

Columbus Day

expected to see people native to India, or be taken to see the great leader Khan. They called the first people they saw "Indians." They had gone ashore in their best clothes, knelt and praised God for arriving safely. From the "Indians" they learned that the island was called Guanahani. Columbus christened it San Salvador and claimed it immediately for Spain. When they landed on the island that is now Cuba, they thought they were in Japan. After three subsequent voyages, Columbus was still unenlightened. He died a rich and famous man, but he never knew that he discovered lands that few people had imagined were there.

Columbus had stopped at what are now the Caribbean Islands, either Watling Island, Grand



The Columbus coat of arms.

Turk Island, or Samana Cay. In 1926, Watling Island was renamed San Salvador and acknowledged as the first land in the New World. Recently, however, some people have begun to dispute the claim. Three men from Miami, Florida have started a movement to recognize Conception Island as the one that Columbus and his men first sighted and landed on. The controversy has not yet been resolved.

Few celebrations marked the discovery until hundreds of years later. The continent was not even named after Columbus, but an Italian explorer named Amerigo Vespucci. In 1792, a ceremony was held in New York honoring Columbus, and a monument was dedicated to him. Soon after that, the city of Washington was officially named the District of Columbia and became the capital of the United States. In 1892, a statue of Columbus was raised at the beginning of Columbus Avenue in New York City. At the Columbian Exposition held

in Chicago that year, replicas of Columbus's three ships were displayed.

Americans might not have a Columbus Day if Christopher Columbus had not been born in Italy. Out of pride for their native son, the Italian population of New York City organized the first celebration of the discovery of America on October 12, 1866. The next year, more Italian Organizations in other cities held banquets, parades and dances on that date. In 1869, when Italians of San Francisco celebrated October 12, they called it Columbus Day.

In 1905, Colorado became the first state to observe a Columbus Day. Over the next few decades other states followed. In 1937, then-President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed every October 12 as Columbus Day. Since 1971, it has been celebrated on the second Monday in October.



Senator John Sabini on Columbus Day *"Proud to be an American of Italian Descent"*

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**Best Wishes To All My
Fellow Italian-American Friends
On This Columbus Day**

GEORGE ONORATO
STATE SENATOR
12th S.D.

*On This Day I Salute
Christopher Columbus and
the Millions of Other Fine Italians
that followed him!*



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