

CELEBRATIONS

onestopenglish

Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

Worksheet

1. Warmer

Choose the best answers to the questions.

1. A pancake is a ...
 - a. one-centimetre thick cake baked in the oven in a tin.
 - b. thin flat cake made of batter and fried in a pan.
 - c. round, sweet treat made by deep-frying dough in a pan.
2. Pancake mixture is made using ...
 - a. flour, milk and egg.
 - b. oil, water and flour.
 - c. egg, butter and sugar.
3. In the UK, the favourite pancake topping is ...
 - a. chocolate spread and powdered sugar.
 - b. lemon juice and sugar.
 - c. cheese and ham.

2. Key words and expressions

Read the article and find and underline the key words from the box below. Then match the words to their definitions (1–12).

| | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|---------|------------|------------|------|
| charity | The Commonwealth | confess | contestant | determined | fall |
| fasting | indulgences | mass | peers | sins | toss |

1. officially decided or controlled when something happened _____
2. happen on a particular day or date _____
3. tell a priest about the bad things you have done, and ask to be forgiven for them _____
4. actions or ways of behaving that you think are morally wrong _____
5. eating no food or very little food for a period of time, often for religious reasons _____
6. special things that someone eats for pleasure, not because they need to _____
7. an organization of countries that used to be under the political control of the UK _____
8. a religious ceremony in the Roman Catholic church _____
9. someone who takes part in a race _____
10. throw something up into the air _____
11. people who are from a high social class in the UK and have a title such as 'Lord' or 'Lady' _____
12. organizations to which you give money so that they can give money and help to people who are poor or ill, or who need advice and support _____

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The exact date of Shrove Tuesday each year is determined by the date of Easter. Depending on when Easter is, it can fall anytime between 2 February and 9 March, but it is guaranteed to always take place 47 days before Easter Sunday, and always on a Tuesday. In the UK, Ireland, Australia and Canada, Shrove Tuesday is more commonly known as Pancake Day.

The day after Shrove Tuesday is Ash Wednesday which is the first day of Lent, a period in the Christian calendar which lasts until Easter. The word shrove comes from the old English word 'shrive' which meant 'to confess your sins to a priest'. As Lent is meant to be a time of self-examination and fasting – when people traditionally eat simpler food and give up indulgences such as meat, dairy products, eggs, as well as (more commonly these days) chocolates and alcohol – it became a tradition in the UK and The Commonwealth countries to use up these foods before Lent by making pancakes.

Many other countries make similar Shrove Tuesday treats using the same or similar ingredients. In French, Pancake Day is known as 'Mardi Gras', meaning 'Fat Tuesday', after the celebratory meals made using these 'luxury' ingredients which celebrated the end of the carnival season and the beginning of Lent.

Although now a normal workday, in the past, Shrove Tuesday was a 'half holiday' in Britain. It started at 11 o'clock in the morning and was announced by the ringing of church bells. Tradition says that in 1445 a woman in Olney in Buckinghamshire was so busy making pancakes that she lost track of time. When she heard the bells ringing, she ran as fast as she could to the church and arrived there just in time for Shrove Tuesday mass, still carrying her pancake in a frying pan. And so began the tradition of holding pancake races through the streets on Shrove Tuesday – a tradition that continues to this day.

Every year on Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, many towns and villages hold pancake races in which the aim is to reach the finishing line as fast as you can without dropping your pancake. The rules usually state that each contestant must toss and catch their pancake, in their frying pan, at the beginning and end of each race. There is even an annual pancake race held in London between members of parliament, peers from the House of Lords and political journalists which raises money for charity.