A guide to National Indigenous History Month

Learn about the history of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and how Canadians can celebrate their history in June.

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Who are Canada's Indigenous peoples?

First Nations

There are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada, representing 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages.

Inuit

Inuit Inuit live in the far north of Canada, mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador.

Métis

The Métis people are Indigenous individuals with mixed Indigenous and European ancestry.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

First held in 2009, National Indigenous Peoples Day is recognized on the summer solstice and holds significance for many Indigenous communities.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was held in 2021 to honor the lost children and survivors of residential schools.

Month of June

June 21

National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21


September 30

Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission conducted six years of work and consulted with more than 6,000 Indigenous residential school survivors for its 2015 report titled Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. The report found that the residential schooling system was an act of cultural genocide by the Canadian government against its Indigenous peoples.

“The legacy [of residential schools] can be seen in the myths, misunderstandings, and lack of empathy many Canadians openly display about Indigenous people, their history, and their place in society.”

Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 2019, the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia identified the frequent murder and disappearance of Indigenous women as an epidemic across both Canada and the U.S. They emphasized that this epidemic is only “worsened by startlingly little public awareness or concern equal to the problem across non-Indigenous populations in both countries.”

“The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation maintains a National Student Memorial Register to honor the children who died at residential schools and could never return home to their families.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Access the National Student Memorial Register here

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was established in 2015 to support and advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report. The National Centre is dedicated to engaging Canadians in a process of healing and reconciliation.

Notable Indigenous Canadians

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould (Puglass)

Inuvialuk cross-country skier; represented Canada in 2014 and 2018 Winter Olympic Games

Jesse Cookney

First female general surgeon of First Nations descent in Canada

Dr. Nadine Caron

Acclaimed director and documentarian

Alanis Obomsawin

Kat Baulu

The Canadian Encyclopedia

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

University of British Columbia

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Canadian Institute

Sources

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Sources

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada

The Canadian Encyclopedia

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Government of Canada

University of British Columbia

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Sources

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