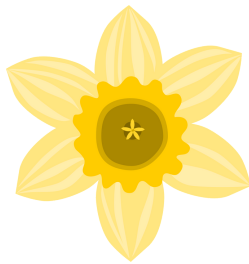


Easter Traditions Around the World



© Skolelærerlife.dk

Name:
Grade:



Secret Easter Letters

in Denmark



As Easter approaches, people in Denmark have a special tradition, where they send secret letters to friends and family. The letters are called "gækkebreve." Do you know about those? The idea is that you don't write who the letter is from. The recipient has to guess that. The tradition started in the 17th century. But in the beginning, they didn't write letters. They exchanged flowers instead.

The first known secret letter (gækkebrev) was sent on April 18th 1770. The letter was sent to Marie Hansdatter. It is only during the 20th century that the letters has become a tradition for children.

In a secret letter, you often write a small verse that rhymes. Finally, you finish by writing your name with dots instead of letters.

If you receive a secret letter, you have to guess who the sender is. If guessed correctly, the sender owes an Easter egg. If the sender is not guessed, the recipient of the letter owes an Easter egg.

It is only in Denmark that they have the tradition of sending secret letters to one another. And you'll never guess what I wish for you:

H.... E....!

the Easter Bunny

in Germany



Have you ever wondered why we have an Easter Bunny? Easter is usually considered a Christian tradition, and there is no mentioning of Easter Bunnies in the Bible.

The truth is that the Easter Bunny might be an older tradition than the Christian one. It originates in Germany. The concept of a rabbit as a symbol of fertility can be traced back to pre-Christian societies, where these creatures were associated with spring, renewal, and the abundance of new life.

In medieval Europe, hares were also seen as symbols of innocence and purity, reinforcing their connection to the themes of rebirth and resurrection. As Christianity spread, some pagan customs merged with Christian celebrations, and the symbolism of the rabbit endured.

The precise transition of the Easter Bunny into the Christian Easter tradition is unclear, but by the 18th century, German immigrants in America had introduced the concept of an egg-laying hare as a symbol of Easter. Children would build nests for the "Osterhase" or Easter Bunny to lay colorful eggs. Over time, this tradition evolved further, with the eggs eventually becoming a central focus of the celebration. Hop hop and lay those eggs, ye old Easter Bunny!

TRUE OR FALSE?



Mark the right box.

In secret letters, you write your name with dots.

True

☐

False

☐

The tradition of sending gækkebreve is from America.

☐☐

The Easter Bunny is a made up tradition from the 20th century.

☐☐

In medieval Europe, hares were symbols of innocence and purity.

☐☐

The first secret letter was sent to Hans Hermansen in 1876.

☐☐

In the 17th century, people exchanged flowers instead of letters.

☐☐

Easter is normally considered a Buddhist tradition.

☐☐

Christianity and the pagan traditions concerning hares merged over time.

☐☐

Gækkebreve is an Easter tradition in most of the world.

☐☐

HOW MANY WORDS?



Write as many words as you can starting with Easter..

EASTER EGG

Hot Crosses and Rolling Eggs in United Kingdom



Forget about chocolate for Easter. In the United Kingdom, the Easter festivities involve hot cross buns. Hot cross buns are a type of sweet, spiced bun that is typically eaten on Good Friday. The buns are marked with a distinctive cross on the top, made either from a simple icing or with a mixture of flour and water. The cross is both a symbol of the Crucifixion and a representation of the Christian faith.

The buns themselves are made from a rich, sweet dough that usually contains currants or raisins, providing a fruity flavor. The spices commonly used include cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice, which contribute to the buns' distinct taste and aroma. After baking, the buns are often glazed with a sugar syrup to give them a shiny finish.

Another notable English tradition is the Easter egg roll, which takes place on Easter Monday. The rolling of eggs is said to be symbolic of the rolling away of the stone from Jesus' tomb during the Resurrection. The most famous Easter egg roll occurs on the slope of the White House lawn in the United States, but rolling eggs are also very popular in the UK. Here people gather to roll decorated hard-boiled eggs down a hill. The fastest egg is the winner. Ready, get set, go! May the best egg win!

