



Eggs

Of all the symbols associated with Easter the *egg*, the symbol of fertility and new life, is the most identifiable. The customs and traditions of using eggs have been associated with Easter for centuries

Originally Easter eggs were painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring and were used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts. After they were colored and etched with various designs the eggs were exchanged by lovers and romantic admirers, much the same as valentines. In medieval time eggs were traditionally given at Easter to the servants. In Germany eggs were given to children along with other Easter gifts

Different cultures have developed their own ways of decorating Easter eggs. Crimson eggs, to honor the blood of Christ, are exchanged in Greece. In parts of Germany and Austria green eggs are used on Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday). Slavic peoples decorate their eggs in special patterns of gold and silver

Austrian artists design patterns by fastening ferns and tiny plants around the eggs, which are then boiled. The plants are then removed revealing a striking white pattern. The Poles and Ukrainians decorate eggs with simple designs and colors. A number of eggs are made in the distinctive manner called *pysanki* (to design, to write)

***Pysanki* eggs are a masterpiece of skill and workmanship. Melted beeswax is applied to the fresh white egg. It is then dipped in successive baths of dye. After each dip wax is painted over the area where the preceding color is to remain. Eventually a complex pattern of lines and colors emerges into a work of art**

In Germany and other countries eggs used for cooking where not broken, but the contents were removed by piercing the end of each egg with a needle and blowing the contents into a bowl. The hollow eggs were died and hung from shrubs and trees during the Easter Week. The Armenians would decorate hollow eggs with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other religious designs



Easter Egg Games

Eggs play an important part in Easter sports. The Romans celebrated the Easter season by running races on an oval track and giving eggs as prizes. Two traditional Easter egg games are the Easter Egg Hunt and the Easter Egg Roll

On Easter morning the children of the house join in a search to locate the eggs that the Easter Bunny had hidden while they were asleep. The searching might continue though out the house with the older children helping the youngest. Sometimes prizes of candy are awaiting the child finding the most eggs

Easter egg hunts can are also part of a community's celebration of holiday. The eggs are hidden in public places and the children of the community are invited to find the eggs

The rules of an Easter Egg Roll are to see who can roll an egg the greatest distance or can make the roll without breaking it, usually down a grassy hillside or slope

Maybe the most famous egg rolling takes place on the White House Lawn. Hundreds of children come with baskets filled with brightly decorated eggs and roll them down the famous lawn, hoping the President of the United States is watching the fun.

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