups](#). According to Scientific America, the [oldest hominid](#) (*A. anamensis* is the oldest unequivocal hominin, with some fossils dating from as far back as 4.2 million years ago) yet found comes from Ethiopia, and Ethiopia was the second country to officially adopt Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Ethiopia represents a melting pot of ancient cultures with Middle Eastern and African cultures evident in the religious, ethnic and language composition of its Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic peoples.

A series of monarchies ruled the area that is now Ethiopia from 980 B.C. to 1855, when the Amhara kingdoms of northern Ethiopia united in an empire under [Tewodros II](#). Ethiopia is one of two African countries (Liberia being the other) that was never colonized. Many Ethiopians still speak reverently about the [Battle of Adwa in 1896](#), when they defeated Italian forces and thus retained their freedom from colonial rule. It was briefly occupied by the Italians from 1936 – 1941. [Emperor Haile Selassie](#) became an internationally renowned figure in 1935, when he unsuccessfully appealed to the [League of Nations](#) to prevent Italy from occupying Ethiopia from 1936 to 1941. Emperor Selassie survived an attempted coup in 1960, annexed modern-day Eritrea in 1962, and played a leading role in establishing the [Organization of African Unity](#) in 1963, now known as the [African Union](#).

However, in 1974, a military junta, the [Derg](#), deposed him and established a socialist state. Torn by bloody coups, uprisings, drought, and massive displacement, the Derg regime was toppled in 1991 by a coalition of opposing forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Ethiopia adopted its constitution in 1994 and held its first multiparty elections in 1995. A two-and-a-half-year border war with Eritrea in the late 1990s ended with a peace treaty in December 2000.

### Fun Facts About Ethiopia

- ▶ Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the oldest in the world.
- ▶ [Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela](#): In a mountainous region in the heart of Ethiopia, some 645 kilometers or 400 miles from Addis Ababa, eleven medieval monolithic churches were carved out of rock. The churches were not constructed in a traditional way but rather were hewn from the living rock of monolithic blocks. These blocks were further chiseled out, forming doors, windows, columns, various floors, roofs etc.
- ▶ Ethiopia is the [13<sup>th</sup>-most populous](#) country in the world, the [2<sup>nd</sup>-most populous in Africa](#) after [Nigeria](#), and the most populous landlocked country on Earth.
- ▶ Ethiopia has nine (9) Cultural, and two (2) Natural, Properties inscribed on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#).
- ▶ The country is also the seat of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in addition to more than 100 foreign embassies. Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, is the highest capital city in Africa, at 2,355 m or 7726.45 ft above sea level.
- ▶ Ethiopia is home to the lowest place on the African continent, the [Danakil Depression](#), at 125 meters or 410 feet below sea level.
- ▶ [Abebe Bikila](#) was the first Ethiopian and the first black African to win gold at the Olympics! He ran the marathon barefoot as his new shoes were giving him blisters. Bikila also went on to successfully defend his gold medal in the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics by again winning the marathon in world-record time.
- ▶ Ethiopians have their own calendar. It has 13 months in a year. In Ethiopia, Christmas Day or [Genna](#) will be celebrated on January 7, 2024, and New Year Day ([Enkutatash "Gift of Jewels"](#)) on September 11, 2024 (September 12<sup>th</sup> on a Leap Year). Ethiopians also have their own time! This is based on the conception that the Ethiopian day is constituted of roughly 12 hours of daylight, starting at 6:00 AM and roughly 12 hours of darkness, starting at 6:00 PM.

November is the eleventh and penultimate month of the year in the [Julian](#) and [Gregorian Calendars](#). It is the last of four months to have a length of 30 days and the fifth and last of five months to have a length of fewer than 31 days. November was the ninth month of the [calendar of Romulus](#) c. 750 BC. November retained its name (from the Latin *novem* meaning "nine") when January and February were added to the Roman calendar. November is a month of late spring in the Southern Hemisphere and late autumn in the Northern Hemisphere. Therefore, November in the Southern Hemisphere is the seasonal equivalent of May in the Northern Hemisphere and vice versa.

