

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!!

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For most of us, there is one relationship in this mortal life which will always rank above all other known relationships: the one with our mothers. This priceless bond, that when severed leaves immeasurable pain and a lifetime of loss and longing, is filled with the unconditional love, dedication, and devotion that she pours daily into the lives and hearts of her family. To acknowledge the presence of all mothers worldwide, Mother's Day, which this year will be Sunday May 9, 2021, is celebrated as a social day to pay tribute to the women, whether our biological mothers or not, who have nurtured, mentored, taught, inspired, loved and cared for us throughout life's journey. Mother's Day reinforces the importance of taking a moment to think about and truly thank the women who have tirelessly given of themselves in raising and shaping the lives of generations of people across the globe. We reflect on the joyful memories of those mothers that have gone before us and express gratitude for those mothers who are in our lives today.

The official Mother's Day holiday arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis, who, following her mother's 1905 death, conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honouring the sacrifices mothers made for their children. Her mother had organized women's groups to promote friendship and health in the late 1800s and on May 12, 1907, she held a memorial service at her late mother's church in Grafton, West Virginia to celebrate her life and works. Within five years virtually every state was observing the day but It was not until 1914 that the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson made it a national holiday. Since the origin of its modern form in the United States, the holiday has evolved into a worldwide celebration officially commemorated on the second Sunday in May by over 90 countries.

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day was the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday." Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration traditionally occurred on the fourth Sunday in Lent, known as Laetare Sunday. Then, It was originally seen as a time when the faithful, who had moved away from home, would return to visit their "mother church", the main church in the vicinity of their home, for a special service with their mothers. Over time though, the "Mothering Sunday" custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus becoming a more secular holiday where children present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation.

While versions of Mother's Day are celebrated worldwide, traditions vary depending on the country. In Thailand, for example, Mother's Day is always celebrated in August on the birthday of their current queen, Sirikit. Another alternate observance of Mother's Day can be found in Ethiopia, where families gather each fall to sing songs and eat a large feast as part of Antrosht, a multi-day celebration honoring motherhood. In the United States, Mother's Day continues to be celebrated by presenting mothers and other women with gifts and flowers as well as by giving mothers a day off from activities like cooking or other household chores. At times too, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968 Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King, Jr., used Mother's Day to

host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women's groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare.

Mother's Day still remains relevant in Jamaica and the rest of the world where celebrations honoring the mother of the family, as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society are still very important. The varying traditions, notwithstanding, do share characteristics and ultimately honour mothers and women who have brought peace and improvement to the world. Despite consumerism gradually overpowering authenticity, the day will forever serve as a reminder of what mothers do for us. Even though we are able to, and definitely should, spoil our mothers on any day throughout the year, the denoted day gives us an excuse to express our utmost gratitude. HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!!

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