

Trivia

Fireworks Facts

The first fireworks were hollowed out bamboo stalks stuffed with black powder.

It was not until the 19th century that pyro technicians discovered that mixing potassium chlorate into the powder made it burn much hotter, enabling it to burn red when strontium was added, green when barium was added, and bright yellow when sodium was added.

The first fireworks created were called “arrows of flying fire”, and shot into the air during religious occasions and holidays to ward off imaginary dragons.

Blues and violets (caused when copper and chlorine are added) are the hardest colors to create.

White was impossible to produce until the mid-1800s, when scientists developed ways to add aluminum magnesium, and titanium to black powder.

Fireworks Lingo

- *Willows: Fireworks with long colorful “branches” that stream down towards the ground.*
- *Palm Trees: Willows that leave a brightly-colored trail from the ground as they’re shot into the air.*
- *Chrysanthemums: Fireworks that explode into perfect circles.*
- *Split comets: Fireworks that explode into starlets, which explode again into even more starlets.*
- *Salutes: A bright, white flash, followed by a boom.*
- *Triple-break Salutes: Salutes that explode three times in a rapid succession.*
- *Cookie-Cutters: Created by filling the inside of a cardboard container with black powder and gluing individual starlets to the outside. When the black powder charge explodes, the starlets explode in the same shape as the cookie-cutter. Shapes include stars, hearts, ovals, etc.*

(excerpted from Uncle John’s Biggest Ever Bathroom Reader)

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Dates in History

1776 On July 4th, the Declaration of Independence was signed, but it took four more days before it was publicly read. July 8th marks the anniversary of that first public reading in Philadelphia. The next day it was read aloud to General George Washington's troops in New York. It took two days to prepare copies for shipment to all the colonies. It took another month until all the copies were signed.

1866 The Atlantic telegraph cable between England and the United States was completed on July 27th. From that day forward, news crossed the ocean instantly. And that, in turn, speeded up the tempo of world events to a relatively rapid pace.

1911 On July 24th, Hiram Bingham climbed to a Peruvian mountain top with a native guide and walked through a mysterious city in the clouds. Bingham discovered one of the last Incan cities-Machu Picchu.

1957 On July 29th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act which created the NASA program, beginning the race to be the first nation to put a man into space and to send a spacecraft capable of landing on the moon's surface.

On the Lighter Side

"I will never understand why they cook on TV. I can't smell it. Can't eat it. Can't taste it. The end of the show they hold it up to the camera, "Well, here it is. You can't have any. Thanks for watching. Goodbye."

-Jerry Seinfeld

"Thank you, hard taco shells, for surviving the long journey from factory, to supermarket, to my plate and then breaking the moment I put something inside you. Thank you."

-Jimmy Fallon

"Spring is nature's way of saying, Let's party!"

-Robin Williams

"As American as an apple is and as American as baseball is, they don't go together. You can't be chewing an apple at a baseball game. You've got to let go of the diet that day."

-Kevin James

"The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age."

-Lucille Ball

"When someone is impatient and says, 'I haven't got all day,' I always wonder, How can that be? How can you not have all day?"

-George Carlin

"If it wasn't for the coffee, I'd have no identifiable personality whatsoever."

-David Letterman