

# Long Weekends: Bank Holidays [B1]

Il sistema finanziario londinese ha marcato il calendario lavorativo generale fino al punto di definire i giorni festivi come 'bank holidays'. Il promotore era un banchiere, politico, archeologo, antropologo e filantropo... cercò persino di insegnare a leggere al suo cane!



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Bank holidays are national public holidays that take place in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and the Crown Dependencies. The secular holiday is a relatively recent invention. It began with the Bank Holiday [Act](#) of 1871, which established a [day off](#) exclusively for banks.

## BEFORE THE BILL

In the early 19th century the Bank of England had about forty holidays a year celebrating saints' days, Christian festivities or royal occasions. In 1830, however, it was decided that this was simply too many: the number of holidays was [slashed](#) to eighteen days, and three years later cut again to just four: [Good Friday](#), 1 May, 1 November, and Christmas Day. Factory workers, however, enjoyed more days off, as a trend for local holidays had spread after the Industrial Revolution began in the 1760s. On a local holiday, all the

factories in the town closed [at once](#), saving on [running costs](#), but with the standardisation of paid holidays and school holidays, and the decline in the manufacturing industry, local holidays began to disappear too.

## **LUBBOCK'S BILL**

In 1871, it was decided that a regulation of bank holidays was needed. The man in charge of [drafting](#) the Bank Holiday Bill was Sir John Lubbock, the first Baron of Avebury and a prominent banker and politician. The act, which became law, established four bank holidays for England, Wales and Ireland (which was under British [rule](#)), and five for Scotland. It also made it [lawful](#) for any day to be officially proclaimed a bank holiday, a decision that would cover future holiday-[deserving](#) events. The law made it clear that all financial [dealings](#) would be postponed until the day after the bank holiday, and that no penalties would be applied for those [delayed](#) transactions. Initially, the Bank Holiday Bill only affected banks and financial institutions, but over the years businesses, schools and government institutions [joined in](#).

## **POP-UP BANK HOLIDAYS**

In 1971, a hundred years after the passing of the bill, some new bank holidays were created. Nowadays, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and the Crown Dependencies enjoy between eight and ten bank holidays a year. The dates of most of the holidays vary, since they always fall on a Monday. In 2023 there was an extra bank holiday called on 8 May to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

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# Glossary

- **rule** = dominio
- **lawful** = legale
- **dealings** = affari
- **delayed** = ritardare
- **at once** = contemporaneamente
- **running costs** = costi operativi
- **drafting** = redigere
- **Good Friday** = Venerdì Santo
- **deserving** = degni, meritevoli
- **joined in** = unirsi
- **Act** = legge
- **day off** = giorno libero
- **slashed** = ridurre