

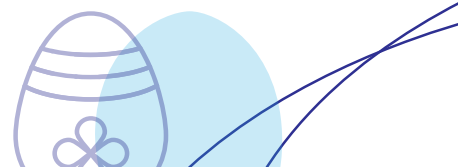
EASTER TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

While Easter may conjure up visions of colourful eggs and chocolate bunnies, different countries mark the holiday with their own Easter traditions. From kite flying to pot throwing, here are some of the unique ways that Easter is celebrated around the world.

GUATEMALA Colourful Carpets



According to Condé Nast Traveler, Antigua, in southern Guatemala, prepares for its Good Friday procession by covering the streets in vibrant carpets before Holy Week. Flowers, colorful sawdust, fruits, vegetables, and sand are used to create the lengthy carpets. Each carpet frequently features motifs that are significant to the artisans who create them, such as religious scenes, Mayan rituals, or scenes from Guatemalan history. They only have 24 hours to complete their works of art the day before the Good Friday procession but some of these pieces can stretch as far as half a mile, and artists utilize stencils to quickly assemble.



BERMUDA Flying Kites



The sky's the limit when it comes to Bermuda's Easter traditions. According to the island's travel website, the Good Friday Kite Fest kicks off the celebrations. The colorful geometric patterns in the sky represent Jesus' ascent into heaven as Bermudians assemble to fly homemade kites constructed from wooden sticks and colorful tissue paper. Together with a codfish feast, hot cross buns, and sunrise services on the beach, this Easter custom is celebrated.

GREECE Pot Smashing

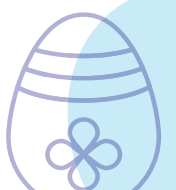


On Easter Saturday morning at 11 am locals on the Greek island of Corfu toss clay pots from their balconies onto the street. This raucous and healing ritual is conducted to represent the earthquake that occurred after Jesus' resurrection. Some people think the custom began in the 16th century when individuals would toss their old possessions out of the window in order to be ready for the new year and signal fresh starts.

POLAND Water Fights



Easter Monday in Poland— also known as Wet Monday involves people throwing copious amounts of water at each other. Although the exact origins of Wet Monday is unknown, the story is boys in the countryside would be allowed to drench girls with water and smack them with tree branches. According to legend, the girl who gets soaked the most will be the next one to get married within the year.



NORWAY Crime Novels



Those who live in Norway like to spend their Easter cozying up to a good book, according to Visit Norway. Many people use the holiday to hunker down in a cabin, ski, and read crime novels (or watch crime shows on television). The tradition is said to have started in 1923 when a book publisher promoted its new crime novel on the front pages of newspapers. The ads resembled news so much that people didn't know it was a publicity stunt, so it received massive attention. The rest, they say, is history. It also helps that in Norway, there's plenty of time to relax and read, thanks to the length of the Easter holiday season.

FINLAND Little Witches



In Finland, you may have little witches ringing your doorbell on Easter morning. The children come with birch twigs, which symbolize the palm branches laid down on Palm Sunday. They dress as witches to poke fun at long ago fears that witches may be out and about on Easter Sunday. They also enjoy an Easter dinner with traditional foods like roast lamb, Mämmi, and Pasha, two traditional desserts. In the evening, villages light large bonfires to keep away evil spirits.

