The U.S. has adopted legislation which moved the celebration of several holidays to the Monday nearest the day of the event the holiday commemorates. The purpose of this legislation is to create as many “three day weekends” as possible.

Four principal national holidays - New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas - were not subject to the date changing legislation. They are still celebrated on the same day each year. Another principal holiday, Labor Day, has traditionally been on Monday. Many businesses and all government offices close in observance of these holidays. Of the holidays on the following list, not all are celebrated by everyone. Some are holidays only for the members of certain religions, others are for particular groups, such as lovers or children.

**Holiday Calendar**

The following list indicates which are legal holidays, (when government offices are closed) and which are business holidays (when many businesses, except some drugstores, service stations, and food stores are closed.)

- **New Year’s Day**, January 1. Celebration of New Year’s Day usually occurs the night before, on New Year’s Eve, when it is common for groups of people to have a party to celebrate the coming of the New Year.

- **Martin Luther King’s Birthday**, January 15, but celebrated the third Monday in January, a legal holiday in some states, including Ohio.

- **Groundhog’s Day**, February 2. Legend has it that the groundhog emerges from hibernation on February 2. If he sees his shadow there will be six more weeks of winter.

- **St. Valentine’s Day**, February 14. A day for friends and lovers to exchange cards and/or gifts.
Holidays in the United States

**Holiday Calendar (cont.)**

George Washington’s Birthday, February 22, or nearest Monday, celebrated in some states.

President’s Day, February, third Monday. This day honors past U.S. presidents, commemorating the February birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. A legal holiday, but not a business one.

Ash Wednesday, date varies. Marks the beginning of the 40 day period of Lent, a period of penitence and fasting in some Christian denominations. On Ash Wednesday, some Christians attend a church service during which small ash crosses are placed on their foreheads to symbolize man’s ultimate return to dust.

St. Patrick’s Day, March 17. A day dedicated to the patron saint of Ireland. Many people wear something green on this day.

Easter Sunday, date varies, in March or April. Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For children, baskets of candy and dyed, hard-boiled eggs are hidden by a mythical “Easter Rabbit” or “Easter Bunny.” The children seek out the hidden eggs.

Mother’s Day, the second Sunday in May. Gifts, cards and/or special attention are given to mothers and grandmothers.

Father’s Day, the third Sunday in June. Gifts, cards and/or special attention are given to fathers and grandfathers.

Memorial Day, May 30, or nearest Monday. A legal and business holiday when homage is paid to U.S. soldiers who have died in wars.

Flag Day, June 14. Flags are flown to mark the adoption of the American Flag.
**Holidays in the United States**

**Holiday Calendar (cont.)**


Labor Day, the first Monday of September. A legal and business holiday honoring the contributions and efforts of laborers.

Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, both celebrated on varying days in September or October.

Columbus Day, October 12 or nearest Monday. Commemorates the discovery of America by the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus on the shores of North America. A legal holiday, but not a business one.

Halloween, October 31. A children’s holiday, associated with carving faces on pumpkins. Children often go to parties or door-to-door in costumes collecting candy and other treats.

Election Day, the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Not a legal or business holiday, but people may leave work briefly in order to vote in municipal and other elections.

Veterans’ Day, November 11. A holiday in commemoration of the end of World War I and in honor of veterans of the armed forces.

Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November. This is a day of feasting and giving thanks for everything. This feast was initiated by the Pilgrims and the Native Americans.

Hanukkah, late November or early December. An eight-day Jewish holiday marking the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Christmas, December 25. The annual holiday of the Christian church commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. As Christianity is widely practiced in the United States, this is a national holiday. Many people exchange gifts with family and friends at this time of year.