

The Queen's Birthdays



The Queen celebrates two birthdays every year. Her actual birthday is celebrated on 21st April and her official birthday falls on the second Saturday in June.

Why Does The Queen Celebrate Two Birthdays?

King George II began the tradition of having two royal birthdays in 1748. He was born in November and he felt that the weather would be too cold for a birthday parade.

So, he decided to celebrate his birthday with a military parade, called Trooping the Colour, held every spring or summer. This tradition has continued ever since, no matter what month the king or queen was born. This is the monarch's official birthday.



The Queen's Actual Birthday

The Queen was born on 21st April 1926. Her birthday is usually spent privately with her family and close friends. To mark her birthday, there are usually gun salutes at various royal locations around London.

There was no gun salute for the Queen's 95th birthday in April 2021. This was because The Queen's husband, Prince Philip, had died over a week earlier and the Queen was still in **mourning**.

What Is a Gun Salute?

Gun salutes are a mark of respect for special royal celebrations and involve rounds being fired from large guns in royal parks.

Gun salutes are usually fired at midday. Salutes are not fired on Sundays so if The Queen's Birthday is on a Sunday, the salute will take place on the following Monday.



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The Queen's Official Birthday

The Queen originally celebrated her official birthday on a Thursday but it was later changed to the second Saturday in June. Other countries of the **Commonwealth** celebrate The Queen's birthday on different days of the year.

For example, in Canada, celebrations are held on the last Monday before 25th May and in Australia, Her Majesty's birthday is celebrated on the second Monday in June.



What Is Trooping the Colour?

The **sovereign's** official birthday in June is usually marked with a famous parade called Trooping the Colour. The parade begins at Buckingham Palace and travels down The Mall before finishing at Horse Guard's Parade. It is a colourful celebration and thousands of people line the pavements of The Mall to enjoy the sight.

For many years, The Queen rode her horse, Burmese, with her troops but more recently, she has ridden in a carriage. Usually, members of the public line the streets to watch the parade while waving flags and cheering. Her Majesty returns to the balcony of Buckingham Palace to wave to the crowds that have gathered to wish her well.

COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2020, the Trooping the Colour parade was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a much smaller version was held inside the grounds of Windsor Castle. An announcement was made in March 2021 which said that arrangements were underway for another alternative parade that year.

Glossary

Commonwealth:

A family of 54 countries that work together.
The Queen is Head of the Commonwealth.

mourning:

An expression of sorrow following a person's death.

sovereign:

A supreme ruler, such as king or queen.