



June 21st is National Indigenous Peoples Day in Canada. On this day, we celebrate the contributions, culture, and heritage of the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples. Although these groups share some similarities, they each have their own distinct heritage, language, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. This particular date, June 21st, significantly coincides with summer solstice, the longest day of the year. For many generations, Indigenous communities have celebrated their culture and heritage at the time of summer solstice.

The Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival takes place annually in Ottawa. This event was established in 1996; it is a multi-disciplinary arts festival, incorporating different mediums of artist expression, that brings the Indigenous community together to share knowledge and celebrate Canada's diverse Indigenous cultures. ¹

National Indigenous Day came to be through consultation and statements of support from several Indigenous groups. Beginning in 1982, the [National Indian Brotherhood \(now the Assembly of the First Nations\)](#) advocated for the celebration of Indigenous culture and heritage with the creation of National Aboriginal Solidarity Day. In 1995, at a national conference of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people known as the Sacred Assembly, the prospect of a day devoted to recognizing Indigenous heritage was again raised. That same year, [the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#) recommended the designation of a National First Peoples Day. In 1996, former Governor General of Canada, Romeo LeBlanc, announced National Aboriginal Day (now National Indigenous Peoples Day), through the [Proclamation Declaring June 21 of Each Year as National Aboriginal Day](#). On June 21, 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau issued a [statement](#) announcing the intention to rename this day National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Please join the EDI committee in celebrating Indigenous culture! We encourage you to learn more! We have suggested some resources below.

¹ For more information on this Summer Solstice please visit: <https://summersolsticefestivals.ca/ssif/>

Spotlight: Thelma Chalifoux



Metis activist and advocate for Indigenous rights, Thelma Chalifoux was born in Calgary, Alberta in 1929. She went on to be the first Indigenous woman and first Metis person to be appointed to the Canadian Senate. In 1958, Thelma's four children were taken away from her as a part of the 60's Scoop.² It took more than 7 years of tireless advocacy efforts before Thelma was reunited with her children in 1965. Among her many accomplishments, Thelma notably co-founded the [Native Friendship Centre](#) and ran the first shelter for women fleeing domestic violence. Thelma also served in the Company of Young Canadians, an organization committed to social, economic and community development in Canada. In this role Thelma supported the development of community housing programs for Indigenous folks. In the early 1980s, Thelma contributed to constitutional talks with Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau as part of a Metis delegation. These talks with the Prime Minister were instrumental in the recognition of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples as separate and distinct nations. In 2004, when Thelma retired from the Senate, she founded the Michif Cultural Institute, which is dedicated to preserving and promoting Metis culture.³

² The "60's Scoop", where government social worker agencies systematically removed Indigenous children from their homes, placing them into foster care, for white families to adopt.

³ If you would like to learn more about Thelma's life and rich contributions to Canadian history, please visit [The Canadian Encyclopedia, Thelma Chalifoux](#).

Spotlight: Kent Monkman



Visual artist, Kent Monkman, is a member of Fisher River Cree Nation in Treaty 5 Territory (Manitoba). He lives and works in Dish With One Spoon Territory (Toronto, Canada). Kent is a visual and performance artist. In his work Kent explores themes of colonization, sexuality, loss and the complexities of the Indigenous experience, both historic and current. Kent's paintings and installation works have been featured in exhibitions across Canada and internationally. In 2014, Kent received the Indspire Award, the Hnatyshyn Foundational Visual Arts Award. In 2017, he received the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts and an honorary doctorate degree from OCAD University. To see some of Kent's artwork and to read more about his life and contributions to Canadian history, please visit <https://www.kentmonkman.com/>.

How you can learn: Check out these creative and interactive resources to get involved and commemorate National Indigenous History Month 2021, and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Map room: Find a map or geospatial dataset about First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities or the North, available as either web-based interactive maps or static maps that can be downloaded and printed.

Project Naming: Share your knowledge and help Library and Archives Canada get to know the names of people, activities, events or places depicted in photographs.

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada – Giant Floor Maps: This resource will help you and your students understand the past, present and future of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.

Content warning: This material contains information regarding Residential Schools, which some may find distressing. If you require support, please note that there are resources available. [Click here for more information.](#)

Residential School Records Resources: Resources held by Library and Archives Canada to help you conduct research on Residential Schools.

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For more resources please go to: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1621449326146/1621449348579>

Listen: Experience descriptive storytelling through podcasts and audio clips

Traditional stories and creation stories: Listen to traditional stories and creation stories told by First Nations, Inuit and Métis storytellers from communities across Canada collected by the Canadian Museum of History.

Indigenous Perspectives: Stories from Indigenous Public Servants: Employment and Social Development Canada's podcasts explore what it's like to be Indigenous in the Federal Public Service, what reconciliation is for individuals and what it can be for Canada.

Residential Schools podcast series: Residential Schools is a three-part podcast series created by Historica Canada that aims to commemorate the history and legacy of residential schools.

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Healing Journey: Project Naming at 15: Project Naming has provided a virtual space enabling First Nations, Inuit communities, and the Métis Nation to access Canada's historic photo collections and engage in the identification of people and locations - reconnecting with their history to share memories and stories rekindled by the photographs.

