

Thursday is National *I Love Lucy* Day

National *I Love Lucy* Day falls is celebrated on October 15 this year, and who doesn't love this iconic comedy? At this very minute, somewhere in the world, Lucy and Ricky are arguing in 44 countries. On *I Love Lucy* Day we recall a simpler time when the family gathered in 44 countries. (We repeat one) rabbit-eared, black and white TV set with only three channels. CBS was the only channel to watch on Monday nights at 9 p.m. So throw on your pj's and bunny slippers to walk down memory lane.

History of *I Love Lucy* *I Love Lucy* Day, which takes place on October 15, celebrates the trendsetting sitcom of the same name, *I Love Lucy*. Spearheaded by Lucille Ball as the bubbly, aspiring-star Lucy, and her real-life husband Desi Arnaz as singer and bandleader Ricky Ricardo took America by storm.

Shot in Hollywood, the show was innovative and fresh. It was the first sitcom to be shot in 35mm film in front of a live audience, those were real laughs we were hearing, not canned laughter. Three cameras were used simultaneously to shoot the show, allowing three different angles for each scene. After Lucy's pregnancy, the reruns that were shown as a way to let her rest were so popular that it effectively started the concept of the rerun, revolutionizing TV as we know it.

I Love Lucy was the most-watched television show in the country for most of its airtime, even becoming the first show to end while at the top of the Nielsen ratings. It won five Emmy awards and has consistently been called one of the greatest shows in television history. Following the end of the original run of the series, one-hour episodes rebroadcast as *The Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Show* or *The Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour* were rebroadcast from 1957 to 1960. Starting in 1962, Ball starred in *The Lucy Show*, which ran until 1968, when *Here's Lucy* started and broadcasted until 1974.

Today reruns of *I Love Lucy* are broadcast on several late-night networks, such as the Hallmark Channel, TBS, Nick and Nite, and TV Land, as well as many streaming sites. It is credited to be the longest-broadcasted TV show of all time.

5 Surprising *I Love Lucy* Truths

- One of the first Hollywood-filmed shows - Most shows were taped live in New York City at the time but this was taped in Los Angeles since the Arnazes didn't want to move away.
- It was the first show to syndicate reruns - Producers thought of the innovative rerun concept as a way to give Ball maternity leave.
- The magic 10 million - *I Love Lucy* was the first American television show to reach 10 million households.
- Ricky Ricardo almost was Larry Lopez - But the alliteration of Larry and Lucy wasn't deemed appealing.
- Episodes were filmed almost seamlessly - Scenes very rarely had to be re-taped; the live audience often had the start-to-finish experience.

Why We Love *I Love Lucy*

• It was a real love story. One of the reasons why we all love *I Love Lucy* is that Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz were a real, married couple. They met on the set of a 1940 film called "Too Many Girls." The two eloped later that year and by 1951 were having some trouble in the marriage. The *I Love Lucy Show* was Lucy's brainstorm idea to keep her marriage with Desi intact.

• It was hilarious. Even today, scholarly types go back and forth over why the show actually worked when the reason is simple — the show was freakin' hilarious! By 1951, Lucille Ball, a former B-rated glamour girl, was already 40 years old, considered past most actresses' prime. The idea that someone still so beautiful would do anything for a laugh in the style of slapstick masters like Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, or even the Three Stooges was revolutionary. Everybody who watches the show has a favorite episode where Lucy inevitably gets dunked, schmeared, frozen in a vault, or ahead of time in a wine vat full of grapes.

• It was ahead of its time. The show was groundbreaking even in the '50s. The idea of a Latino band leader in an interracial marriage never even seemed to raise eyebrows. More than that, Arnaz was a genius of innovation with the show as using three cameras and 35mm film for the very first time — a technological achievement that television shows still use today. When Lucy and Desi took a pay cut with the understanding that they would gain 100% of the most lucrative syndication, this became one of the first and most lucrative syndication deals in history.

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