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## The most important dates in the history of surfing (/surfing/10553-the-most-important-dates-in-the-history-of-surfing)



**Surfing is one of the world's oldest sports. Although the act of riding a wave started as a religious/cultural tradition, surfing rapidly transformed into a global water sport.**

The popularity of surfing is the result of events, innovations, **influential people** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/9754-the-most-influential-people-to-the-birth-of-surfing>), and technological developments. Early surfers had to challenge the power of the oceans with heavy, finless surfboards.

Today, surfing has evolved into a high-tech extreme sport, in which hydrodynamics and materials play vital roles. Surfboard craftsmen have improved their techniques; wave riders have bettered their skills.

The present and future of surfing can only be understood if we look back at its glorious past. From the rudimentary "caballitos de totora" to computerized shaping machines, there's an incredible trunk full of memories, culture, achievements and inventions to be rifled through.

Discover the most important dates in the history of surfing:

**3000-1000 BCE:** Peruvian fishermen build and ride "caballitos de totora" to transport their nets and collect fish;

**900 BCE:** Ancient Polynesians ride "olo" boards as a traditional, religious art form;

**1769:** Botanist Joseph Banks writes first description of wave riding at Matavai Bay, Tahiti;

**1778:** Captain James Cook touches the Hawaiian Islands;

**1866:** Mark Twain tries surfing in Hawaii;

**1885:** Three Hawaiian princes surf for the first time in the USA, at the San Lorenzo river mouth, in Santa Cruz;

**1898:** Hawaii is annexed by the USA;

**1906:** Thomas Edison films surfers for the first time, at Waikiki, Hawaii;

- 1907:** Jack London visits Hawaii and tries surfing at Waikiki, Hawaii;
- 1907:** George Freeth is publicly announced as the "Hawaiian wonder" who could "walk on water", at Redondo Beach;
- 1907:** Surf Life Saving Association is founded in Australia;
- 1908:** Alexander Hume Ford founds the Outrigger Canoe and Surfboard Club;
- 1911:** Duke Kahanamoku, Knute Cottrell and Ken Winter found Hui Nalu;
- 1914:** Duke Kahanamoku introduces surfing to Australia, at Freshwater Beach;
- 1920:** Duke Kahanamoku wins two gold medals for the USA at the Olympic Games, in Antwerp;
- 1920:** **Edward, Prince of Wales** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/7213-the-rare-surfing-photo-of-edward-prince-of-wales>), is photographed surfing in Hawaii;
- 1922:** **Agatha Christie** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/6340-agatha-christie-surfed-waves-in-1924>), the crime novelist, learns how to surf in South Africa;
- 1926:** Tom Blake and Sam Reid surf Malibu for the first time;
- 1926:** The **first waves ridden in Europe** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/7917-old-portuguese-surf-film-rewrites-the-history-of-surfing>) are filmed in Leca da Palmeira, Portugal;
- 1928:** Tom Blake organizes the first Pacific Coast Surfing Championship, at Corona del Mar;
- 1929:** **Lewis Rosenberg** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/3447-uk-surfing-history-started-in-1929>) rides the first waves in the UK;
- 1929:** The world's first artificial wave pool is built in Munich, Germany;
- 1930:** Tom Blake build the first waterproof surf camera housing;
- 1930:** The "Swastika" is the world's first mass-produced surfboard;
- 1933:** San Onofre is surfed for the first time;
- 1935:** Alfred Gallant Jr. applies floor wax to his surfboard;
- 1935:** Tom Blake writes "Hawaiian Surfboard", surfing's first full-length surf book;
- 1935:** Tom Blake introduces the first stabilizing fin on a surfboard;
- 1935:** John "Doc" Ball founds the Palos Verdes Surf Club in California;
- 1935:** Tom Blake writes an article on how to build a surfboard in "**Popular Mechanics**" (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/6608-better-ways-to-build-surfboards-in-1935>) magazine;
- 1940:** Gene "Tarzan" Smith paddles a 14-foot board from Oahu to Kauai, in Hawaii;
- 1943:** Hawaiian big wave pioneer Dickie Cross dies at Sunset Beach, in Hawaii;
- 1944:** John Crowell, Charles Bates and Harold Cauthery work on **surf forecasting for the Allied Invasion of Normandy**; (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/6873-d-day-the-secret-of-swell-and-surf-forecast>)
- 1943:** Tom Blake adds a twin fin system to a hollow timber board;
- 1945:** Frank Adler founds the Australian Surf Board Association;
- 1948:** John Lind founds the Waikiki Surf Club;
- 1951:** Hugh Bradner, a MIT physicist, produces the world's first neoprene wetsuit;
- 1952:** Jack O'Neill opens his "Surf Shop" in San Francisco;
- 1954:** Hobie Alter opens his surfboard factory at Dana Point;
- 1954:** Wally Froiseth organizes the Makaha International Surfing Championships;
- 1956:** First waves ridden in France, at Biarritz;
- 1956:** Dave Sweet shapes the world's first polyurethane foam surfboard;
- 1957:** Mike Stange, Greg Noll, Pat Curren, Mickey Munoz and Harry Schurch ride Waimea Bay for the first time;
- 1957:** Hollywood surf movie "**Gidget**" (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surf-movies/4934-gidget>) is released;
- 1958:** Marge Calhoun becomes the world's first female surfing champion after winning the Makaha International;
- 1959:** John Severson founds "The Surfer", the world's first surfing magazine;
- 1961:** **Philip Edwards** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/6889-phil-edwards-the-first-surfer-of-pipeline>) rides Banzai Pipeline, in Hawaii, for the first time;
- 1961:** Dick Dale pioneers the **surf music** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/5329-the-best-surf-music-bands-ever>) genre;
- 1962:** The Beach Boys release "Surfin' Safari";
- 1962:** Bob Evans founds "Surfing World", Australia's first surf magazine;
- 1964:** The World Surfing Championships hit Manly Beach, in Australia;
- 1964:** Eduardo Arena is elected the first president of the International Surfing Federation (ISF);
- 1964:** John Kelly founds Save Our Surf;
- 1966:** Bruce Brown releases "**The Endless Summer**" (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surf-movies/4629-the-endless-summer>), the world's first surf movie;
- 1967:** Alex Matienzo, Jim Thompson, and Dick Knottmeyer surf Mavericks for the first time;
- 1969:** Greg Noll rides one of the biggest waves of all time at Makaha, Hawaii;
- 1969:** Steve Russ, a kneeboarder, invents the surf leash in Santa Cruz, California;
- 1969:** Doug Warbrick and Brian Singer found Rip Curl in Torquay, Australia;
- 1969:** Alan Green and John Law found Quiksilver in Torquay, Australia;
- 1970:** O'Neill markets the one-piece fullsuit;
- 1971:** **Tom Morey** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/bodyboarding/5830-bodyboarding-celebrates-40-years>) invents the bodyboard;
- 1971:** Jeff Hakman wins the first edition of the Pipeline Masters;
- 1972:** Kelly Slater, the most successful competitive surfer of all time, is born in Cocoa Beach, Florida;
- 1973:** Ian Cairns wins the first world surfing title, at the Smirnoff World Pro-Am Championships;
- 1973:** Gordon and Rena Merchant found Billabong in the Gold Coast, Australia;
- 1978:** Hawaiian lifeguard, surfer and waterman **Eddie Aikau** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/8131-the-surfing-life-story-of-eddie-aikau>), 31, is lost at sea, south of Molokai, never to be found;
- 1979:** Michel Barland designs the world's first commercial computerized shaping machine;

