

British traditions – Pancake Day

Read the text about a British tradition, then do the related tasks.



In the UK, people celebrate Pancake Day. This festival takes place in February, on Shrove Tuesday. This is the day before Lent. Lent is an important time in the Christian calendar. It lasts 47 days. During Lent, people traditionally stop eating delicious food, like cakes and chocolate. So on Shrove Tuesday, they must eat up all the nice food in their cupboards. So they make pancakes, and they often eat them with lemon and sugar.

Many British towns hold pancake races on Shrove Tuesday. People wear fancy dresses and run down the street with a pancake in a pan. They must throw the pancake in the air and catch it in the pan as they run. It must not fall on the ground.

The tradition of pancake races started in Olney, Buckinghamshire. According to a story, a housewife made pancakes on Easter Sunday in 1445. Then she heard the church bells. She was worried because she was late for church, so she ran to church with her pan and pancake in her hand! Now, Olney's pancake race is famous. All the competitors, traditionally women, carry a frying pan and race to the finishing line while tossing the pancakes as they go. The winner is the first to cross the line having tossed the pancake a certain number of times. If men want to participate, which is quite common, they must dress up as a housewife (usually they put on an apron and a bandanna.)

Westminster School, an old boys' school in London, has a different pancake tradition. The school cook makes a huge pancake and throws it over a five-metre high bar. The schoolboys run to take a piece of the pancake. The boy with the biggest piece of pancake wins some money!



These days many people opt to celebrate Pancake Day by eating pancakes for breakfast, lunch or dinner, and the celebrations are decidedly non-religious for most.

Task 1. Write Yes or No.

1. Pancake Day is a festival celebrated during the period of Lent.
2. Pancake day is on Shrove Tuesday.
3. Lent lasts more than 40 days.
4. People participating in a Pancake Day race have to eat a lot of pancakes.
5. The pancake races have been organised for more than five centuries.
6. Only women can participate in the races.
7. Competitors have to dress up as a housewife.
8. Nowadays Pancake Day is celebrated only by religious families.

Task 2. Match the words with their definitions.

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| 1. Lent | A) throw and turn something in the air |
| 2. dress up | B) having a strong belief in a God or Gods |
| 3. toss (the pancake) | C) in Christian religions, the 40 days before Easter |
| 4. participate | D) to make a choice |
| 5. opt | E) to put on special clothes in order to change your appearance |
| 6. religious | F) take part |

Task 3. Complete the sentences – Drag and drop.

Shrove Tuesday	Lent	races	toss	apron	church bells
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- sign the start of a mass or other religious services.
- While making a pancake, you should and turn it in the air before it drops into the pan.
- Housewives often wear to protect their clothes when cooking.
- Traditionally British people make pancakes on
- The winner of the is the first person who reaches the finishing line.
- During the period of most people avoid eating delicious food or meat.

Task 4. Choose the correct verb form.

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| 1. The festival | place on Shrove Tuesday. |
| 2. Lent | for about 40 days. |
| 3. The housewife | the church bells. |
| 4. She | she was late for the mass. |
| 5. Men | dress up as a housewife. |
| 6. The winner | some money. |