Our focus this month is Ethiopia. A fascinating country; a land of origins and contrasts in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia and Liberia were never colonized by foreign powers.

We join President Biden and all Americans in recognizing “the invaluable contributions of Native peoples that have shaped our country and we honor the hundreds of Tribal Nations who continue exercising their inherent sovereignty as vital members of the overlapping system of governments in the United States.”

We also salute all the countries celebrating their Independence or National Day in November.

As always, please be safe.

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# BRIEFS & NOTES

## A Guide to Thanksgiving Etiquette for Hosts and Guests

Patricia Fitzpatrick, a doyenne of class at the helm of the Etiquette School of New York, and Jung Lee, the world-renowned event designer behind party-planning firm Fête New York, outline a set of rules for those who may be hosting or attending a formal Thanksgiving feast for the first time:

*Invite Family First, Then Everybody Else:* For many of us, family is scattered across the country; so give them advance notice to travel.

*Inquire About Duties and Restrictions Upon Invitation:* You may think you already know who enjoys a vegan or alternative diet in your family, but it pays to be safe and ask outright. Be upfront with your guests well ahead of the big day to confirm any allergies or restrictions in advance.

*Designate an Arrival Time for Your Guests:* To avoid unreasonable lags between courses, decide on what time you plan on eating.

*Bring Candles or Fruit—Not Food or Flowers:* Even if you don't have a dietary restriction, you may wish to bring something to be polite—Thanksgiving is all about sharing a meal with your loved ones. Don't bring a dish without discussing it first with your host/hostess.

*Make Your Guests Feel Comfortable:* Dining with your immediate family members is comfortable, but Thanksgiving dinner is often about coming together with those in your larger community

*Guide Everyone Through Dinner:* Your hosting duties do not end once everyone is seated. Gently lead your guests through polite table talk in between bites.

*End the Evening Gracefully:* While Thanksgiving may be one of the most special dinners you'll enjoy all year, that doesn't mean it should keep your guests at the table for more than two hours maximum. Dessert and coffee could be served in the sitting room or a more comfortable space to wrap up the evening.

In the same manner that hosts should extend invitations in advance, guests shouldn't wait too long to send your host a thank-you note. A thank-you note is essential for hosts, because it lets them know that you enjoyed the holiday together, and all of the work that went into the meal to make it possible. But the best way to send along gratitude is in handwritten thanks, since it's a sign of true appreciation that both sender and receiver will cherish.

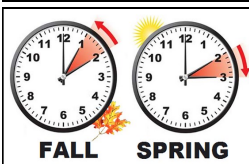
Source: [Marthastewart.com/A Guide to Thanksgiving Etiquette for Hosts & Guests](http://Marthastewart.com/A-Guide-to-Thanksgiving-Etiquette-for-Hosts-&Guests)

## Interesting Fun Facts... Know more about the world!

- \* The strongest muscle in the body is the tongue.
- \* Women blink nearly twice as much as men!
- \* You can't kill yourself by holding your breath.
- \* It is impossible to lick your elbow.
- \* Like fingerprints, everyone's tongue print is different.
- \* If you sneeze too hard, you can fracture a rib.
- \* If you try to suppress a sneeze, you can rupture a blood vessel in your head or neck and die.
- \* An average person eats 60,000 pounds of food in his lifetime.
- \* An average person spends 24 years of their life sleeping.
- \* An average woman uses 6 lbs. of lipstick in her lifetime.
- \* Sitting while talking on the phone for eight hours will burn 914 calories.
- \* Driving a car for eight hours will knock off around 1,219 calories.
- \* And standing in a casino for eight hours will burn about 1,402 calories.
- \* You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching TV.
- \* The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as a substitute for blood plasma.
- \* Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes.
- \* The first product to have a bar code was Wrigley's gum.
- \* The King of Hearts is the only king without a mustache.
- \* Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.
- \* Most dust particles in your house are made from dead skin.
- \* Pearls melt in vinegar.
- \* It is possible to lead a cow upstairs... but, not downstairs.
- \* A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.
- \* Dentists have recommended that a toothbrush be kept at least six (6) feet away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush.
- \* Turtles can breathe through their butts.

