

Gandhi Era Notes

On the Eve of Gandhi Jayanti

Timeline of Mahatma Gandhi's Life: Key Dates and Events

Early Life & Education

- **October 2, 1869:** Born Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in Porbandar, Gujarat.
- **1883:** Marries Kasturba Makhanji Kapadia at the age of 13.
- **September 4, 1888:** Sails from Bombay for London to study law at the Inner Temple.
- **June 10, 1891:** Called to the Bar in London.
- **Mid-1891:** Returns to India and begins practicing law in Bombay and Rajkot.

Formative Years in South Africa (1893 – 1914)

- **April 1893:** Sails for South Africa to work as a legal consultant for an Indian firm in Natal.
- **June 7, 1893:** Is forcibly removed from a first-class train carriage at Pietermaritzburg, an event that strengthens his resolve to fight racial discrimination.
- **August 22, 1894:** Founds the Natal Indian Congress to advocate for the rights of Indians in South Africa.
- **1903:** Establishes the weekly journal *Indian Opinion*.
- **1904:** Founds the Phoenix Settlement near Durban, a communal living experiment based on principles of simple living and self-sufficiency.
- **September 11, 1906:** During a mass meeting in Johannesburg, he adopts the strategy of *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) for the first time to protest against the Transvaal Asiatic Registration Act.
- **1908:** Is arrested for the first time for defying the registration law and is sentenced to two months in prison.
- **1910:** Establishes the Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg, another community to sustain the Satyagrahi families.
- **1913:** Leads a historic march of 2,221 people from Natal into the Transvaal in protest against discriminatory laws, including a poll tax and the invalidation of non-Christian marriages.

Return to India & Early Satyagraha Movements (1915 – 1919)

- **January 9, 1915:** Returns to India permanently. This day is now celebrated as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Non-Resident Indian Day).
- **May 25, 1915:** Establishes the Satyagraha Ashram (later known as Sabarmati Ashram) in Kochrab, near Ahmedabad.
- **April 1917:** Launches the Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar to address the grievances of indigo farmers under the oppressive Tinkathia system.
- **February 1918:** Leads the Ahmedabad Mill Strike, a dispute between textile mill workers and owners. He undertakes his first fast for a public cause.
- **March 1918:** Initiates the Kheda Satyagraha in Gujarat, advocating for the remission of taxes for peasants facing crop failure.
- **April 6, 1919:** Launches a nationwide hartal (strike) as part of the Rowlatt Satyagraha to protest the repressive Rowlatt Act.
- **April 13, 1919:** The tragic Jallianwala Bagh massacre takes place in Amritsar.

Leading the Nation: Mass Movements (1920 – 1942)

- **August 1, 1920:** Launches the Non-Cooperation Movement, the first pan-India mass movement against British rule, in conjunction with the Khilafat Movement.
- **February 5, 1922:** The Chauri Chaura incident occurs, where a violent mob attacks a police station.
- **February 12, 1922:** Gandhi calls off the Non-Cooperation Movement due to the violence at Chauri Chaura.
- **March 10, 1922:** Arrested for sedition and sentenced to six years in prison. He is released in February 1924 on medical grounds.
- **December 1924:** Presides over the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress, the only time he held this position.
- **March 12, 1930:** Embarks on the historic Dandi March (Salt March) from Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal village of Dandi to break the British salt law.
- **April 6, 1930:** Breaks the salt law at Dandi, marking the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- **May 5, 1930:** Is arrested and imprisoned without trial.
- **March 5, 1931:** Signs the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, agreeing to discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement and attend the Second Round Table Conference in London.
- **September – December 1931:** Attends the Second Round Table Conference in London. The conference ends in failure for Indian demands.
- **January 1932:** Resumes the Civil Disobedience Movement. Is arrested again.
- **September 20, 1932:** Begins a fast unto death in Yerwada Jail, Poona, to protest against the Communal Award which provided separate electorates for the 'Depressed Classes'.
- **September 24, 1932:** The Poona Pact is signed, reserving seats for the Depressed Classes within the general electorate. Gandhi breaks his fast.
- **1934:** Formally withdraws from the Indian National Congress to focus on constructive programs in rural India.
- **August 8, 1942:** The All-India Congress Committee, at its session in Bombay, passes the Quit India Resolution. Gandhi gives the call to "Do or Die".
- **August 9, 1942:** Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders are arrested. He is imprisoned at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune.

Final Years, Independence & Assassination (1944 – 1948)

- **February 22, 1944:** Kasturba Gandhi dies at the Aga Khan Palace while in detention.
- **May 6, 1944:** Gandhi is released from prison on health grounds.
- **1946:** Travels extensively through Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) and other riot-torn areas of Bihar, appealing for peace and communal harmony.
- **August 15, 1947:** India achieves independence. Gandhi, deeply pained by the Partition, spends the day in Calcutta, fasting and praying for an end to communal violence.
- **January 13, 1948:** Begins his last fast in Delhi for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and the restoration of peace.
- **January 18, 1948:** Breaks his fast after receiving assurances from leaders of all communities to work for peace.
- **January 30, 1948:** Is assassinated by Nathuram Godse on his way to a prayer meeting at Birla House, New Delhi.