

Mother's Day



The First Mother's Day

Celebrations of mothers date back centuries, but the American holiday has its roots in the post-Civil War era.

EARLY CELEBRATIONS

Ann Reeves Jarvis had served as founder of Mother's Day work clubs that were meant to educate women in her West Virginia community in the proper care and feeding of children.

After peace was declared in America, these clubs helped heal lingering divisions as mothers of soldiers on both sides reclaimed a sense of fellowship and community. Elsewhere, abolitionist Julia Ward Howe composed the Mother's Day Proclamation in 1870, asking them to unite against war. Her hope was to create an annual Mother's Peace Day, to be celebrated on June 2.

Temperance activist Juliet Calhoun Blakely and the duo of Frank Hiring and Mary Towles Sasseen were also working separately to organize their own local events.

NEW NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Ann Reeves Jarvis' daughter, Anna, continued the effort after her mother died in 1905. Anna began by seeking financial backing from a Philadelphia department-store owner in the hopes of organizing the first official Mother's Day, which



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would now focus on the sacrifices made in raising children.

The long-awaited first celebration, in May 1908, was based in a local Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia, but also saw large gatherings at each of John Wanamaker stores. The younger Jarvis then started a letter-writing campaign to get Mother's Day added to a national calendar that she said too often focused on male

achievement.

Many individual churches, towns and even states had begun to celebrate the holiday annually by 1912. All of it led to President Woodrow Wilson's 1914 signing of a measure that established the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

INCREASING COMMERCIALIZATION

Like many holidays, Mother's

Day became increasingly commercialized. Jarvis had conceived of the day as one for personal celebrations with family. Before long, however, the holiday also inevitably became associated with floral arrangements, candy makers and confectioners, greeting card companies and merchant sales — and this deeply upset Jarvis. By 1920, she could be found openly denouncing the holiday she'd

once championed, urging others to follow the commemoration back to its simple origins. She filed a number of lawsuits trying to stop retailers and other groups from using "Mother's Day" in promotional materials, losing her personal wealth to attorneys fees. Anna Jarvis actually lobbied the federal government to remove Mother's Day from the calendar before her death in 1948.

The Best Breakfast in Bed

Wake up early this Mother's Day if mom is typically the one who toils in the kitchen to feed everyone. Breakfast in bed will get her special holiday off to a great start.

EARLY PREP MATTERS

First, consider what she loves for breakfast, rather than what dad or the kids prefer. You're thanking her for the many sacrifices she makes every day for your family. So, you'll want to make sure it's something she especially loves. For the biggest surprise, consider a make-ahead dish so that there's not a lengthy — and perhaps noisy! — preparation period that might awaken her too early. Oven-baked French toast is a relatively easy option. You can also try biscuit cups, breakfast wraps or an old-standby like pancakes. Make sure everyone knows where everything you need to prepare things is located in the kitchen. If possible, pull out needed kitchenware.

IDEAS FOR THE BIG DAY

If you decide to cook first thing on Mother's Day, keep it simple. Whatever you make needs to be prepared quickly and — perhaps most importantly — quietly. So if you're a true amateur around the



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stove, consider an easier task like scrambled eggs rather than a more complex omelet. If you're more of a pro in the kitchen, try something trendier like substituting egg whites — or something more culturally specific, if it applies. Worried that any activity in

the kitchen will wake her? Sneak out for a run to the local farmer's market or bakery for something fresh and tasty.

PRESENT IT WITH FLAIR

How it all will look is a big part of the surprise. You don't want to serve her a plate of

runny eggs and burnt toast. So take your time with plating the meal, then decorate around the plate with flowers, herbs or slices of fruit. Buy a tray with four legs, if you don't already own some. Consider selecting one with a design that you know mom will love.

(If you plan out far enough, you could provide an extra surprise by getting the tray customized by a local woodworker with a special message or dates.) Find linens to place over the serving tray, adding a splash or color or patterned flair.

Mother's Day and Your Ex

Navigating through holidays like Mother's Day can be difficult after divorce. Here's how to make sure it doesn't become a sticky situation.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Both parents should be respectful and transparent about the process, from planning to drop off and pick up. Communication issues are often at the root of divorce, so this might be easier said than done. But the focus here is on smoothing the way for a parent to spend time with her children on a very special day. It's not the time to bring up past issues.

