

## Mother's Day

Different countries celebrate Mother's Day on various days of the year because the day has a number of different origins.

One school of thought claims this day emerged from a custom of mother worship in ancient Greece, which kept a festival to Cybele, a great mother of Greek gods. This festival was held around the Vernal Equinox around Asia Minor and eventually in Rome itself from the Ides of March (15 March) to 18 March.

The ancient Romans also had another holiday, Matronalia, that was dedicated to Juno, though mothers were usually given gifts on this day.

Mothering Sunday, also called "Mothers' Day" in the United Kingdom and Ireland falls on the fourth Sunday of Lent (exactly three weeks before Easter Sunday). It is believed to have originated from the 16th century Christian practice of visiting one's mother church annually, which meant that most mothers would be reunited with their children on this day.

The United States celebrates Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May. In the United States, Mother's Day was loosely inspired by the British day and was imported by social activist Julia Ward Howe after the American Civil War. However, it was intended as a call to unite women against war. In 1870, she wrote the Mother's Day Proclamation as a call for peace and disarmament. Howe failed in her attempt to get formal recognition of a Mother's Day for Peace. Her idea was influenced by Ann Jarvis, a young Appalachian homemaker who, starting in 1858, had attempted to improve sanitation through what she called Mothers' Work Days. She organized women throughout the Civil War to work for better sanitary conditions for both sides, and in 1868 she began work to reconcile Union and Confederate neighbors.



When Jarvis died in 1907, her daughter, named Anna Jarvis, started the crusade to found a memorial day for women. The first such Mother's Day was celebrated in Grafton, West Virginia, on 10 May, 1908, in the church where the elder Ann Jarvis had taught Sunday School. Grafton is the home to the International Mother's Day Shrine. From there, the custom caught on — spreading eventually to 45 states. The holiday was declared officially by some states beginning in 1912. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson declared the first national Mother's Day, as a day for American citizens to show the flag in honor of those mothers whose sons had died in war.

Nine years after the first official Mother's Day, commercialization of the U.S. holiday became so rampant that Anna Jarvis herself became a major opponent of what the holiday had become. [*Is there a lesson to be learned here?*] Mother's Day continues to this day to be one of the most commercially successful U.S. occasions. According to the National Restaurant Association, Mother's Day is now the most popular day of the year to dine out at a restaurant in the United States.

In parts of the United States, it is customary to plant tomatoes outdoors after Mother's Day (and not before). [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother's\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother's_Day)]

By the way, how about *Holidays* as a small collection?