

# What day even was Ferris Bueller's Day Off anyway?

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By [Anna Leszkiewicz](#)

Hey, internet pop culture nerd. Yeah, you. You, who clicked on a headline about what specific date it is during the 1987 classic film of fun and hijinks *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. You are probably aware that on Monday, 5 June, the internet celebrated Ferris Bueller Day – the day when, supposedly, Ferris took his titular day off (5 June 1985).

There were [viral posts](#) – even by [IMDB](#) and [JSTOR](#), so you know it's real. There was a [Twitter Moment](#) about it and everything.

But what if they were wrong. What if it Ferris Bueller's Day Off wasn't on 5 June 1985 at all.

*How is this day calculated*, I hear you cry – desperately, tears streaming from your eyes and spit flying from your mouth. *How?!* There's no canonical mention of the date in the movie, so any attempts to figure it out must be done from background materials, key events, and vague temporal references.

So, the argument for 5 June mostly revolves around one key event that takes place in the film: a baseball game. Yep, you remember – battabattabattasawinggggibatta.

We see Ferris, Cameron and Sloane chatting and eating in the stands while watching the Chicago Cubs, and we cut to televised footage from the game beaming from the TV in a pizza place. According to [a 2011 article by Larry Granillo on the website Baseball Prospectus](#), this footage is from a real Cubs game that took place on, yes, 5 June 1985. The scene was shot in September 1985, and what they filmed was combined with the real game footage.

But there are, of course, other theories. [A article by Andy Lewis from June 2015 posits September 1985](#). Why? The Von Steuben Parade. Yes, the parade of "Twist and Shout" fame. This German-American celebration is a real event that takes place every year in Chicago on or around 17 September (the birthdate of Baron Friedrich von Steuben, who the parade celebrates).

To confuse matters even more, though, there's a lot of evidence to suggest that the day off is definitely supposed to be at the *end* of the school year, not the beginning: Ferris and Cameron's upcoming graduation looms over the whole story. Ferris first pitches the day off by telling the audience, "If anybody needs a day off, it's Cameron. He has a lot of things to sort out before he graduates." [Brendan Hardesty from IMDB notes](#) that Principal Rooney says Ferris mustn't think he can "coast this last month and still graduate" – so we're roughly

says Ferris mustn't think he can coast this last month and still graduate – so we're roughly a month away from the end of the school year. Plus, according to Ferris, we're only two months away from their actual graduation: he says to camera at the end of the film, "We're gonna graduate in a couple of months. Then we have the summer."

But if school usually ends in June, and Ferris and co. still have a month of term left, isn't 5 June a little late in the year for the day off? In June 2016, Tim Lybarger threw a firework in the mix with his controversial suggestion that neither 5 June nor 17 September are the correct date. Lybarger pitches *May*.

Lybarger uses what I like to call the screenshot hyperanalysis approach, looking at several key props glimpsed in the background. First: posters in the school hallways advertising band try outs and magazine submissions deadlines in late May. Secondly: the calendar in Rooney's office, which is on the month of May. It seems like the props department are definitely on team May.

But there's a curveball in Lybarger's post – as the film goes on, and, in fact, right before the parade scene, we see Ferris's dad reading a copy of the *Chicago Sun-Times* in the back of his cab. (It's just a prop, as it includes a story on the local community rallying around Ferris's illness, but it does seem to be made from a real copy of the newspaper.) Using Google News archives, Lybarger found extremely similar stories from papers printed on September 12, 1985: near enough to the Von Steuben Parade to support that theory.

So where do we end up? Is it early-mid May? 5 June? 12 September? 17 September? It's hard to say. In times like these, I wonder... what would Ferris say?

Ultimately, the reason that *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* captured so many hearts is because it offers a fantasy divorced from the usual constraints of routine. The day off exists in a glorious, beautiful vacuum, cut off from calendars and deadlines and graduation dates. It's exciting because it's a day unlike any other happening on a day that is, in every other respect, like every single other. There was no key occasion that made that day the day. It just spontaneously blossomed into life.

In *Ferris Bueller*, life moves fast. We imagine a single day holding all the joys and pleasures of a long, luxurious summer. It's both transient and eternal. It's May, June, July, August, September all rolled into one ridiculous 24-hour period. This retrospective confusion around the date itself feels weirdly, wonderfully apt. So get offline, internet nerds, and stop and look around once in a while. The sun's out!

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