- 1980:** Simon Anderson creates the "**Thruster** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/5440-simon-anderson-reveals-the-story-behind-the-thruster>)" surfboard fin system;
- 1982:** Ian Cairns founds the Association of Surfing Professionals;
- 1983:** Michael Ho wins the first edition of the Triple Crown of Surfing;
- 1984:** Glen Hening and Tom Pratte found the Surfrider Foundation;
- 1984:** Tom Carrol and Kim Mearig win the first ever ASP World Tour;
- 1986:** Mike Stewart and Ben Severson surf **Teahupoo** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/7725-the-history-of-the-teahupoo-waves-and-surf-break>), in Tahiti, for the first time;
- 1986:** Herbie Fletcher tows Tom Carroll, Martin Potter and Gary Elkerton into 10-foot waves at Pipeline, Hawaii;
- 1987:** "**California Games** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/5365-california-games-the-first-surfing-video-game>)" is the world's first video game featuring surfing;
- 1992:** Kelly Slater wins his first ASP World Tour title;
- 1995:** The Olympic Movement recognizes the International Surfing Association as the world's governing body for surfing;
- 2000:** Laird Hamilton rides the **Millennium Wave** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/videos/8805-the-millennium-wave-by-laird-hamilton>) at Teahupoo, Tahiti;
- 2005:** Clark Foam, producer of 60% of the world's surfboard blanks, shuts down;
- 2011:** Garrett McNamara rides **the biggest wave of all time** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/6412-garrett-mcnamara-rides-the-biggest-wave-of-all-time-in-nazare>), in Nazaré, Portugal;
- 2014:** **Gabriel Medina** (<http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/11298-gabriel-medina-wins-maiden-asp-world-championship-tour-title>) is the first ever Brazilian to win a world surfing title;

*Have we missed a key date? Tell us.*



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**Mindi Reid**

Why is the forced and illegal annexation of Hawai'i a "surfing history" date? If one wants to note negative impact on Hawaiian cultural practices, the overthrow of the rightful Hawaiian government in 1893 would be more edifying..

Like · Reply · 1 · Jun 27, 2014 1:32am



**Sam Buckle** · Owner at Design and Film Cornwall with Pollenation Marketing

Um, yes you have missed a date. January 28th 1998. Ken Bradshaw towing in at Log Cabins on the biggest ever swell to hit the north shore!

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**Sam Buckle** · Owner at Design and Film Cornwall with Pollenation Marketing

Oh, and Darrick Doerner, Super Bowl Sunday at Waimea 1988!

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Top seeds shine at the 2016 Hawaiian Pro (/surfing/13238-top-seeds-shine-at-the-2016-hawaiian-pro)

*John John Florence and Kelly Slater won their Round 3 heats at the 2016 Hawaiian Pro, in Haleiwa.*

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NeilPryde announces the Convertible Kite Racing (CR:X) class (/kiteboarding/13239-neilpryde-announces-the-convertible-kite-racing-crx-class)

*NeilPryde has announced the expansion of its one-design program into kite racing with the introduction of CR:X, the world's first one-design kite racing class.*