Easter Witches

in Finland



Maybe you think that witches are something kids dress up as for Halloween? In Finland it is not so. The tradition of "virpominen" comes around for Easter where children dress up as witches, go door to door and exchange decorated willow twigs for candy. The tradition is similar to Halloween practices in other countries, but it has its unique Finnish characteristics.

Typically taking place on Palm Sunday, children dress in colorful and imaginative costumes, carry small bunches of decorated willow twigs, known as "virpovitsa" or "palmikko." The twigs are adorned with feathers, paper, and sometimes even small candies. The children visit neighbors, friends, and relatives, wishing them health and prosperity.

As part of the custom, the children recite a traditional rhyme or song, conveying Easter blessings and good wishes. The young witches will usually get chocolate, candy, or small coins for their efforts. This exchange symbolizes the warding off of evil spirits and the arrival of spring.

So if you see a witch in Finland for Easter, don't run away, she's probably just there to wish you good health and good luck.

DO YOU REMEMBER?



What did you read about in the text "Hot Crosses and Rolling Eggs". Write the answer in the box.

When do they eat hot cross buns in the United Kingdom?

What do the buns look like, and what is in them?

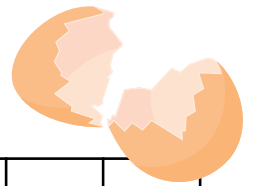
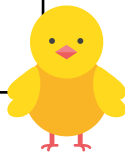
What does the Easter egg roll symbolize?

What did you read about in the text "Easter Witches ." Write a short abstract.

FIND AND WRITE

Look at the pictures and write the right words.

--	--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

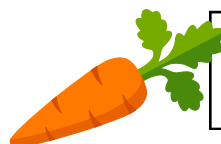
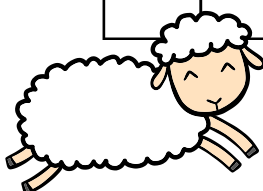
--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--	--	--

the White House Easter Egg Roll

in The United States



Can you imagine spending your Easter holiday rolling eggs down a hill with the President of The United States?

The White House Easter Egg Roll is a fun tradition that takes place every year on Easter Monday. It's a big party on the White House lawn where families come together to celebrate and have a good time.

The main event is rolling colored Easter eggs down a grassy hill using spoons. Kids push the eggs with all their might, and it turns into a friendly competition to see whose egg goes the farthest. It's a bit like a race, but with eggs!

Aside from the egg rolling, there are various activities like storytelling, live music, and even a visit from the Easter Bunny. The First Family usually makes an appearance, too, and sometimes they join in the fun. It's a way for the White House to open its doors to the public and spread joy during the Easter season.

The tradition has been going on for a long time, dating back to the 19th century. How to get invited? There's a lottery on the White House's information page online. Go and have a look!

Wet Monday

in Poland



Have you ever been to a party where all the guests splash each other with water? If that is a dream of yours, you might want to visit Poland during Easter. Wet Monday, known as "Śmigus-Dyngus" in Poland, is a playful Easter Monday tradition that involves water fights and good-natured splashing.

On Wet Monday, friends, family, and even strangers join in and douse each other with water. Buckets, water balloons, and water guns become the weapons of choice as people take to the streets, parks, and even their own homes to engage in good-humored water battles.

The tradition most likely goes back to the 14th century and the Christian idea of cleansing oneself, but there could also be a pre-Christian origin connected to the coming of spring – water being a symbol of life and renewal. Similar traditions can be found all around Central and Eastern Europe, with ПОЛИВАНІЙ ПОНЕДІЛОК (Watering Monday) in Ukraine, Oblévačka in Czech, Oblievačka in Slovak and Vizbevető in Hungary.

If you are a young woman, be aware! Legend has it that the girls who get the most soaked will be married within a year.

