



# EASTER TRADITIONS

The originsÉ

# Lent

40-day period before Easter during which some Christians fast or give up something they enjoy.

## Roman Catholic tradition

Some people give up eating meat, for instance.

## Protestant tradition

Some people give up something they consider a vice, like fast food or cable TV.

# Shrove Tuesday

The day before Lent starts. The tradition is to use all the fat foods in the kitchen before Lent begins, and they can no longer be eaten.

Great Britain

North America

- It is called Pancake Day because it is traditional to eat pancakes to use the fat foods in the kitchen.
- Some people do pancake races: they run and toss the pancakes in a frying pan without dropping them.
- Video

- It is called Mardi Gras and it is traditional to celebrate a carnival in New Orleans.
- Traditionally, carnival was a time of eating, drinking and fun before Lent.
- In New Orleans they have celebrations and parades with amazing costumes.
- Video

# Other Easter-related terms

- Easter: named after the Anglo-Saxon goddess *Eostre* (related to new beginnings, spring and fertility).
- Ash Wednesday: the first day of Lent, after Shrove Tuesday.
- Holy week: the week before Easter
  - Palm Sunday: Sunday before Easter
  - Maundy Thursday
  - Good Friday
  - Holy Saturday
- Easter Sunday
- Easter Monday: another public holiday in the UK, without much religious significance, so people practice other secular traditions.

Have you ever  
wondered why we  
use these symbols?

# THE EGG

- symbol of fertility and life , so it celebrates the new life that came to Jesus when he resurrected.
- given as a welcome gift, as it was forbidden during Lent.



Some egg custonsÉ



# PAGE EGGING



- painting the shells of hard-boiled eggs in bright colours, to represent the sunlight of spring.
- origins of colouring eggs: this practice was made popular by King Edward I of England, who ordered 450 eggs to be decorated as Easter gifts.

# EGG ROLLING



- the idea is to see who can roll the egg the longest distance, without breaking it, or it is rolled between two pegs, usually down a hillside or slope.
- the Christian church managed to adapt this pagan ritual by explaining that it represented the rolling away of the tomb where Christ had been buried.
- Video

# EGG TAPPING



- you have to tap your opponent's egg until it breaks. The winner goes through to the next round, and so until there is only one egg left unbroken.
- some people have competitions in houses and pubs, exchanging quite a bit of money and can get very competitive.

# EASTER EGG HUNT



- more common in the US.
- decorated on Saturday evening and given on Sunday.
- children search to find the eggs that the Easter bunny has hidden around the house while they were asleep.
- Video

# CHOCOLATE EGGS



- more common in the UK.
- people simply exchange them as gifts.
- as chocolate became more widespread in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a chocolate version of the traditional painted egg was developed.
- these eggs can be hollow or have a filling.
- around 80 million chocolate eggs are eaten each year in Britain.

# THE EASTER BUNNY AND BASKET



- rabbits were the most fertile animals known and were symbols of new life.
- as an Easter symbol it originated in Germany, and so was brought by German settlers to America.
- according to a German legend, a white hare would leave Easter baskets filled with candies, brightly coloured eggs and other sweets for kids .
- it's more typical in America and has only recently arrived in Britain.

# OTHER SYMBOLS (US) É



- the Easter lily: symbolizing the values of purity, life and renewal.



- the Easter peeps: sweet marshmallow candy shaped like a chick or bunny.

And finally, some  
other traditionsÉ



# Morris dancing



- traditional form of English folk dance.
- men dance through the streets carrying a stick or a handkerchief.
- Video

# Easter bonnet parade



- Easter was a traditional day to get married, so people wore new clothes, shoes, hats and ribbons.
- today there are parades in London and especially in New York.
- Video

# The Ceremony of Royal Maundy



- traditional in the UK, held by Queen Elizabeth.
- money is distributed to senior citizens (a man and a woman) to thank them for their service to the community.

# Religious ceremonies



- sunrise service: held on Easter Sunday on a hillside so everyone can see the sunrise.



- Easter vigil: lighting a fire outside a church in the early Sunday morning.

And finally, some  
typical foodsÉ

# Easter Sunday menu



- breakfast: boiled eggs
- lunch: roast lamb, mint sauce and vegetables.
- dessert: Easter nests and biscuits, Simnel cake and hot cross buns.



# Simnel cake



- Simnel cake: a rich fruitcake covered with a thick layer of marzipan. Eleven balls of marzipan represent the eleven true disciples (excluding Judas).
- The legend says it was first made by a couple named Simon and Nelly.

# Hot cross buns



- served on Good Friday.
- small sweet buns with a cross on top made of sugar icing.
- the pagan tradition says they represent the moon divided into four quarters.
- the Christian tradition says they represent Jesus' death on the cross.
- "Hot cross buns,  
hot cross buns,  
one a penny, two a penny,  
hot cross buns.

If you do not like them,  
give them to your sons,  
one a penny, two a penny,  
hot cross buns."