

Get your flour, milk and eggs ready – March 4th is Pancake Tuesday in the UK.



Forget the dressing up and carnival in Germany: the UK celebrates Shrove Tuesday on March 4th with much less fuss – just tossing a pancake or two.

While many countries in the world have a riotous time on Shrove Tuesday, the United Kingdom does nothing more than eat pancakes. It is a tradition that refers to the practice of eating up the fatty, rich foods before the quieter days of fasting during Lent, when these foods were forbidden. You may know the French words *Mardi Gras* which mean Fat Tuesday: this also refers to the notion of eating all the fatty foods before Ash Wednesday and the forty days of Lent.

The word *shrove* comes from the old word *shrive*, meaning to confess your sins. It is not a commonly used word and you do not often see it in other contexts but Shrove Tuesday. Although it is not a holiday (except in Northern Ireland), Pancake Tuesday is a well-respected tradition in most parts of the UK. And it has led to some interesting festivities throughout the country.

In the town of Olney in Buckinghamshire, there is a pancake race that has a 500-year-old history. The race is only open to women who are residents of the town and are over 18. They run from Olney Market Place to the Parish Church (a distance of nearly half a kilometre) and must be dressed as 'housewives': a skirt, an apron and a head covering. They must also carry a frying pan with a pancake in it and as they pass the finishing line they must toss the pancake.

If you are in London on Pancake Day, then head off to the Houses of Parliament for 10am, where you can see some highly competitive racing between teams from the House of Commons and the House of Lords. At lunchtime take the tube over to east London for the Great Spitalfields Pancake Race or try a very fancy race: the Inter-Livery and City of London Pancake Races at the Guildhall in the City of London. Teams wear their official ceremonial attire, plus a chef's hat and an apron. And if you pop across the river, you can enjoy the Better Bankside Pancake Day race at Southwark Cathedral. All of the participants in all of the races will have a frying pan and a pancake to toss.

And how are pancakes traditionally eaten in the UK? With sugar and lemon juice. So if you would like a quiet and more thoughtful Shrove Tuesday and want to avoid the German *Fasching* or *Karneval*, take yourself to the UK for 4th March and enjoy a pancake – you might even be able to toss a pancake yourself.

To find out more about Shrove Tuesday click [here](#).

And if you would like to use Pancake Day as a topic in your classroom from A1.2 upwards, then we have provided you with an activity. You'll find it in the following **Teacher's notes** and on the **Worksheet**.

Teacher's notes

Recipe for pancakes (A1 upwards) (15+ mins)

- Copy **Recipe for pancakes** (see Worksheet) – one for each student.
- On the board write the words: *Shrove Tuesday*. Ask students if they know anything about this day (see background notes above). Explain that in the UK people eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.
- Give each student a copy of the exercise **Recipe for pancakes** and tell the class they are going to listen to you and should complete the recipe. Give them time to read through the recipe's text first. Help with unknown vocabulary (sift = *durchsieben*, whisk = *verquirlen*, amount = *Menge*, batter = *Teig*, toss a pancake = *einen Pfannkuchen wenden*; 1 tablespoon = 15ml).
- Read out the complete **Recipe for pancakes** clearly and slowly. Repeat if necessary. (The words in bold are the missing words on your students' Worksheet.)
- Check answers together in class.

Recipe for pancakes

Ingredients:

110g flour	lemon juice
a pinch of salt	sugar
two eggs	
275ml milk	
50g butter	

Preparation:

Sift the flour and **salt** into a bowl.

Break the eggs into the flour.

Whisk the eggs and the flour **together**.

Slowly add the milk.

Melt a **small** amount of butter in a frying pan.

Make sure it is very **hot**.

Pour in **two** tablespoons of batter and check it covers the base of the pan.

After thirty **seconds** or so, toss the pancake so that it cooks on both sides.

Put the pancake on a **plate** and sprinkle with lemon juice and sugar.

Worksheet

Recipe for pancakes

Ingredients:

- (1) _____ g flour
a pinch of (2) _____
two (3) _____
(4) _____ ml milk
50g (5) _____
lemon juice
(6) _____



Preparation:

- Sift the flour and (7) _____ into a bowl.
(8) _____ the eggs into the flour.
Whisk the eggs and the flour (9) _____.
(10) _____ add the milk.
Melt a (11) _____ amount of butter in a frying pan and make sure it is very (12) _____.
Pour in (13) _____ tablespoons of batter and make sure it covers the base of the pan.
After thirty (14) _____ or so, toss the pancake so that it cooks on both sides.

Put the pancake on a (15) _____ and sprinkle with lemon juice and sugar.