



Korean American Day



Annually observed on January 13th, Korean American day was established to honor the contributions and rich history of Korean Americans in the United States. The date marks the arrival of the first Korean immigrants in 1903, recognizing their perseverance, achievements, and cultural influence. The S.S. Gaelic, the first ship that arrived at the United States through Hawaii, carried 103 Korean immigrants looking for work and refuge from the Japanese occupation that was occurring in Korea at the time. This day celebrates the diversity of American society, fostering a deeper appreciation for the contributions of all communities and encouraging unity through the shared values of resilience and inclusion.

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CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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Significant contributions to the cultural melting pot of the United States have been made by Korean Americans through unique traditions, foods, art, and values. From the rise in popularity of Korean food within the US over the past few years to Korean pop music or television shows, the culture has become a vibrant part of American society.

FIVE SOLDIERS HONORED

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Recently, President Joe Biden honored five Korean American soldiers for their exemplary service and sacrifice, highlighting their contributions to the US military and acknowledging the vital role Korean Americans have played in shaping the nation's history. During the 1950s, these soldiers were denied decoration for valor when the resistance of desegregation was unfortunately common. Their recognition highlights the rich heritage and commitment of Korean Americans to both their country and their cultural roots, underscoring the pride and resilience that define their legacy in American society.



DID YOU KNOW...

- The earliest evidence of fishing net sinkers was found in Korea.
- An aviation school was established in California during the 1920s to train Korean Americans on being pilots.
- Taekwondo originated in Korea nearly 2,000 years ago.
- The country is home to the oldest astronomical observatory in the world, the Cheomseongdae Observatory.

MUSEUM OF KOREAN AMERICAN HERITAGE

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The museum of Korean American Heritage highlights the rich history and contributions of Korean Americans, showcasing their journey, their trials and tribulations, and major successes in the United States and globally. Established in the early 2000s, it aims to educate the public on unfamiliar stories and names that are intertwined into our history more than we realize. Throughout the museum's exhibits, their resilience and impact on American culture are honored, promoting greater understanding of their important role in shaping the nation's story.

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THE SHAPE OF TIME: KOREAN ART OF 1989

Though no longer on display, 'the shape of time: Korean Art of 1989' was an art exhibition focused on 28 artists of Korean background who represented stories of change through their work. The exhibit touches on urbanization and industrialization in Korea as well as social and economic changes. All 28 artists were born between 1960 and 1989, highlighting historic events that occurred during this time.

POPULAR KOREAN TRADITIONS

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- Hambok: A traditional dress worn during special occasions or ceremonies.
- Seollal: Korean Lunar new year that marks the beginning of the lunar calendar, considered a major holiday.
- Kimchi: A traditional dish in Korea that consists of salted fermented vegetables, typically cabbage, and is often eaten with most meals.
- Doljanchi: a Korean celebration marking a baby's first year of life. The event includes a special ceremony (Doljabi) where the baby chooses an item that is believed to predict the future endeavors.

FAMOUS FIRSTS:

- Philip Jaisohn: The first Korean to become an American citizen and played a key part in advocating for Korean independence. Philip was also the first Korean to receive an American medical degree from George Washington University.
- Esther Park: She was the first female Korean physician to practice modern medicine in Korea as well as trained the first generation of women doctors in Korea.
- Susan Ahn Cuddy: Susan Ahh Cuddy made history as the first female Korean American to serve as a gunnery officer in the U.S. Navy, breaking barriers for women and Asian Americans in the military.
- Yumi Hogan: The very first Korean First Lady of the United States, more specifically, as the First Lady of Maryland. During her time as first lady, she was highly involved in the art world and advocated for cultural diversity.

KAANJ

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The Korean American Association of New Jersey, KAA NJ, is a non-profit organization that seeks to highlight Korean heritage within the state of New Jersey and to create opportunities for future generations. The group strives to spread culture while embracing the diversity of others.

KAF

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The Korean American Foundation focuses on the well-being and health of the community, with special interest in Korean American needs that are often overlooked. The foundation annually raises funds to support its mission and to give back to those underserved such as elderly or low-income families.

PACHAPPA CAMP

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Pachappa Camp, established in 1904 in Riverside, California, was one of the first communities created for Korean immigrants in the United States. It provided a space where early Korean settlers could live, work, and provide for one another as they adjusted to their new lives away from familiarity. The camp became a cultural hub, fostering a sense of community and upholding traditions while also contributing to the growth of the broader American society. Through its establishment, Pachappa Camp played an essential role in shaping the Korean American experience and enhanced the sharing of Korean culture.