FOCUS ON THE KIDS

Hard feelings may remain after a marriage ends, but the holidays are for kids — and this one, really, is no different. Mother's Day is a chance for little ones to put their mother's care and sacrifice into perspective, then to show how thankful they are. Discuss how children want to honor mom, then help them with hand-made projects and special messages, as needed. Follow their lead, and you'll be ensuring their words are heard and wishes are followed — but also taking any personal conflict out of the process, as well.

REMAIN FLEXIBLE

For a previous Mother's



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Day, parents of youngsters might have simply purchased gifts and put the child's name on it. Is that still appropriate after divorce? Do whatever feels comfortable for your family. The key to making potentially awkward circumstances work is remaining flexible. Concessions might have to be made, for instance, on visitation schedules in

order to accommodate the holiday. If your children are teenaged or older, they are more able to manage shopping, craft making and transportation. Younger kids might need more help, however, beginning with advice from you about gift ideas. At this point, you may still know more about your ex's hobbies, favorite flower, cherished

movies and music, or preferred restaurants than your kids do. Helping children choose the perfect gift will give the day more meaning for them.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Managing situations like these with love and care helps younger children understand the concept of conflict resolu-

tion, a needed skill both at home and in our work lives. Putting them first can also give a child the confidence they need to move through a painful experience like divorce. At the same time, teaching them how to honor their mother, even after you've split up, is also teaching them how to honor the other women in their lives.

Mother's Day Traditions

Mother's Day typically begins in America with greeting cards and flowers.

In fact, spending on flowers increased by 4% year over year in 2021 — the largest leap in any category. Yet greeting cards remain the most-bought item.

Here's a look at how we celebrate Mother's Day.

Greeting cards were purchased by 72% of those shopping for Mother's Day gifts in 2021, followed by flowers at 68%. This one day accounts for 26% of all holiday-related sales at floral shops.

Next on the list of Mother's Day spending in 2021 was a special outing (49%), followed by gift cards (47%) and clothing or accessories (40%).

Two in five moms said they were happy with receiving a card, according to a 2021 YouGov poll. Some 36% said they were hoping for a floral arrangement. One-third wanted a special family experience, while about a third were in favor of things like keep-sake gifts, chocolate or something handmade.

Keep in mind, however, that one shocking poll by Zagat found just 4% of moms wanted to be served breakfast in bed. More than half (53%) said they'd prefer to go out and eat.

Most gifts were purchased online last year, with the estimated per-mom spending at



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roughly \$220, according to the National Retail Federation. That figure has been growing steadily for years, and represents a \$16 jump from 2020. In all, American spent some \$28 billion last year on Mother's Day, almost \$1.5 billion more than in 2020.

AROUND THE WORLD

Not everyone celebrates mom in May. In fact, Mother's Days are held on every month of the year internationally, save for July and September. Norway, Africa and the Middle East celebrate earlier, in February and March.

Argentina, Panama and Indonesia honor mothers in the fall. Beyond the typical cards, gifts and special outings, moms are also serenaded by mariachi bands singing "Las Mananitas" in Mexico. Jasmine is commonly given in Thailand, where the holiday

coincides with the birthday of Queen Sirikit. Carnations are the flowers of choice in places like Australia and Japan. Mother's Day is actually held over three days in Ethiopia, where they'll also celebrate the conclusion of the autumnal rainy season.

Involving the Kids

It's tempting to take over present buying, meal making and craft creations in an effort to turn Mother's Day into an unforgettable moment.

But the love and imagination of children can turn any gift into something to be cherished for a lifetime.

WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

A child's messages of love, and the innocent, often humorous way they look at life will mean more to mom than they could ever imagine. Encourage children to be themselves, even if they're simply writing their own personal thoughts on a store-bought greeting card or in a florist's message box. Along the way, they'll come to understand how important they are to their mom, while continuing to grow more confident in expressing their own unique point of view.

FUN WAYS TO CELEBRATE

Small crafts like hand-painted garden rocks, fingerprint hearts or paper-flower bouquets are both timeless and easy enough for even the youngest of kids to imagine and create. Looking to get beyond the usual craft-making or gift-buying ideas? Consider using modern media to create something that hip and new.



