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April Spotlight

Arab American Heritage Month

Commemorating Arab American Heritage

The initiative for official national designation of Arab American Heritage month was launched in 2017 by the nonprofit media and education organization [Arab American Foundation](#) and its sister organization, Arab American. It began with support from a few states, but has gained momentum each year.

In 2019, U.S. Representatives, Debbie Dingell (MI-6th Dist.) and Rashida Tlaib (MI-12th Dist.), introduced a resolution to Congress to proclaim April as National Arab American Heritage Month. "It is my hope as a strong and proud Arab American in Congress that our nation can uplift our contributions in the United States by supporting Arab American Heritage Month," Tlaib, a first-generation American, said about the resolution. The bill remains pending.

In April 2021, National Arab American Heritage Month was recognized by President Joe Biden, with the U.S. Department of State, some members of Congress, and 37 governors issuing proclamations supporting the month. "Diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and it is essential that we continue celebrating, promoting, and educating others about the myriad of ways that Arab people have advanced human civilization and contributed to the well-being of our nations," said President Biden.

By 2022, Illinois, Oregon, and Virginia passed permanent legislation designation of April as National Arab American Heritage Month, with similar legislation pending in Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Rhode Island.

Arab Nations

Arab Americans have ancestry in one of the world's 22 Arab nations which are located from northern Africa through western Asia. They are ethnically, politically, and religiously diverse, but share a common culture and linguistic heritage.

The 22 Arab nations are Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Yemen.

Arab nations have a diversity in religious beliefs, including Muslim, Judaism, and Christianity. Arab Americans are over 50% Christian.





April Celebrations

2nd World Autism Awareness Day
9th Day of Silence
9th Eid-al-Fitr
13th Vaisakhi
22nd Earth Day
22nd – 30th Passover

Hummus Recipe

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

2 cups chickpeas cooked or canned
Broth of the cooked chickpeas
1 tsp baking soda
½ cup tahini
½ cup lemon juice
¾ tsp of salt
1 large garlic clove

Instructions:

1. Cover the chickpeas with water the night before.
2. Drain. With new water, boil the chickpeas with baking soda for 20 minutes. Remove skins if possible. Place in cold water or let chickpeas cool.
3. Place tahini and lemon juice in food processor or blender. Process or blend until a thick sauce emerges.
4. Add chickpeas, salt, and garlic. Blend until creamy and smooth. Add broth until creamy and smooth.
5. Serve and drizzle olive oil, if desired

Arab Immigration to the United States

In the late 1800s, Arab immigration to the United States began, according to the [Migration Policy Institute](#). Arab Christians fled the [Ottoman Empire](#) from religious persecution and conscription, as well as for economic reasons. The [U.S. Department of State](#) reports that the immigrants mostly settled in the Northeast and Midwest.

The [Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924](#), which used origin quotas to limit immigration, halted the influx of Arab immigrants until 1948 to 1966, when a new wave of Middle Eastern immigration began due to the [Arab-Israeli War](#) and other regional conflicts. Many of those immigrants came to Detroit during the auto industry boom. A third Arab immigration wave occurred in the U.S. following the [Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965](#), which ended quotas favoring those from northern and western Europe.

Today, Arab Americans live in all U.S. states, with two-thirds residing in 10 states: California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. The largest group comprising, nearly one-third of the Arab American population, are Lebanese Americans, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Dearborn, Michigan outside of Detroit, boasts the country's largest percentage of Arab Americans.

Websites and Credits in this Spotlight

Arab American Foundation: www.arabamericanfoundation.org

Migration Policy Institute: www.migrationpolicy.org

Ottoman Empire: <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/ottoman-empire>

Immigration Act of 1924: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>

Arab-Israeli War: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war>

Immigration Act of 1965: <https://www.history.com/news/immigration-act-1965-changes>

Chef Tariq: www.cheftariq.com

Famous Arab Americans

Rami Malek, actor, Egyptian

Salma Hayek, actress, Mexican-born Lebanese

Jerry Seinfeld, comedian, actor and writer, half-Syrian Jewish

Gigi & Bella Hadid, supermodels and TV personality, half-Palestinian

Frank Zappa, musician, part-Lebanese

DJ Khaled, hip-hop DJ, rapper, and music producer, Palestinian

Rashida Tlaib, Congresswomen MI, Palestinian

Justin Amash, Retired Congressmen MI, Palestinian & Syrian

Spencer Abraham, Former Senator MI, Lebanese

Katya Bachrouche, Olympic swimmer, Lebanese

Danny Thomas, Founder St. Jude Children's, part-Lebanese

Justin Abdelkader, NHL player Red Wings, part-Jordanian