

Easter traditions and food from around the world

Easter is a time of year when people around the world celebrate in style as the most important Christian festival of the year. Many European countries, with their strong Catholic and Orthodox faiths have created traditions and festivals that make good quiz clues. Whilst writing the Christian Aid quiz I came across several interesting European curiosities, for example on Good Friday in the Colosseum a huge cross with burning torches is lit whilst the stations of the cross are read in multiple languages. You had better watch out if you travel to Corfu on Holy Saturday as locals take part in a local custom of pot throwing out of an upstairs window onto the street below, thought to symbolise welcoming spring and a good harvest collected in new pots.

Elsewhere in the world, for example Washington DC an Easter egg roll takes place on the South Lawn of the White House. In Australia, an environmental concern for the dwindling populations of rabbit eared bandicoots (a rabbit-sized marsupial), has prompted its confectioners to make chocolate bilbys with proceeds benefiting the endangered animal.

In England our traditions tend to go as far as attending a church service and partaking in Easter egg hunts. Many churches have several services during the day, for example in Walsingham.

Easter Food

Another important aspect of Easter, as a feast day, is enjoying seasonal treats. Pashka is a pudding from Russia which is made of many foods that were forbidden during Lent including curd cheese, dried fruit and alcohol. It is traditionally made in a mould with the letters XB on the side meaning 'Christ is Risen!'. In Italy, Easter is celebrated with a panatone shaped liked a dove whilst in the UK the simnel cake is a favourite baked treat with the marzipan balls representing the disciples of Jesus, with the exception of Judas. Another treat are hot cross buns with a cross made either of water and flour or pastry. Our traditional meal of roast lamb symbolises Jesus as the lamb of God as a sacrifice he made for us all.