More First Nations resources

Ahkameyimok podcast with National Chief Perry Bellegarde: Assembly of First Nations' National Chief Perry Bellegarde leads discussions on important issues affecting First Nations Peoples.

More Inuit resources

Inuktut Tusaalanga: *Tusaalanga* means "Let me hear!" and this website features thousands of sound files to help you learn Inuktitut quickly and easily.

More Métis resources

Métis Nation Self-Determination Gateway: Explore an online information portal developed by the Métis National Council that focuses on specific aspects of Métis Nation self-determination.

For more resources please go to: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1621448126309/1621448142223>

Watch: Be inspired by conversation, history and culture through creative visual storytelling

People and stories — Indigenous Peoples: A video catalogue from Veterans Affairs Canada that showcases First Nations, Inuit and Métis involvement in major Canadian conflicts.

Indigenous Voices on nature conservation :This series highlights Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous leadership in nature conservation, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Guardians programs. Produced in partnership with Indigenous partners and allies, and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Indigenous films and filmmakers: Explore the Canadian Museum for Human Rights' curated selection of First Nations, Inuit and Métis films from the National Film Board collection in English, French and the Nakota language. Gain a new understanding of Indigenous identities and spirituality, and learn about reconciliation through a human rights lens.

Indigenous cinema at the National Film Board of Canada : The National Film Board of Canada has a vast collection of First Nations, Inuit and Métis-created films from different periods of history and on a variety of subject matter for Canadians to watch online.

We Are Here: Sharing stories: Library and Archives Canada is digitizing and describing hundreds of thousands of Indigenous-related collection items, including textual material, photographs, artwork, maps and publications related to First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. These items come from private donors, government records and published works.

Parks Canada Indigenous Connections: Discover YouTube playlists of various Indigenous Peoples sharing their homelands and traditions in collaboration with Parks Canada.

Seven Sacred Laws: Turtle Lodge created this Web Series of vignettes to tell the stories of Indigenous Peoples in their own voices, in a format that is accessible not only for Indigenous people, but for all Canadians.

Residential Schools: Photographic Collections: Library and Archives Canada presents photographs from its collection on Residential Schools, taken between 1885 and 1996.

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More First Nations resources

Baskets with a Haida weaver: Explore the importance of tradition. Watch as Ariane Xay Kuyaas (Yaghujaanaas clan, Haida) demonstrates Haida basket-weaving techniques that were passed down to her from her family. Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History.

Moment of Reckoning – Turning the Page on a Dark Chapter of Our Shared History: Former residential school students discuss their personal experiences with Indian residential schools and the steps toward reconciliation.

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More Inuit resources

Inuit Nunangat Taimannanit: Learn about these lands from the voices of the residents in this playlist.

More Métis resources

Métis Identity and Voice in Canada's National Parks and Historic Sites: Each video in this series is connected to a Parks Canada location and gives a voice to today's Métis communities to share their own stories of Metis history and culture.

For more resources please visit: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1621448858275/1621448882580>

Read: Check out these reading suggestions in commemoration of National Indigenous History Month 2021 and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Distinctions-based approach – Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples: Learn why it's important to make the distinction between First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: This online atlas offers reference maps of Indigenous land and peoples in Canada, as well as a section devoted to Truth and Reconciliation, including detailed pages on many aspects of the topic with contemporary and historical photographs, maps and a glossary of common Indigenous terms.

The Canadian Encyclopedia – Indigenous Peoples: Explore topics from treaties, suffrage and residential schools to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation involvement in the War of 1812.

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#IndigenousReads: The #IndigenousReads campaign encourages reconciliation by increasing Canadians' understanding of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures and history.

Historica Canada Education Portal: Indigenous History: This portal contains resources for educators of elementary and middle school learners.

Indigenous connections: Almost all of Parks Canada's special, natural and cultural places have been traditionally used by Indigenous Peoples long before Canada became a country. Learn more about the place names and stories associated with them.

Indigenous ecological knowledge: Indigenous peoples have wide-ranging knowledge of the land and its ecology. Through collaboration with Indigenous partners, Parks Canada and Canadians are benefitting from traditional knowledge systems that have been handed down over thousands of years.

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Learn how the Government of Canada launched an independent national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: This two-volume report calls for legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Visit the Commission's official site to learn more about it and to read the final report.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action: Learn how the Government of Canada is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Discover the Library and Archives collection: Indigenous Heritage: Learn more about the Indigenous documentary heritage initiatives and additional resources available to increase access to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation-related content in Library and Archives Canada's holdings and support Indigenous communities to digitize and preserve culture and language recordings.

More First Nations resources

Assembly of First Nations: It's Our Time: Education Toolkit: The multimedia toolkit was designed to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people and foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding and action.

Indigenous Heritage: First Nations: Find information about First Nations from Library and Archives Canada's collection.

More Inuit resources

About Canadian Inuit: Learn more from the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami about Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland, their leadership, families and communities.

Inuktitut Magazine: Download the most recent, free edition of the magazine in English or Inuktitut.

More Métis resources

About Métis Nation: Learn more from the Métis National Council about how the Métis emerged as a distinct Indigenous people and nation in the historic Northwest during the late 18th century.

Virtual exhibition – Hiding in Plain Sight: Discover the Métis Nation in the Archival Records of Library and Archives Canada.

For more resources please visit: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1621447786278/1621447804781>