Sources: [www.rd.com/list/interesting-facts](http://www.rd.com/list/interesting-facts); [www.academictips.org/interestingfacts](http://www.academictips.org/interestingfacts)

## Daylight Saving Time (DST)



In the U.S. [clocks are advanced and set-back by an hour](#), on Sunday, March 12, 2023, and on Sunday, November 5, 2023, respectively. It is the U.S. Congress that decides the time change. The [Uniform Time Act of 1966](#) mandates the country use daylight saving time, but allows states to opt out and exempt themselves from the practice to stay on standard time year-round. It does not allow states to permanently establish daylight saving time, which would keep them an hour ahead from November to March while other states switch to standard time. Arizona and Hawaii are the only two states that do not observe daylight saving time, relying on a loophole in a 57-year-old federal law that requires states to stay on daylight saving time.

For the past few years, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida has introduced a version of what he calls the "[Sunshine Protection Act](#)" which would permanently establish daylight saving time for the whole country. However, these bills usually die before they ever come close to becoming law. In 2022, [the U.S. Senate passed a version of that bill](#) but it was never voted on by the House of Representatives. With little to no progress made on the 2023 measure, Americans will continue to "spring forward" and "fall back" in 2024.

DST was first proposed by [Benjamin Franklin in 1784](#), but it was not widely adopted until World War I. The rationale for DST was to conserve energy by reducing the need for artificial lighting in the evening. DST is currently observed by over 70 countries around the world, including the U.S., Canada, and most of Europe. However, there is growing debate about the benefits and drawbacks of DST.

# BRIEFS & NOTES

## World Toilet Day



**World Toilet Day (WTD)** is an official [United Nations international observance day](#) on November 19<sup>th</sup> to inspire action to tackle the global [sanitation](#) crisis. Worldwide, 4.2 billion people live without "[safely managed sanitation](#)" and around 673 million people practice [open defecation](#). The UN [Sustainable Development Goal 6](#) aims to "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all," and to "end open defecation and to provide access to sanitation and hygiene".

World Toilet Day exists to inform, engage, and inspire people to act toward improving sanitary conditions. The [UN General Assembly](#) declared World Toilet Day an official UN day in 2013, after Singapore had tabled the resolution (its first resolution before the UN's General Assembly of 193 member states). Prior to that, World Toilet Day had been established unofficially by the [World Toilet Organization](#), a Singapore-based non-governmental organization (NGO) in 2001. Every year, UN-Water — the UN's coordination mechanism on water and sanitation — sets the theme for World Toilet Day. In 2023, the focus is on Accelerating Change. In 2024, the theme will be Leveraging Water for Peace.

### Did you know?

- \* There are 3.5 billion people living without safe toilets and 2.2 billion people living without safe drinking water.
- \* 419 million people still go to the toilet in the open ('open defecation').
- \* 2 billion people - a quarter of the world's population - lack basic handwashing facilities at home to wash their hands with soap and water.
- \* Unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene are responsible for the deaths of around 1,000 children under five every day. At the current rate, 3 billion people will still be living without safe toilets, 2 billion will be without safe drinking water and 1.4 billion will lack basic hygiene facilities by 2030.

Source: [World Health Organization/UNICEF](#)

### [What's the Real History of Black Friday?](#)

**BLACK FRIDAY**  
BUY ONE | GET ONE  
**50% OFF**

The first recorded use of the term "Black Friday" was applied not to post-[Thanksgiving](#) holiday shopping but to financial crisis: specifically, the crash of the U.S. gold market on September 24, 1869. Two notoriously ruthless [Wall Street](#) financiers, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, worked together to buy up as much as they could of the nation's gold, hoping to drive the price sky-high and sell it for astonishing profits. On that Friday in September, the conspiracy finally unraveled, sending the stock market into free-fall and bankrupting everyone from Wall Street barons to farmers.

The most repeated story behind the Thanksgiving shopping-related Black Friday tradition links it to retailers. As the story goes, after an entire year of operating at a loss ("in the red") stores would supposedly earn a profit ("went into the black") on the day after Thanksgiving, because holiday shoppers blew so much money on discounted merchandise. Though it's true that retail companies used to record losses in red and profits in black when doing their accounting, this version of Black Friday's origin is the officially sanctioned—but inaccurate—story behind the tradition.

