

Pancake Day

Pancake Day is a Christian Festival, which is also known as Shrove Tuesday. It has been celebrated by Christians for over 1000 years!

Traditionally, people celebrate by making pancakes. Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to indulge in a treat by using up rich food such as fat, butter and eggs before Lent begins.



In the United Kingdom, there are lots of traditions linked to Pancake Day:

Northern Ireland

In the past, pancakes were cooked over a fire. Families and friends would gather around to enjoy the food.

The eldest unmarried daughter of the family would toss the first pancake. If she tossed it and it landed back in the pan, then she would be married that year; but if it didn't turn over or she dropped it, she would stay unmarried.

Wales

In some parts of Wales, on the evening before Shrove Tuesday, tin cans were kicked up and down the streets, to remember the task of putting away all the pots, pans and utensils used to make the tastier food that was not allowed to be eaten during Lent.

Crempogs, also known as ffroes, are thicker than traditional pancakes. Traditionally, they were cooked on a cast iron bake stone, griddle or 'planc'.

Scotland

Scottish pancakes are smaller and thicker than the traditional pancakes. They are called 'drop scones' or 'dropped scones'.

England

A famous pancake race takes place in Olney in Buckinghamshire, England. Legend has it that in 1445 a woman heard the church bells ringing as she was making pancakes. Rather than be late, she ran to church still holding the frying pan and pancake!

Today, you can take part in the race, wearing an apron, a hat or scarf and of course carrying a pan containing a pancake. You must flip your pancakes three times during the race. The first person to cross the finish line at the church and receive a kiss from the vergers wins the race!



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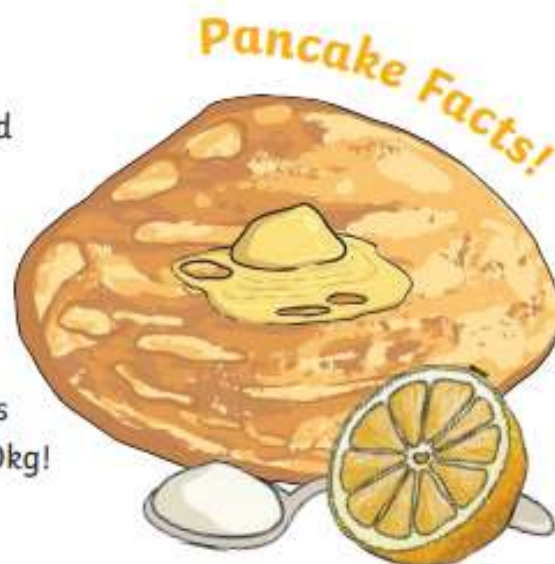
Pancake Day marks the start of Lent. During this time, Christians 'abstain', which means they give up treats and luxuries.

'Shrove' means being forgiven for doing wrong. Long ago, Christians would go to church to say sorry for things they had done wrong. By saying sorry, they hoped to be 'shriven' or forgiven at the start of Lent.

Christians all over the world celebrate Shrove Tuesday, although it can be celebrated in very different ways:

France, America and Brazil	'Mardi Gras' or 'Fat Tuesday' carnival.
Sweden	'Fettsdagen' or 'Fat Tuesday'. A pastry called semla is eaten.
Iceland	'Sprengidagur' or 'Day of Bursting'. Salted meat and peas is eaten.
Finland	Green pea soup and pastry is eaten.
Greece	'Apocreas' or 'from the meat'. Many Greek Christians give up meat during Lent.

- On Pancake Day, an estimated 52 million eggs are eaten!
- 349 = The World Record for the most pancake flips in 2 minutes!
- The largest pancake made was 15m across and weighed 3000kg!



Questions

1. What other name is given to Pancake Day?

2. Traditionally, what ingredients would be used to make pancakes?

3. Why are pancakes traditionally made on Shrove Tuesday?

4. Not all pancakes are the same.
 - a) What are pancakes known as in Wales?
 - b) How are Welsh pancakes different to traditional pancakes?_____

5. In Northern Ireland, what might happen if the eldest unmarried daughter drops the pancake?

6. What does the word 'abstain' mean?

7. What is different about the Pancake Day celebrations in Greece and Iceland?

8. Can you explain why people join in with the traditions of Pancake Day?