Wacky Ways for Easter Around the World



Smashing in Corfu



Be aware on Easter Sunday in Corfu because there is a tradition of breaking ceramic pots by throwing them out of the window. The locals smash casserole dishes, flowerpots, jugs... And they even make special oversized versions of these things.



Following the last footsteps of Jesus in Jerusalem



Jerusalem is where Jesus spent his final days. His journey, well documented in the sacred scriptures, passed through many locations that still exist today. For this reason, from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday, thousands of believers relive the last moments of Jesus' life by following his footsteps.



Willow whipping in Slovakia



Watch out girls in Slovakia! Prior to Christianity, there were many fertility rituals celebrated during the Easter season that were linked to the rebirth of nature. In some countries, these customs still survive. This is the case in Slovakia, where young girls and women are (carefully!) struck with bunches of willow branches.

DO YOU REMEMBER?



What did you read about in the texts "the White House Easter Egg Roll" and "Wet Monday"? Color the correct answers orange.

The White House Easter Egg Roll takes place every year on Easter Monday.

The White House Easter Egg Roll takes place every year on Easter Sunday.

You have to be famous to get invited to the White House Easter Egg Roll.

You need to win a lottery to get invited to the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Wet Monday is known as "Śmigus-Dyngus" in Poland.

There are no traditions like Wet Monday anywhere else in the world.

On Wet Monday, people douse each other with water.

On Wet Monday, people splash each other with honey.

What are the vacky Easter traditions they have in Corfu, Jerusalem and Slovakia? Write the answer in the box.

Corfu



Jerusalem



Slovakia



The Giant Omelette of Bessières

in France



If you like omelettes and are near the town of Bessières in France on Easter Monday, you're in luck. You can take part in a delicious Easter tradition which involves the preparation and cooking of a massive omelette made with thousands of eggs.

Legend has it that Napoleon Bonaparte, while traveling through the south of France, enjoyed an omelette so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelette for his army. The tradition is said to have originated from this.

In modern times, the Giant Omelette of Bessières has become a festive Easter event. On Easter Monday, a group of volunteers gather in the town square to crack thousands of eggs into a giant pan. The number of eggs used often exceeds 15,000. The omelette is then cooked and served to the public, free of charge.

This tradition has spread to other places in France and around the world, with different communities organizing their own versions of giant omelette celebrations during the Easter season. It has become a symbol of communal spirit – and a tasty one at that. Bon appetit!

Murder and Mayhem in Norway



"Påskekrim" in Norway refers to a peculiar Easter tradition where Norwegians indulge in crime novels, detective stories, and crime-related television shows during the Easter holiday. The term "Påskekrim" literally translates to "Easter crime."

The tradition began in 1923 when two young guys wrote a crime novel and convinced their publisher to launch a major marketing campaign. The Sunday before Easter, the book's title "Bergen train looted in the night" gets the top spot on the front page of the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten. The stunt turns heads. The ad is so believable that most people don't realise that it is fiction – they believe the train has actually been robbed.

The drama gets massive attention, and the novel becomes a huge success. The campaign was so successful that it turned into an annual phenomenon, and now, many Norwegian authors and publishers release crime novels specifically for the Easter market.

During Påskekrim, bookstores prominently display crime novels, television channels air crime dramas, and people settle in with a good mystery. Some even take part in Easter crime quizzes and murder mystery games. Nothing says Easter like a bloody murder in Norway.

TRUE OR FALSE?



Mark the right box.

More than 15,000 eggs are used in the giant omelette in Bessières.

True

☐

False

☐

Napoleon hated the omelette he tasted in Bessières.

☐☐

Påskekrum really means Easter ugly.

☐☐

Påskekrum is a tradition started in 1923.

☐☐

The giant omelette is prepared by volunteers.

☐☐

In Norway, people read poetry all through Easter.

☐☐

The first giant omelette is said to have been made for Napoleon's army.

☐☐

In 1923, the Bergen train really was robbed during the night.

☐☐

The giant omelette has become a symbol of individualism.

