

Read the text below. For questions (1-5) choose the correct answer (A, B, C, or D).



The Truth Behind St. Patrick's Day Traditions

Every year on March 17th, people around the world celebrate St. Patrick's Day. While it is widely known as a celebration of Irish culture, many of the holiday's most famous traditions actually have surprising origins. Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, wasn't actually Irish. He was born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century and was taken to Ireland as a slave when he was a teenager. He eventually escaped but returned later as a missionary to spread Christianity.

When people think of St. Patrick's Day, the colour green immediately comes to mind. However, historical records show that the colour originally associated with Saint Patrick was actually blue. The shift to green happened in the 18th century. The shamrock, a three-leaf clover, became a symbol of Irish nationalism during the Irish Rebellion, and wearing green became a bold political statement.

Another iconic symbol of the holiday is the shamrock itself. According to legend, Saint Patrick used the small three-leaf clover to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) to the Irish people. Today, wearing a shamrock is one of the most common ways to celebrate the holiday, but it started as an educational tool rather than a festive decoration.

Surprisingly, the first St. Patrick's Day parade did not take place in Ireland. It was actually held in America. Historical records indicate that a parade was held in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1601. More than a century later, in 1772, Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in New York City to honour the Irish patron saint. These parades eventually became a way for Irish immigrants in America to celebrate their heritage.

Finally, the traditional holiday meal of corned beef and cabbage is more American than Irish. In Ireland, the traditional meal was boiled bacon and potatoes. However, when Irish immigrants arrived in the United States in the 19th century, they found that beef was much cheaper than pork. They adopted corned beef from their Jewish neighbours in New York and paired it with cabbage, a highly affordable vegetable, creating a new tradition that is now essential to the holiday in America.



1. What does the text reveal about Saint Patrick's background?

- A) He was born in Ireland and became a famous missionary.
- B) He was originally from Roman Britain and was brought to Ireland against his will.
- C) He was an Irish rebel who fought for national independence using green symbols.
- D) He was an English soldier who marched in the first parade in New York.

2. Why did green replace blue as the primary colour of St. Patrick's Day?

- A) Saint Patrick preferred the colour green over blue during his life.
- B) Green was the main colour of the first parade in America.
- C) The shamrock and the green colour became political symbols of Irish nationalism.
- D) Blue clothing was too expensive for Irish immigrants in the 18th century.

3. According to the legend, how did Saint Patrick use the shamrock?

- A) To decorate the local churches for the spring holiday.
- B) To secretly identify other Christians during the rebellion.
- C) To help explain a complex religious concept to the locals.
- D) To start a new political movement in Roman Britain.

4. Where was the first recorded St. Patrick's Day parade held?

- A) In a small, traditional village in Ireland.
- B) In St. Augustine, Florida.
- C) In New York City by Irish immigrants.
- D) In London, organised by Irish soldiers.

5. Why did corned beef and cabbage become a traditional St. Patrick's Day meal in America?

- A) It was the most popular and expensive dish in Ireland at the time.
- B) Irish immigrants learned to cook it from British soldiers.
- C) Beef and cabbage were more affordable for immigrants in the US than traditional Irish ingredients.
- D) Saint Patrick was known to eat this specific meal during his missionary work.