

# PECAN BAYOU

**NATIONAL PLAY DAY:  
YOU ARE  
NEVER TOO  
OLD TO PLAY!**



**July 19 is National Play Day, a reminder that play does not have an age limit.** Whether you are 9 or 90, play has a way of lifting the spirit, sparking laughter, and bringing people together. It is one of the simplest ways to feel young at heart. In a month that also celebrates staying social and connected, play is a natural fit, especially when shared across generations.

There are so many ways to join in the fun:

- **Bean bag toss or cornhole in the yard**
- **Balloon volleyball or indoor bowling**
- **Games like left-right-center, checkers, chess, or cribbage**
- **Card games such as Uno, euchre, bridge, or rummy**
- **Classics like Battleship, Scrabble, or Connect Four**
- **Music, dancing, or playing piano, guitar, or another instrument**
- **Handheld video games or phone apps**

Play also brings back memories of simpler days, like neighborhood baseball games, riding bikes until dinner, or afternoons at the swimming pool with friends. Those spontaneous “play dates” were really just time spent enjoying life outdoors.

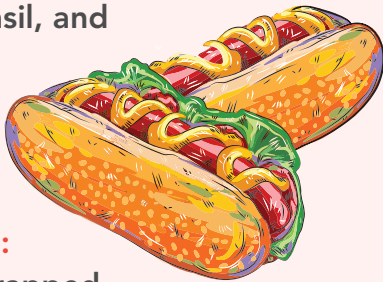
On National Play Day, try something familiar or something new. Gather with friends or family of all ages, have fun, stay connected, and simply play!

# Fun Ways to Dress Up Your Hot Dog!

July is National Hot Dog Month, a time to celebrate this beloved summer staple. Whether you're at a cookout, ballgame, or picnic, nothing says summer quite like a perfectly dressed dog.

Tired of the same old ketchup and mustard? Try these fun twists to give your hot dog a makeover:

**Bruschetta Dog:** Tomatoes, garlic, basil, and balsamic on a toasted roll



**Tiki Style:** Bacon-wrapped with teriyaki glaze, grilled pineapple, and red onion

**French Onion:** Caramelized onions, Swiss cheese, and a sprinkle of thyme

**The Completo (Chile):** Tomato, avocado, mayo, and sauerkraut

## *Regional Favorites*

**New York:** Spicy brown mustard and sauerkraut

**Chicago:** Relish, tomato, pickles, onions, sport peppers, and mustard (no ketchup!)

**Seattle:** Cream cheese with grilled onions and jalapeños

**Philly:** Cheez Whiz, peppers, and onions

# Share the Fun of Summer

July is filled with some of summer's most delicious celebrations, and many of them have one thing in common: bringing people together.

**From National Grilling Month and Hot Dog Month to Ice Cream Month, Watermelon Month, Chili Dog Day, and Family Reunion Month, July is packed with fun reasons to gather with family and friends and enjoy the simple moments of the season.**

There is something wonderfully nostalgic about summertime foods. The smell of hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill, cold watermelon on a hot afternoon, melting ice cream cones, and picnic tables filled with everyone's favorite side dishes can instantly bring back memories of backyard cookouts, family vacations, neighborhood gatherings, and long summer evenings spent outdoors.

Those favorite summer moments often change throughout life, but the feeling

behind them stays the same. Maybe summer once meant running through sprinklers and chasing the ice cream truck, while now it means watching grandchildren enjoy those same simple joys. Maybe you still look forward to a classic hot dog at a family cookout or ballgame, or perhaps your favorite part of the season is simply sitting outside on a warm evening sharing stories and laughter with the people you love.

That is what makes July's fun food observances feel so special. They are not just about hot dogs, watermelon, chili dogs, or ice cream sundaes. They are reminders to slow down, reconnect with loved ones, and enjoy the traditions that make summer memorable.

**No matter which July observance is your favorite, the season offers plenty of opportunities to savor good food, enjoy good company, and make memories worth sharing.**





## 250 YEARS OF RED, WHITE & BLUE

This Fourth of July marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a milestone that brings a little extra meaning to a familiar summer tradition.

For generations, July 4 has been filled with backyard barbecues, hometown parades, fireworks, and simple moments shared with the people around us. While traditions evolve, the feeling stays the same: gathering together and celebrating the red, white, and blue.

A 250th celebration is a chance to slow down and enjoy those traditions in a simple, meaningful way.


- **Set out red, white, and blue table accents**
- **Enjoy a relaxed barbecue or picnic outdoors**
- **Play cards, board games, or simple lawn games**
- **Make easy patriotic crafts with family**
- **Serve colorful summer desserts or treats**


So whether it is a big gathering or a quiet evening outside, enjoy the day, the people, and the celebration of 250 years of red, white, and blue.


## Bust Summer Boredom Together!


The summer heat might keep us indoors sometimes, but July's Anti-Boredom Month is the perfect excuse to turn those quiet moments into joyful, creative fun — solo or with family and friends of all ages.


Here are some intergenerational friendly ideas:


 **Art Hour:** Draw, paint, or color simple nature scenes, animals, or imaginative creatures like dinosaurs, dragons, or unicorns. Let your creativity take the lead!


 **Family Ice Cream Social:** Host a DIY ice cream sundae party with toppings everyone picks—great for sharing stories and laughter.


 **Storytelling Swap:** Write short stories or funny poems and share them aloud or over video chat with younger family members.

 **Learn Together:** Pick a new language or dance routine—practice with friends, family, or a community group.

 **Puzzle Power:** Tackle a 1,000- or 3,000-piece puzzle as a team, sharing memories or trivia while working on it.

 **Craft Remix:** Upcycle old clothes or household items into creative crafts—tie-blankets, no-sew pillows, or homemade greeting cards.

 **Digital Fun:** Try simple games or apps that everyone can join from different locations.

 **Bonus: Mix It Up!** Combine activities like an art session followed by an ice cream treat or storytelling after a puzzle challenge. The key is variety and connection—boredom doesn't stand a chance!



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## Celebrate Friendship on July 30

Friendship is a gift at any age. Whether reconnecting with lifelong pals or making new friends through shared hobbies, these connections boost happiness and wellbeing.

### Ways to Celebrate:

- Call or write to an old friend
- Meet for coffee or a walk
- Share a favorite photo on social media
- Chat with someone new about a hobby or interest

**Friendship is about kindness, laughter, and support — no matter how long you've known someone. Celebrate those who bring joy to your life!**

**PECAN BAYOU**  
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**WORD SEARCH** Find and circle the 15 words listed below. Find words straight across, up and down, and diagonally. All words are forwards reading only. No backwards. Good luck!

K	N	D	B	N	U	F	A	M	I	L	Y	G	A	O	B
S	O	F	O	L	Z	I	U	V	R	A	R	P	A	S	S
Y	U	B	R	W	S	S	Y	E	L	I	T	L	S	M	F
W	T	B	E	F	A	J	M	P	J	S	O	G	R	J	E
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### WORD LIST

- AMERICA
- BLUE
- BOREDOM
- FAMILY
- FRIENDS
- GAME
- HISTORY
- HOT DOG
- OUTDOORS
- PATRIOTIC
- PLAY
- RED
- SUMMER
- TOGETHER
- WHITE