☐☐

LETTER POEM



Make a letter poem. Write a word starting with the letter in the box. The word must be related to Easter.

E

A

S

T

E

R

E

G

G

A Blood Red Tradition

in Greece



Decorating Easter eggs in beautiful colors is an Easter tradition in many countries. But in Greece, they use only one color. As Easter approaches, families come together to dye hard-boiled eggs a bloody red.

There are several traditions behind the choice of the color red. For many, the red dye represents the blood of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross. Another explanation comes from a story about Mary Magdalene, in which Emperor Tiberius told her that he would believe in the Resurrection if the basket of eggs she held turned red – which they immediately did. Another story explains that the Virgin Mary turned a basket of eggs red with her tears upon seeing Jesus on the cross.

Often it is the women who gather around to boil eggs and prepare a special dye using natural ingredients or red dye. People can get very creative with their red eggs, making different shades and designs. When the eggs are dry, the women rub them in olive oil to make them shine. On Easter Sunday, the bloody eggs take center stage as part of the celebratory feast.

A common Easter game involves tapping two eggs together, with the person whose egg remains uncracked considered the winner. Get cracking!

Wacky Ways for Easter Around the World



Girls smell nice for Easter in Hungary.

In Hungary, there is an Easter fertility ritual where perfumed water is poured on young girls. In the past, they were completely soaked with water scented with flowers, but nowadays the girls only wet their foreheads with cologne or perfume.



In Sicily, devils tempt souls

On the morning of Easter Sunday, three devils wearing zinc masks run through the town, tempting people with sweets, with the aim of taking their souls. They carry on until the afternoon, when they come up against the procession carrying the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. Their presence scares the devils, and they disappear.



Real pain at Easter in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the pain is real during Easter, where some Catholic devotees engage in self-flagellation and whip their backs with bamboo sticks or cords. Others choose to be physically nailed to crosses as a symbolic reenactment of the suffering of Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church does not endorse or support such extreme forms of self-flagellation but suggests prayers instead.



The Great Easter Bunny Hunt in New Zealand

While the rest of the world hunts for Easter eggs hidden around the house, the good folk of Otago grab their guns for the annual 'Great Easter Bunny Hunt'. In New Zealand, rabbits are an invasive species and a danger to native fauna which is the reason for this unusual Easter Hunt. Sensibly, the Easter Bunny gives this corner of New Zealand a miss.



DO YOU REMEMBER?



What did you read about in the text "A Blood Red Tradition"? Color the correct answers orange.

Families in Greece come together to dye hard-boiled eggs a nice purple color.

Families in Greece come together to dye hard-boiled eggs a bloody red.

The red dye represents the blood of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross.

The purple dye represents the Easter Bunny's purple ears.

Often it is the women who gather around to boil eggs.

Often it is the children who gather around to boil eggs.

When the eggs are dry, they get rubbed in chocolate.

When the eggs are dry, they get rubbed in olive oil.

What are the wacky Easter traditions they have in Hungary, Sicily, the Philippines and New Zealand? Write the answer in the box.

Hungary



Sicily



Philippines



New Zealand



Kite Flying

in Bermuda



In Bermuda, flying kites is a beloved Easter tradition that fills the sky with beautiful colors. People of all ages gather on Good Friday to launch kites of various shapes and sizes. Some kites are so big it takes several people to lift them. The kites have amazing rainbow colors.

The tradition has cultural roots, dating back to the 19th century when according to legend, a local teacher used a kite to explain the ascension of Jesus. For this reason, the cross is still often an important part of the kite's structure. Today, it's a festive occasion where families head to parks and beaches, picnicking and enjoying the spectacle of kites soaring overhead.

You might ask yourself: Don't the good people in Bermuda go to church on Good Friday? Of course, they do. But you'll have to get up early to attend. Many people attend sunrise services, often held at the beach. That way, they have plenty of time for kite flying and picnicking. It takes a good imagination though, to see Jesus, ascending to the sky on the back of a kite!

