

Reading 1 - Celebrations in Britain



People in Britain celebrate birthdays, Christmas and Easter like people in most Western countries. But some celebrations are particularly British. Here are a few:

1. Pancake Tuesday

British people celebrate this day by making and eating pancakes. There are also pancake races for children, a race where you have to run and throw a pancake in the air from a frying pan at the same time. Pancake Tuesday is just before Easter.

2. May Day

This day celebrates the end of the cold weather and the beginning of the warm, sunny weather. The first Monday of May is a Bank Holiday, and lots of people go to the beach or spend a weekend away. In some parts of the country, especially in the countryside, people dance around a Maypole.

3. Bonfire Night

"Remember, remember, the fifth of November" is a popular refrain. On the 5th of November 400 years ago a group of people tried to blow up the English parliament, but they were caught before they could carry out their plan. People all around Britain today make big fires and burn a sort of scarecrow that represents Guy Fawkes, the leader of the conspiracy. There are also firework displays to watch and baked potatoes or warm soup to eat.

4. Notting Hill Carnival

The Notting Hill Carnival is a festival with reggae music, colourful carnival parades and typical food and drink from the Caribbean. It takes place in London, in an area called Notting Hill, at the end of summer.

1. Which celebration takes place in the winter?

- A. May Day
- B. Bonfire Night
- C. Pancake Tuesday

2. Which three paragraphs mention food?

- A. 1 , 3 , 4
- B. 2 , 3 , 4
- C. 1 , 2 , 4

3. Which celebration has some kind of sport?

- A. Pancake Day
- B. May Day
- C. Bonfire Night

4. Which celebration is a national holiday?

- A. Pancake Day
- B. May Day
- C. Bonfire Night

5. Which celebration commemorates a historical event?

- A. May Day
- B. Notting Carnival
- C. Bonfire Night

Reading 2 – Easter

What does it mean?

Easter is a spring festival of new life. As a pagan tradition, it is the beginning of growth and new life after the cold, winter months. The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn and spring – Eostre. For Christians, Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and practising Christians attend special church services at Easter time. Easter celebrates life and rebirth, which is why we see lots of symbols of new life and fertility at Easter, like eggs, chicks and rabbits.

When is it?

Unlike Christmas, Easter isn't on the same date each year. It takes place on the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. Schoolchildren and students in the UK have about a two-week holiday at Easter time, which is almost as long as the Christmas holiday. It's also the first public holiday after Christmas and everyone looks forward to their Easter break as a moment to relax, have a short holiday or visit family and friends.

Chocolate eggs

For most British children, Easter means chocolate Easter eggs. The shops are full of bright Easter displays decorated with chicks, rabbits and flowers, all with the objective of selling chocolate eggs in huge numbers. And it works! 90 million chocolate eggs are sold in the UK each year and each child receives on average eight chocolate eggs.

However, the eggs are sold in cardboard boxes and sometimes there's more packaging than chocolate! Also, some people believe that too much chocolate is eaten and most doctors and dentists would advise people to eat Easter eggs in moderation.

Other 'egg-straordinary' traditions

In the UK, chocolate is definitely the most popular way to enjoy eggs at Easter. But there are some less sugary traditions, too. Chickens' eggs are painted and decorated to give as presents, and eggs are also hidden for children to find as part of an 'egg hunt'. Some places even hold competitions to see who can roll an egg down a hill without it breaking!

There are other special foods too. Hot cross buns are typical cakes that are made at Easter time. They are spiced bread rolls with raisins and they always have a cross shape on top. They are delicious toasted with butter.

Exercise 1: Match the words/phrases with the definitions

a chick	packaging	spring
extraordinary	a public holiday	to do something in moderation

- _____ the season after winter when plants grow again
- _____ a day when most shops, offices and schools in a country are closed
- _____ a baby chicken
- _____ the paper or plastic around something to protect it
- _____ to do something but not do it too much
- _____ really amazing or unusual

Exercise 2: True or False?

1. Easter is a summer festival.	True	False
2. The exact date of Easter is different every year.	True	False
3. The Easter holiday is two weeks long for everyone in the UK.	True	False
4. Chocolate eggs are extremely popular.	True	False
5. Doctors and dentists say that people should not eat any Easter eggs.	True	False
6. In an egg hunt, children hide eggs for adults to find.	True	False

Exercise 3: Fill the gaps with the correct word from the box.

as	at	in (x2)
of (x2)	on	to

- Easter is a spring festival _____ new life.
- Christians attend special church services _____ Easter.
- Easter isn't _____ the same date each year.
- Everyone looks forward _____ their Easter break.
- The shops are full _____ bright Easter displays.
- The aim of most shops is to sell chocolate eggs _____ huge numbers.
- Doctors and dentists would advise people to eat Easter eggs _____ moderation.
- Eggs are painted and decorated to give _____ presents.