

A brief history of the Pride flag



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The rainbow Pride flag is synonymous with Pride Month and the LGBTQ+ community. Today, there are flags to represent all different communities within the wider LGBTQ+ community. Let's take a look at how the Pride flag has developed over time.

Gilbert Baker designed the first rainbow flag at the request of Harvey Milk (one of the first openly gay elected officials in the United States) as a symbol of pride for the gay community.^{1,2}

This version of the flag first flew in the United Nations Plaza on June 25, 1978, during the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade.¹

The aim was to highlight that acceptance and equality of sexual and gender minorities are a global struggle and a matter of civil rights.³



1978

Breaking down the colors of the Pride flag

Sex	Life	Healing	Sunlight
Nature	Magic	Serenity	Spirit

In the Gilbert Baker Pride Flag, each color was used to represent a different element of people's lives²

1979

The original flag was modified from eight colors to six, due to the availability and cost of fabric, resulting in the most commonly seen version of the Pride flag.^{2,4}

This version of the flag was first seen on display on each side of the street lamps on Market Street, San Francisco, for the 1979 Gay Freedom Day Parade.²



2018

A redesigned version of the traditional Pride flag was created by designer Daniel Quasar. They incorporated elements from both the Philadelphia's people of color inclusive flag and the Transgender Pride flag to focus on inclusion and progress.^{5,6}

Using the six-stripe rainbow design as a base, this Progress flag adds black, brown, light blue, pink, and white stripes to represent marginalized communities, including people of color and transgender people.⁵



2021

The Pride progress flag was redesigned by Valentino Vecchiotti to be more inclusive of intersex people, as part of a collaboration with the advocacy group, Intersex Equality Rights UK⁷

This now incorporates the intersex flag, which was originally created in 2013 by Intersex Human Rights Australia and includes a purple circle that is superimposed over a yellow triangle.⁷



The Progress Pride flag arrow design

The portrayal of the new colors as an arrow pointing right is a representation of forward movement.⁵

The positioning of this arrow to the left edge indicates that progress still needs to be made.⁵

The Pride flags are iconic symbols of the LGBTQ+ community and its proud legacy. For the LGBTQ+ community, in the words of Gilbert Baker, "The rainbow has given our people a thing that connects us. I can go to another country, and if I see a rainbow flag, I feel like that's someone who is a kindred spirit or [that it's] a safe place to go."⁴ We hope this brief history of the Pride flag has been interesting and informative.

For more information on the Pride flag and different variations that exist, here are some useful resources:

Pride: What is the Progress Pride flag? www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/57607955

LGBTQ+ Pride flags and what they represent www.dmu.ac.uk/events/pride/flags.aspx

Rainbow Flag (LGBT) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_\(LGBT\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT))

References

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3. Museum of Modern Art. Gilbert Baker, Rainbow Flag, 1978. www.moma.org/collection/works/192373 (accessed February 2023);
4. Museum of Modern Art. MoMA Acquires the Rainbow Flag. www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2015/06/17/moma-acquires-the-rainbow-flag (accessed February 2023);
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6. Advocate. Will Everyone Feel Included With Artist's New Pride Flag? www.advocate.com/pride/2018/6/08/will-everyone-feel-included-artists-new-pride-flag (accessed February 2023);
7. This Pride Flag is Designed For Intersex Inclusion. www.them.us/story/progress-pride-flag-intersex-inclusive-makeover (accessed February 2023).