[Click here](#) to view the entire story about the origins of Black Friday.

Source: [www.History.com](#)

### Cyber Monday

[Cyber Monday](#) is a marketing term for e-commerce transactions on the Monday after [Thanksgiving](#) in the U.S. It was created by retailers to encourage people to [shop online](#). The term was coined by [Ellen Davis](#) of the [National Retail Federation](#) and Scott Silverman, and made its debut on November 28, 2005, in a [Shop.org](#) press release entitled "Cyber Monday Quickly Becoming One of the Biggest Online Shopping Days of the Year". Cyber Monday takes place the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Cyber Monday has become the online equivalent to [Black Friday](#) and offers a way for smaller retail websites to compete with larger chains. Since its inception, it has become an international marketing term used by online retailers around the world. The Cyber Monday on November 30, 2020 (the first during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#)) was the biggest online shopping day in U.S. history with a total of \$10.7 billion in online spending. According to Adobe Analytics, which tracks online shopping, consumers were expected to spend between \$12 billion and \$12.4 billion on Monday, December 28, 2023, making it the biggest online shopping day of all time.

#### U.S. Retail by the Numbers

According to the [National Retail Federation](#) (NRF), retail is the nation's largest private-sector employer. It supports more than one in four U.S. jobs:

**52 million** - Jobs supported by retail in **4.2 million** - retail establishments. **\$3.9 trillion** - Total GDP impact and **32 million** - direct retail employment. **\$1 trillion** - Direct labor income and **\$1.6 trillion** - Direct impact on GDP.



## BRIEFS & NOTES



As early as 1916, when New York became the first state to declare an “American Indian Day,” efforts have been underway to acknowledge the many contributions and achievements of Native peoples. In 1976, as part of the nation’s bicentennial commemoration, [S.J. Res. 209](#) authorized President Gerald Ford to proclaim October 10-16, 1976, as “Native American Awareness Week.” In 1986 Congress passed [S.J. Res. 390](#), requesting that the president designate November 23 - 30, 1986, as “American Indian Week.” Congress continued this practice in subsequent years, declaring one week during the autumn months as “Native American Indian Heritage Week.”

In 1990 Congress passed, and President George H. W. Bush signed into law, a [joint resolution](#) designating the month of November as the first National American Indian Heritage Month (also known as Native American Indian Month). “American Indians were the original inhabitants of the lands that now constitute the United States of America,” noted H.J. Res. 577. “Native American Indians have made an essential and unique contribution to our Nation” and “to the world.” Introduced by Hawaii senator [Daniel Inouye](#) and congressional delegate [Eni Faleomavaega](#) of American Samoa, the joint resolution stated that “the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon Federal, State, and local governments, interested groups and organizations, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.”

In 2008 the commemorative language was amended to also include the contributions of Alaskan Natives. Every year, by statute and/or presidential proclamation, the month of November is recognized as National Native American Heritage Month.

[Click here to view President Biden’s Proclamation of National Native American Heritage Month 2023](#), recognizing “the invaluable contributions of Native peoples that have shaped our country and honor the hundreds of Tribal Nations who continue exercising their inherent sovereignty as vital members of the overlapping system of governments in the United States. We also recommit to supporting Tribal sovereignty; upholding the Federal Government’s solemn trust and treaty responsibilities; and working in partnership with Tribal Nations to advance prosperity, dignity, and safety for all Native peoples.”

Source: [United States Senate](#)

### Eilmer, the Flying Monk



[Eilmer of Malmesbury](#), England, a Benedictine monk who lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries CE and flew from the top of Malmesbury Abbey, is remembered as one of history’s earliest aviators. Medieval historian William of Malmesbury, recounted the story in the [Gesta Regum Anglorum](#) (“*Deeds of the Kings of the English*”), an early 12<sup>th</sup> century history of the kings of England.

