

trivia - Easter / dawn of spring

- The first Easter baskets were made to look like bird's nests.
- The traditional act of painting eggs is called Pysanka.
- The custom of giving eggs at Easter time has been traced back to the Egyptians, Persians, Gauls, Greeks and Romans, to whom the egg was a symbol of life.
- In medieval times a festival of egg-throwing was held in church, during which the priest would throw a hard-boiled egg to one of the choir boys. It was then tossed from one choir boy to the next and whoever held the egg when the clock struck 12 was the winner and retained the egg.
- Easter is now celebrated (in the words of the Book of Common Prayer) on the first Sunday after the full moon which happens on or after March 21, the Spring Equinox.
- Some churches still keep up the old tradition of using evergreens - symbolic of eternal life - embroidered in red on white, or woven in straw, but most now prefer displays of flowers in the spring colours of green, yellow and white.
- The date of Passover is variable as it is dependent on the phases of the moon, and thus Easter is also a movable feast.
- Pagan traditions give us the English word "Easter" which comes from the word "Eostre".
- Rituals related to the goddess Eostre focus on new beginnings, symbolized by the Easter egg, and fertility, which is symbolized by the hare (or Easter bunny).
- The Anglo-Saxon word for April was "Eostre-monath" (the month of openings). However, it should be remembered that Christians celebrated the resurrection of Christ long before the word "Easter" was used, and the word they used for the celebration was "Pascha", which is derived from and linked to the Jewish festival of Passover.
- The Guinness Book of Records holder for the largest Easter egg ever made is the Belgian chocolate producer Guylian, who made the chocolate egg with at least 50,000 bars on behalf of the city of St. Niklaas. The egg measured 8.32 metres high and twenty-six craftsmen worked 525 hours altogether to build the egg. They needed 1950 kg of chocolates.
- By tradition, it was obligatory (or at least lucky) for churchgoers to wear some bright new piece of clothing - at least an Easter bonnet, if not a complete new outfit.
- One of the most expensive eggs on offer in 2006 was the unique Diamond Stella Egg - a chocolate egg laden with diamonds - which came with a £50,000 price tag.
- Over 16 billion jellybeans are consumed over the Easter period. If all the Easter jellybeans were lined end to end, they would circle the globe nearly three times.