

Easter Special



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What's the connection between Mardi Gras, doughnuts and Shrove Tuesday? Find out by reading the 'Easter Special' in 'Did you know?'.

Let's give you a few more clues: *Shrove Tuesday* is also called *Pancake Day*. *Mardi Gras* is French for *Fat Tuesday*. In Germany, doughnuts are a traditional food on *Faschingsdienstag*. Got it? We're talking about the festive time leading up to Lent - more specifically, the Tuesday before *Ash Wednesday*. This special Tuesday was the last day of festivities before the fasting season of Lent. Pancakes and doughnuts were traditionally associated with this day because they were a way to use up rich foodstuffs such as eggs, milk, and sugar, before the fasting season of the 40 days of Lent.

On *Shrove Tuesday*, or *Pancake Day*, pancake races are held in towns across the United Kingdom. Participants race through the streets whilst tossing pancakes into the air and catching them in the pan whilst running. The tradition originated in 1445 when a housewife from Olney, Buckinghamshire, was so busy making pancakes that she forgot the time until she heard the church bells ringing for the service. She raced out of the house to church while still carrying her frying pan and pancake. And from that time, pancake races have remained popular in the UK.

Click here and you can see **the Olney Pancake Race**:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mkiHjhOxh8&feature=related>

An event which takes place in Britain in the middle of Lent is *Mother's Day*, or *Mothering Sunday*. This year, it's on March 15th in the UK. Years ago, when a lot of people had servants, *Mother's Day* was when the servants were allowed to go home and see their parents. A Simnel cake was traditionally made to take home so that the mothers didn't have to bake for the family. And it has become a custom to eat this kind of cake at Easter. If you'd like a **recipe for Simnel cake**, click on:

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/easter/foods.html>

After the period of Lent, when even today people often give up pleasurable "vices" like alcohol, chocolate or cigarettes, comes *Easter*. In the western world, *Easter* falls between March 22 and April 25. For other special days, which have a fixed date, try our **memory**:

<http://xportal.klett-sprachen.de/club/0005>

What does *Easter* mean to you? How do you celebrate it? Probably not as they do in Gawthorpe, Yorkshire, where **the World Coal Carrying Championship** takes place every *Easter Monday*! Contestants have to run for one mile, carrying a 50kg bag of coal. Don't believe it? Click here and watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JqiBXn0MzU>

Coal carrying is a relatively new custom - less than 50 years old, whereas an *Easter* custom in Kent goes back to the twelfth century. The *Biddenden Dole* is bread, cheese and tea (it used to be beer!), which is handed out to the people of Biddenden. Nowadays, a cake is baked with an image of two women, the founders of this tradition, who were Siamese twins, born in 1100 and who died at the age of 34.

A more traditional way to celebrate *Easter* in Britain is to give presents of chocolate Easter eggs and to eat Hot Cross buns on *Good Friday*. And so the traditions go on - Maundy Money, egg-rolling, bottle kicking - and if you want to find out **more about Easter**, click on:

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/easter.html>