He described Eilmer as “*a man of good learning for those times; of mature age and in his early youth had hazarded an attempt of singular temerity: he had by some contrivance fastened wings to his hands and feet in order that he might fly as Daedalus, and collecting the air, on the summit of a tower, had flown for a distance of a furlong (660 feet or 200 meters).*” According to the story, the landing was not smooth. Eilmer fell and broke both his legs, leaving him lame for the rest of his life. He blamed his fall on forgetting “*to provide himself with a tail*”.

Although almost nothing is known about the life of Eilmer of Malmesbury, the date of the flight can be estimated with some accuracy. It was recorded that Eilmer saw Halley’s comet in 989 and again in 1066. Historians estimate that he had to be at least 6 years old to remember the comet; so, for him to make the flight in his early youth, it had to have taken place sometime between 995 and 1010.

Even though they were born a century apart, Eilmer and William were both from Malmesbury Abbey. It is believed that [William](#), who was a prolific writer and great historian, heard stories about Eilmer from the older monks, who had known Eilmer in their youth. This reduces the odds that Eilmer’s flight was merely a legend. Further strengthening the belief that the flight was real, the town of Malmesbury has been remembering and celebrating the event throughout the centuries, culminating in the millennium celebration of Eilmer’s Flight in July 2010.

Sources:

# INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (NOVEMBER)

**November 1, 1981 – Antigua and Barbuda:** National Day marks the day the islands gained independence from Great Britain.

**November 3, 1978 – Dominica:** Gained independence from Great Britain to become an independent republic in the Commonwealth.

**November 9, 1953 – Cambodia:** Declared independence from France.

**November 11, 1974 – Angola:** Portugal granted Angola independence on November 11, 1974.

**November 11, 1918 – Poland:** National Independence Day commemorates the anniversary of the restoration of Poland's sovereignty as the Second Polish Republic in 1918 and independence from the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian Empires.

**November 15, 1983 – North Cyprus:** In a unilateral declaration, the Turkish Cypriot parliament declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus independent from the Republic of Cyprus.

**November 18, 1918 – Latvia:** Achieved full independence from the U.S.S.R. on August 21, 1991, but the main Independence Day holiday in Latvia celebrates independence from German and Russian occupations on November 18, 1918.

**November 18, 1955 – Morocco:** Gained independence from France on March 2, 1956, and from Spain on April 7, 1956. Until King Hassan II was crowned in 1961, Morocco celebrated Independence Day on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. At the King's request, Moroccan Independence is now celebrated on November 18<sup>th</sup>, to commemorate the day King Mohammed V gave his iconic independence speech in 1955.

**November 18, 1650 – Oman:** National Day celebrates independence from Portuguese control in 1650.

**November 19, 2021 – Monaco:** The Sovereign Prince's Day, Monaco's National Day, is currently celebrated on November 19. Traditionally, the reigning Prince determines the date, and previous Princes often chose the day of the saint they were named after. When he ascended the throne in 2005, Prince Albert chose to celebrate the day of Saint Rainier, the same day his father had celebrated and the day he officially ascended the throne in 2005.

**November 22, 1943 – Lebanon:** Liberation Day from the French Mandate.

**November 25, 1975 – Suriname:** Formerly known as Dutch Guiana, Suriname gained independence from the Netherlands.

**November 28, 1912 – Albania:** Declared independence from the Ottoman Empire.

**November 28, 1960 – Mauritania:** On this day in 1960, Mauritania gained independence from France.

**November 28, 1821 – Panama:** November is Panama's Patriotic Month, as it celebrates three independence days. November 3<sup>rd</sup> is celebrated as Independence from Colombia (1903). This day is also known as Colon Day. It is followed on November 10<sup>th</sup>, when Panamanians commemorate the "uprising in Villa Los Santos" against the Spaniards, and finally, November 28<sup>th</sup>, National Day, celebrates independence from Spain.

**November 30, 1966 – Barbados:** Fifty-five years to the day of gaining independence from the UK, Barbados became a republic on November 30, 2021.

**November 30, 1967 – Yemen:** The declaration of Independence of South Yemen from the United Kingdom. The Yemeni National Day is observed each year on May 22, Unification Day.

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