Explosions in Italy



Are you sad that New Year's Eve with all its fireworks is over? Go to Italy! The "Scoppio del Carro" (Explosion of the Cart) is a traditional Easter celebration in Florence, Italy, dating back over 300 years. It takes place in the historic heart of the city, usually in front of the Florence Cathedral (Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore).

During the Scoppio del Carro, a cart filled with fireworks, known as "il Brindellone," is placed in the square. The cart is large and decorated so it looks like a tower, and it is connected to the interior of the cathedral by a long rope.

The spectacle begins with a grand procession featuring historical characters in traditional costumes, including drummers, flag throwers, and city officials. The Archbishop of Florence ignites a dove-shaped rocket known as the "Colombina," symbolizing the Holy Spirit, during the Easter Sunday Mass. This rocket travels along the rope to the cart outside, where the tower explodes in loud bangs and lots of beautiful colors.

If the Colombina successfully ignites the fireworks in the cart and creates an impressive display, it is believed to bode well for a prosperous year ahead. Happy Easter to all!

DO YOU REMEMBER?



What did you read about in the text "Kite flying". Write the answer in the box.

What is unusual about the tradition on Bermuda for Good Friday?

What is still an important part of the structure of the kites?

What was the teacher in the 19th century trying to explain to the children using a kite?

What did you read about in the text "Explosions". Write a short abstract.

WORD SEARCH



T	W	R	A	H	E	O	W	R	C	M	I	L	J	Ø	N	R	F	F	L
T	R	W	T	S	F	D	R	C	A	N	D	Y	O	Z	D	E	G	A	G
E	B	Z	T	E	K	L	B	L	A	E	E	G	H	Z	E	A	S	P	E
D	Y	E	E	Q	M	N	N	U	K	Æ	L	R	B	L	N	S	T	R	N
R	G	R	E	E	C	E	A	F	N	L	Y	S	E	T	Ø	T	E	I	B
O	A	T	I	O	G	Y	A	T	K	N	O	X	Q	P	M	E	L	L	R
N	Æ	S	C	H	L	M	W	R	U	H	Y	D	L	S	K	R	A	A	U
N	R	W	K	V	S	Y	M	B	O	L	I	C	E	H	A	V	E	T	G
I	V	Z	A	R	Ø	T	W	I	T	C	H	E	S	Z	C	N	N	N	S
N	Y	W	T	Q	A	N	Y	I	E	Q	L	F	B	L	H	U	S	S	B
G	T	R	Æ	R	R	L	F	D	N	Y	M	A	S	J	E	R	D	B	U
A	L	E	O	U	A	A	D	L	O	G	O	E	L	E	R	G	I	O	T
J	E	N	R	A	L	D	A	E	Y	A	L	G	O	T	E	R	G	P	I
D	T	R	D	T	I	L	I	N	S	I	K	E	V	T	E	T	N	S	K
Y	T	O	E	U	M	Y	S	T	E	P	N	N	A	T	S	R	I	A	N
M	E	U	N	L	A	N	A	K	I	D	A	G	K	E	R	Y	E	S	D
Y	R	A	S	I	A	G	E	N	R	O	L	R	I	X	D	B	F	T	E
F	S	L	V	P	N	D	P	L	A	A	N	U	A	O	Å	Y	Æ	I	N
Y	F	I	N	L	A	N	D	D	C	A	T	H	E	D	R	A	L	K	E
F	A	L	O	M	L	E	T	T	E	D	S	D	D	O	Z	Y	X	I	N

Find the words:

Easter

Finland

bunny

tradition

letters

eggs

Omlette

Slovakia

witches

Greece

Cathedral

flying

candy

symbolic
tulip

DO YOU REMEMBER?



Get it right. In each row, color the right answer orange. All answers can be found in the booklet.

