Beat: News

Kingsday

The Netherlands celebrates Koningsdag

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USPA NEWS - The Netherlands celebrates Koningsdag (King's Day) on April 27th every year. This day marks the birthday of King Willem-Alexander, the current King of the Netherlands. The country is decorated in orange, the national color, and people take to the streets to celebrate this national holiday.

History of Koningsdag

Koningsdag has a rich history that dates back to the 1800s. The first celebration of what was then called Prinsessedag (Princess's Day) took place in 1885 in honor of the birthday of Princess Wilhelmina, the daughter of King William III. The celebrations were held annually on her birthday until she became queen in 1890, at which point the name was changed to Koninginnedag (Queen's Day).

When Queen Juliana ascended the throne in 1949, the date of the holiday was changed to her birthday, April 30th. The tradition of celebrating Koninginnedag continued throughout her reign and into that of her daughter, Queen Beatrix, who succeeded her in 1980.

In 2013, King Willem-Alexander became the first male monarch in the Netherlands since 1890. He decided to change the date of the holiday from April 30th to April 27th, his own birthday, and renamed it Koningsdag.

Preparations for Koningsdag

Preparations for Koningsdag begin months in advance. The Royal Family typically visits a different region of the country each year to celebrate the holiday. The chosen city or town undergoes an extensive renovation in the weeks leading up to the event. The streets are cleaned, decorations are put up, and stages are built for live music and performances.

In addition, vendors begin selling orange merchandise, including hats, wigs, and clothing. Orange is the national color of the Netherlands and is worn by many people on Koningsdag. Some people even go as far as to dye their hair or paint their faces orange.

Koningsdag is a day filled with fun activities for people of all ages. One of the most popular activities is the vrijmarkt, or free market. This is a giant flea market where people can sell their second-hand items, homemade crafts, and snacks. The streets are lined with vendors and buyers, and it is a great opportunity to find unique treasures.

Many people also take part in the traditional Dutch game of koekhappen. In this game, a round cake, or koek, is hung on a string and participants have to try to eat it without using their hands. It is a fun and challenging game that requires skill and patience.

Other popular activities include live music performances, parades, and street parties. There are also funfair rides for children, and sports competitions for those who prefer a more active way to celebrate.

The Royal Family also plays an important role in the celebrations. They visit the city or town that has been selected as the official location for Koningsdag and participate in various activities throughout the day. They also greet crowds of people who come out to see them and wish them a happy birthday.

Conclusion

Koningsdag is a unique and special holiday in the Netherlands. It is a day of national pride and celebration, and people of all ages come together to enjoy the festivities. The bright orange decorations, the lively music, and the delicious snacks all add to the festive atmosphere.

While the holiday has undergone many changes over the years, its essence remains the same: a celebration of the country's royal family, its history, and its people. Whether you are a local or a visitor, Koningsdag is an experience that should not be missed.

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