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Tablets and laptops often come with installed home-movie editors where you can combine movies and photos from your phone. Look for shots of mom spending time with family, then choose a favorite song for the soundtrack. Recorded messages to mom complete things. Can't pick just one song? Make

your mother an online playlist with favorite tracks she's loved throughout her life, sprinkling in soundtrack songs from movies you've watched together and some of the latest ear worm hits of today. Soon you'll be singing and dancing your way through Mother's Day. It's the modern-era equivalent of a mixtape.

WHY IT MATTERS

Mother's Day provides us with an annual opportunity to show how much mom means. But sometimes children, especially the younger ones, aren't completely aware of everything that goes into mothering. So take a moment to discuss all of the things she does, both seen and unseen, on this

special holiday. Take this newfound knowledge and put it into action by chipping in more regularly with chores. Kids will be relieving moms of some weekly tasks, while also learning important lessons about responsibility. Loving and respecting your mom shouldn't be reserved for a single day in May.

If Being a Mom Had a Salary

It's impossible, of course, to place a monetary value on what moms do for their families.

Still, if you tried, here's a guess about the kind of salary they might make.

SIX FIGURES

One expert pegged the number of jobs the average mother holds at 18, when you factor in everything they're typically responsible for. That would garner wages of about \$116,000 in 2021, according to Insure.com — up from almost \$94,000, because of increasing responsibilities related to the pandemic. Salary.com factored in their roles as both chief operating officer and chief financial officer for the family, and placed moms pay even higher: \$184,820. Time spent on those two responsibilities alone doubled to more than 20 hours per week since the pandemic began, according to Salary.com's evaluation.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

The U.S. Labor Department's American Time Use Survey found that stay-at-home moms with a child under 18 spent almost 6.5 hours per day on household tasks and child care. Almost half of that time was devoted to the child, while housework and food-related tasks took up nearly four more hours. The rest was the day was



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devoted to running errands and odd jobs around the house. Multiply the number of hours moms spend on these tasks by the typical hourly wage for those who work professionally in these industries, and you get a rough idea about how much she might make. For instance, the Labor Department places the median hourly wage for

daycare workers at \$11.57, so moms would make about \$29.62 per day when spending 2.56 hours a day in child care. Using these same calculations, moms would make more than \$41 a day if they were paid the same as chefs, too.

SAYING THANKS

We live in the so-called gig

economy, where more and more people are working multiple or hybrid jobs.

Moms have always worked that way, wearing a closet full of hats. They are the family CEO, the academic advisor and the accountant. They are the daycare teacher, the dietitian, the event planner and the executive housekeeper.

They're the interior designer, the judge and magistrate, and the tailor. They're the life coach, the photographer and the plumber.

And unlike all of those workers in corporate settings all over the world, most moms do it all for a simple "thanks" — and that's what Mother's Day is really for.

If You've Lost Your Mother

For many, Mother's Day is a time for recalling someone who is no longer with us. Here's how to honor your mom after she's gone.

TELL HER STORY

Make sure your mother is never forgotten by telling her story to the next generation. You may also find solace in reaching out to some of your mother's other family and friends to learn new things. Their stories can then become part of yours.

WRITE TO HER

You always bought her a card for Mother's Day — so why break with tradition? Writing down your thoughts and feelings, even in just a few brief words, can be therapeutic for those with deceased moms. Share as much or as little as you'd like. Just make sure it's from the heart. Once you've finished, sign it as you always did — with love.

PAY YOUR RESPECTS

In Peru, Mother's Day traditions include stops at local cemeteries, where the graves of moms who have passed on are cleaned and then decorated. Incorporate this idea into your own holiday by visiting your mother's final resting place. Bring an arrangement of white carnations — the traditional flower of remembrance — and



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other appropriate mementos that remind you of mom. If you'd like, say a few words, or perhaps read a favorite poem. Just being there can sometimes bring great comfort.

RETURN TO HER RECIPES

Did your mother have a spe-

cial dish or meal that she always served on major family occasions? Why not strap on an apron and cook like she once did? Share this special meal with friends, family members and neighbors. Whether it was a homemade soup, a Sunday roast, cake or pie, returning to these heirloom recipes will

bring cherished memories rushing back.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Remember that how you spend this holiday is completely up to you. Perhaps you want to perform some special act of appreciation, or spend time with family and friends. Or

maybe you'd rather have a quiet day alone, working on some home project or perhaps gardening. Whatever you choose, work to avoid guilt, in particular early into your time apart. Respect your own feelings on a day that can be associated with such acute pain for those left behind.