

## OCTOBER - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. National Pizza Month

Gerry Durnell, the founder of *Pizza Today Magazine*, originated National Pizza Month in the United States in 1984. October was chosen because the first issue of his magazine debuted in October 1984. At the time, Durnell owned a pizzeria in the small town of Santa Claus, Indiana. When he realized there were no tradeshow publications to support the pizza industry, he developed his magazine and introduced National Pizza Month. These proved to be just the marketing tools his growing business needed. Pizza continues to be very popular in the United States, where there are an estimated 63,000 pizzerias. Approximately 94% of Americans eat pizza at least once a month, which amounts to about 45 slices per person per year. Nearly 100 acres of pizza are consumed daily, roughly 350 slices per second, in the United States.

### 2. National Clock Month

October is recognized throughout the United States as National Clock Month. The origin and history of this observance are uncertain. Every year at this time, the Smithsonian Libraries present a selection of books and trade catalogs on American clocks and watches. Schools and other organizations plan activities that highlight the history of clocks and clock makers and emphasize the importance of good time management.

### 3. Christopher Columbus Day

Christopher Columbus Day has been a national holiday in the United States since 1937, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the official proclamation. It commemorates the Italian-born explorer's arrival in the New World on October 12, 1492. His original plan was to chart a western sea route to China, India, and the fabled Spice Islands of Asia. On August 2, 1492, Columbus and his 90 member crew set sail aboard three ships: the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. Just over two months later, on October 12, they landed in the Bahamas instead, becoming the first Europeans to explore the Americas since the Vikings set up colonies in Greenland and Newfoundland during the 10th century. Columbus Day was observed on October 12, until Congress declared it a federal public holiday on the second Monday of October in 1971.

## OCTOBER- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 4. Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate two massive and tragic fires that began on October 8, 1871. The first fire occurred in Chicago, Illinois, killing more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres before being extinguished on October 9. The second fire, and perhaps the most devastating in American history, took place in Peshtigo, Wisconsin. It roared through the Northeast part of the state, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, and scorching 1.2 million acres. Those who survived never forgot their ordeals and recounted many stories of bravery and heroism. On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America (known today as the International Fire Marshals Association) decided that the anniversary would be remembered in a way that promotes public information about fire prevention and safety. President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation in 1920. Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week is observed from Sunday through Saturday, during which October 9 falls.

### 5. National Pretzel Month

The pretzel is believed to have originated with an Italian monk around 610 A.D. He twisted leftover bread dough into what he thought resembled his students with their arms folded across their chests in prayer. He called his creations “pretiolas,” which in Latin means “little rewards”. The dough treats were given to children for memorizing Bible verses. Somehow, the pretzel caught on and spread throughout Europe. Pretzels remain a popular snack food today and are considered by many to be a symbol of good fortune, long life, and prosperity. October is National Pretzel Month.

### 6. Henry John Heinz

H. J. Heinz was born in 1844 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His interest in gardening began at an early age. By the age of fourteen, he tended his own section of the family’s garden. Already, Heinz had a loyal following of produce customers. Heinz attended Duff’s Mercantile College, where he learned sound business practices. The first product he sold after college was horseradish. In 1888, Heinz developed a relationship with retailers in England and built a factory on the Allegheny River. He showed a kindhearted style of management and treated his workers well. He sought to sell quality products that guaranteed purity to his customers. Heinz was instrumental in the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. His hard work, perseverance, and integrity made him and his products internationally known and respected. Perhaps his company’s best-known product is ketchup.

## OCTOBER- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 7. United Nations Day

United Nations Day takes place on October 24<sup>th</sup> each year. It commemorates the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945. The charter was ratified by the five permanent members of the Security Council (France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and a majority of the other nations involved. It marks the official beginning of the United Nations. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly further resolved that United Nations Day should be an international observance and recommended that all member states celebrate it as a public holiday. The holiday's focus is to create global awareness of the aims and achievements of the United Nations organization, such as human rights, areas experiencing famine, eradication of disease, promotion of health, and settlement of refugees.

### 8. Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso was born on October 25, 1881, in Malaga, Spain. He is regarded by many as the most celebrated and influential painter of the twentieth century. Throughout his career as an artist, he continually reinvented himself and experimented with radically different styles. He attended various prestigious fine arts schools but each time grew restless and bored with strict rules and schedules. He would skip classes and go out into the city streets, where he found real-life inspiration for much of his artwork. He died at the age of 91, having enjoyed a long, prolific career and a colorful life.

### 9. Statue of Liberty Dedication

The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France to the United States, honoring the Franco-American alliance during the American Revolutionary War. French sculptor Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi designed the 151-foot statue. It was transported to the United States in sections, enclosed in over 200 packing cases, and assembled on Bedloe Island in New York. The last rivet of the monument was fitted on October 28, 1886, during a dedication ceremony presided over by President Grover Cleveland. Numerous French and American dignitaries were in attendance. In 1924, the Statue of Liberty became a national monument, and in 1956, Bedloe's Island was renamed Liberty Island. The statue underwent a major restoration in the 1980s. The Statue of Liberty still stands tall in the New York harbor today and is a major tourist attraction, visited by thousands annually.

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### 10. National Red Ribbon Week

National Red Ribbon Week is the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign of its kind in the United States and is observed annually during the last week of October. It commemorates the self-sacrifice and dedication of Drug Enforcement Administration officer Enrique Camarena. After graduating from college and serving in the Marines, Camarena became a police officer. He wanted to join the war on drugs because he believed one person could make a difference. While working undercover in Mexico in March of 1985, drug dealers brutally murdered him. Soon after his death, Camarena's Congressman, Duncan Hunter, and Henry Lozano, a high school friend, launched Camarena Clubs in Imperial Valley, California, near Camarena's home. Hundreds joined and pledged to lead drug-free lives. These clubs and coalitions began to wear red satin ribbons to honor Camarena's memory, which evolved into Red Ribbon Week Campaign, a nationally recognized event focusing primarily on drug awareness and prevention.