



# MI'GMAQ TREATY DAY MI'GMAQ HISTORY MONTH

**Sources:**

Nta'tugwaqanminen Our Story: Evolution of the Gespe'gewa'gi  
[www.mikmaqhistorymonth.ca](http://www.mikmaqhistorymonth.ca)  
[www.unsm.org](http://www.unsm.org)

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## **Mi'gmaq Peace and Friendship Treaties**

What are treaties?

Under international law, a treaty is an agreement between two sovereign states which produces judicial effects. These instruments of diplomatic relations were present in Mawio'mi long before the arrival of European nations in our national territory. As a sovereign nation, Mi'gmaq were involved in diplomatic relations with other Aboriginal nations and negotiated international bilateral agreements to establish the modalities of our coexistence.

## **Mi'gmaq use and occupation of Gespe'gewa'gi**

Our Mi'gmaq ancestors lived on the territory since immemorial time and considered, used and occupied the whole of Gespe'gewa'gi and its surrounding waters and islands as part of their territory. During the historical period between 1725 and 1779, the Mi'gmaq of Atlantic Canada entered into a series of treaties with British officials that are part of the Covenant Chain of Treaties.

The treaties signed by our ancestors do not contain any surrender of the Aboriginal Rights and Title to land by the Mi'gmaq.

During the 1700s, repeated attempts were made to reach peace by agreement

between the British and the Mi'gmaq, but they did not resolve the conflicts between the two nations. The Peace and Friendship Treaties signed between 1760 and 1761 ended a lengthy period of warfare between the British Crown and the Mi'gmaq peoples. After decades of conflict, they were entered into to create peace, end hostilities and facilitate trade.

## **Treaty Day Background**

In 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the Treaty of 1752 was still strong and called upon Her Majesty to honour the Treaty and others made with the Mi'gmaq nation.

In 1986, the then Grand Chief Donald Marshall Sr. proclaimed every October 1st as Treaty Day. It commemorates the key role of treaties in the relationship between the Mi'gmaq and the Crown. The annual ceremony reaffirms the historic presence of the Mi'gmaq who have occupied the land for thousands of years. The Mi'gmaq Nation and the crown also exchange gifts to mark each October 1st.

By celebrating Treaty Day, we are giving thanks to the Mi'gmaq and the Crown for signing peace and friendship treaties.

People continue to gather in Halifax on October 1st to participate and enjoy various cultural events celebrating Treaty Day. It is a reunion for many Mi'gmaq and a time for people to learn a part of the Mi'gmaq's history.

## **Mi'gmaq History Month**

In 1993, Nova Scotia Premier John Savage and Mi'gmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy declared October the official month to recognize and celebrate Mi'gmaq culture and heritage.

Since then, communities across Mawio'mi have participated in Mi'gmaq History Month to recognize, celebrate and honour Mi'gmaq culture. Throughout October, community activities, events, sharing and showcasing of Mi'gmaq history occur across Mawio'mi. Everyone is encouraged and welcome to participate in Mi'gmaq History Month events.