		
The first known secret letter (gækkebrev) was sent on April 18th 1770.	The first known secret letter (gækkebrev) was sent on March 9th 1773.	The first known secret letter (gækkebrev) was sent on May 27th 1777.
The Easter Bunny originates in Poland.	The Easter Bunny originates in Germany.	The Easter Bunny originates in Greece.
In the United Kingdom, the Easter festivities involves crackers.	In the United Kingdom, the Easter festivities involves hot cross buns.	In the United Kingdom, the Easter Festivities involves water fights.
In Finland, children dress up as witches for Easter.	In Finland, all adults dress up as witches for New Year's Eve.	In Finland, all children dress up as witches for Halloween.
The White House Easter Egg Roll is a food festival.	The White House Easter Egg Roll is a Rock and Roll show.	The White House Easter Egg Roll is a race for eggs.
On Wet Monday, only boys are soaked in water.	On Wet Monday, everyone is splashed with water.	On Wet Monday, only adults are soaked in water.
Around 15,000 eggs are used in the Giant Omelette of Bessières.	Under 2,000 eggs are used in the Giant Omelette of Bessières.	More than 20,000 eggs are used in the Giant Omelette of Bessières.
Påskekrim is a time for getting together to sing in Norway.	Påskekrim is a time for reading and watching crime fiction in Norway.	Påskekrim is a time for extra large lunches in Norway.
Maria Magdalene's eggs turned red according to legend in Greece.	Maria Magdalene's eggs turned black according to legend in Greece.	Maria Magdalene's eggs turned pink according to legend in Greece.
In Bermuda, the people gather for sunset services in the woods.	In Bermuda, the people gather for sunrise services in the woods.	In Bermuda, the people gather for sunrise services on the beaches.
In Florence, the archbishop ignites a diamond-shaped rocket.	In Florence, the archbishop ignites a dove-shaped rocket.	In Florence, the archbishop ignites a cross-shaped rocket.

EASTER DRAWING

Color the drawing.





WORD SEARCH



T	W	R	A	H	E	O	W	R	C	M	I	L	J	Ø	N	R	F	F	L
T	R	W	T	S	F	D	R	C	A	N	D	Y	O	Z	D	E	G	A	G
E	B	Z	T	E	K	L	B	L	A	E	E	G	H	Z	E	A	S	P	E
D	Y	E	E	Q	M	N	N	U	K	Æ	L	R	B	L	N	S	T	R	N
R	G	R	E	E	C	E	A	F	N	L	Y	S	E	T	Ø	T	E	I	B
O	A	T	I	O	G	Y	A	T	K	N	O	X	Q	P	M	E	L	L	R
N	Æ	S	C	H	L	M	W	R	U	H	Y	D	L	S	K	R	A	A	U
N	R	W	K	V	S	Y	M	B	O	L	I	C	E	H	A	V	E	T	G
I	V	Z	A	R	Ø	T	W	I	T	C	H	E	S	Z	C	N	N	N	S
N	Y	W	T	Q	A	N	Y	I	E	Q	L	F	B	L	H	U	S	S	B
G	T	R	Æ	R	R	L	F	D	N	Y	M	A	\$	J	E	R	D	B	U
A	L	E	O	U	A	A	D	L	O	G	O	E	L	E	R	G	I	O	T
J	E	N	R	A	L	D	A	E	Y	A	L	G	O	T	E	R	G	P	I
D	T	R	D	T	I	L	I	N	S	I	K	E	V	T	E	T	N	S	K
Y	T	O	E	U	M	Y	S	T	E	P	N	N	A	T	S	R	I	A	N
M	E	U	N	L	A	N	A	K	I	D	A	G	K	E	R	Y	E	S	D
Y	R	A	S	I	A	G	E	N	R	O	L	R	I	X	D	B	F	T	E
F	\$	L	V	P	N	D	P	L	A	A	N	U	A	O	Å	Y	Æ	I	N
Y	F	I	N	L	A	N	D	D	C	A	T	H	E	D	R	A	L	K	E
F	A	L	O	M	L	E	T	T	E	D	S	D	D	O	Z	Y	X	I	N

Find the words:

Easter

Finland

bunny tradition

letters

eggs

Omlette

Slovakia

witches

Greece

Cathedral

flying

candy

symbolic
tulip