

What is Earth Day 2018? Everything you need to know about the environmental event

What is Earth Day?

Celebrated every year on April 22, Earth Day aims to encourage people across the world to be more environmentally friendly. This might mean increasing the amount they recycle, volunteering for a local green project or installing solar panels at their home. The very first event for Earth Day, which was held in America nearly five decades ago following a devastating oil spill, is credited as the beginning of the modern environmental movement. Since its launch, Earth Day has been supported by an array of famous faces, including Hollywood stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Emma Watson.

Now it is coordinated globally by the non-profit Earth Day Network, which describes it as 'the largest secular holiday in the world'. Each year, festivals, parades and rallies are held in at least 192 countries to demonstrate support for environmental protection. The day has its own flag, which was created by US peace activist John McConnell and, perhaps unsurprisingly, features a picture of the world on it. It also has its own anthems – one of which is performed to the tune of Beethoven's Ode To Joy, but with lyrics about protecting the planet.

This year, more than one billion people are expected to celebrate Earth Day.

For details of events in your area, visit www.earthday.org.

Where is Earth Day celebrated?

All across the Earth, of course!

The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, in America.

It was founded by former US senator Gaylord Nelson after he saw the enormous 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. To mark the landmark occasion, a staggering 20million people took part in rallies across the US. In 1990, the event went global, with 200million people in 141 countries celebrating it, according to the Earth Day Network. More than two decades on, at least 192 countries mark Earth Day every year, including Britain, Canada, Ukraine, Spain, and the Philippines. Some communities even celebrate Earth Week – an entire seven days of activities and rallies focused on the world's environmental problems.

How should I celebrate?

Here are six ways to mark Earth Day:

- Grow your own food (or buy locally-grown produce)
- Go paperless
- Plant a tree
- Stop drinking bottled water
- Start carpooling (or take up cycling)
- Invest in a solar-powered phone charger