



Easter traditions in Europe

*Dear Students and Teachers,
our students partaking in Erasmus+ project have investigated how Easter is celebrated in the partnering countries, focusing on the customs and traditions connected to this festival in Spain, Germany, Luxembourg and Slovakia. They hope to get a warm welcome for their compilation. Please welcome their compilation warmly.*



Easter in Luxembourg

Like in many other countries, the Eye-Being celebrate Easter in Luxembourg to commemorate Jesus Christ. The resurrection took place on Easter Sunday after Jesus Christ's crucifixion on Good Friday. The resurrection from the dead and eternal life give hope to Christians in their faith.

Green Thursday - "Klibberen" - a Luxembourg tradition has survived!

On Maundy Thursday, the altar servers walk through the streets on this and the following three days "klibberen". With wooden instruments, the "Klibberkanner", make noise and at the same time shout: "D'Moiesklack laut! (6:00); D'Mëttesklack laut! (12:00); D'Owesklack laut! (18:00)".



Before World War II

Since the church bells are silent, the children call the faithful to mass and prayer in the morning, at noon and in the evening. Legend has it that the church bells flew to Rome to hear confessions and to ring in the Easter celebration.

As a reward for their efforts, the "Klibberkanner" then go from house to house on the morning of Easter Sunday to collect Easter eggs, chocolate and money.

Good Friday

Christians commemorate the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on this day. The word "Kar" comes from Old German and means sorrow and suffering.

A day without meat - why? On this day, baked fish, symbol of Christ, is eaten all over Luxembourg to commemorate the day Jesus Christ died. The custom of not eating meat on Good Friday is strictly observed in Luxembourg, even by non-believers. Baked fish is a whole whiting or a piece of cod coated with beer batter and baked in oil.



„Gebakene Fësch“

Easter Sunday

In Luxembourg, there are numerous Easter customs that have their origin either in the religious or pagan tradition: Easter eggs, Easter lamb, Easter wreaths, Easter bushes, Easter bonfires.



1985 and today



Already several weeks before Easter, supermarkets and bakeries attract customers with chocolate eggs. Because in Luxembourg, as in many Christian countries, an egg is considered a symbol of fertility and renewal that accompanies the beginning of spring. In honour of the pagan goddess of spring, Ostara, who gave Easter its name, people have been giving themselves chicken eggs since the 16th century.

An Easter custom in Luxembourg is that parents dye boiled eggs with their children, hide them in the garden early in the morning on Easter Sunday and then the children look for them. The parents tell the children that the Easter Bunny has hidden them. Easter is always celebrated in spring and there is a lot going on in nature. The plants turn green and the rabbit comes out of its burrow. In the course of time he became the symbol of the Easter festival.

Easter Monday

Easter Monday is a public holiday in Luxembourg. On this day a big market takes place in Luxembourg City and in Nospelt, d'"Eimaischen". The name of the market goes back to the name of the biblical town of Emmaus. It is said that Jesus Christ once met two apostles there after his resurrection.



"Péckvillchen"

The market traditionally sells clay figures in the shape of birds, the "Péckvillchen". These are offered in many colours and if you blow into them, you can elicit a sound from them. The "Éimaischen" takes place at the "Fëschmaart" since 1827.



"Éimaischen" 1908

"Eeër técken" is also an old custom where the children toast with the hard-boiled Easter eggs. The winner is the one whose egg stays whole the longest.

Not to forget the Easter traditions is also the Bretzel exchange in the middle of Lent. Normally then the husband offers to his beloved a pretzel. If she is also interested, he gets a chocolate Easter egg on Easter Sunday back.

In leap years, the tradition is reversed: the lady is supposed to give the man a Bretzel on *"Bretzelsonndeg"* and the man gives the woman a chocolate egg filled with pralines at Easter. Where the custom comes from, however, is not known.



3rd Sunday after Easter - Octave

The most important religious festival in the country has been held annually since the 17th century as a pilgrimage to the image of the Virgin Mary. In 1666, the Virgin Mary was appointed patron saint of the city of Luxembourg and in 1678 patron saint of the whole country, in order to stop the plague epidemics, famines and wars that raged at the time. The pilgrimage period lasts from the third to the fifth Sunday after Easter and ends with the solemn final procession. The name Octave comes from the time when adoration of the statue of Virgin Mary lasted only eight days and not two weeks, as it does today.



Octave procession 1944 and today

Easter in Spain

Spain is a country rich in centuries-old traditions passed down from parents to children and full of meaning. Easter is a unique occasion to get to know some of the most beautiful of these customs. In general, on Easter days, Valencian families and friends go out to the fields and mountains to spend the day together, they eat together (usually paella) and play traditional games.



To sing the traditional songs

Valencians have some traditional songs that are sung during Easter days. Especially they are sung by children, although everyone knows them. We also dance some of these songs.

To fly a kite (cometa) and to jump the rope

During Easter days, Valencian children (and not so children) fly the kite when they go out to the field to eat with family and friends. In the Valencian past, many of the kites were home gadgets, a circumstance that facilitated family communication during their elaboration. It is also very traditional to jump rope with friends.



To play the "Sambori"

It is a well-known popular children's game in which only a chalk and a stone are needed. For this traditional Valencian game you need to draw the playing field on the ground. It is played in individual turns, and each player must throw a stone on the field of play when it is their turn.



"Mona de Pascua"

The mona de Pascua is a very old tradition that takes place especially in the Valencian Community, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Aragon and some areas of Murcia and Castilla - La Mancha. It turns out that it comes from an Arabic word and tradition, munna or mouna, which means "provision for the mouth." This was a gift of food that Muslims made to their lords. The "mona de Pascua" is a kind of bun, made with dough (flour, oil, sugar, etc.). It has a hard-boiled egg in the shell, which is usually painted in bright colors. Sometimes the egg can be chocolate. It is usually decorated with colored anisees, which give it a special flavor. The "mona" is usually eaten with an Easter sausage, and when the egg is reached, it is a tradition to exploit it on the front of another person, in order to eat it.



Easter in Germany

The Easter Lamb

The tradition of the Easter Lamb ('Osterlamm' in German, 'Osterlammal' in Bavarian) is an ancient German tradition, which is immensely popular in our state of Bavaria and is carried out every year.

The tradition falls back on Jesus Christ being the 'Lamb of God', is meant to reference the resurrection, and intends to create a connection between Jesus and 'normal' Christians.

The Lamb is a chocolate, vanilla or lemon cake, which is either glazed with chocolate or covered in powdered sugar and is finally decorated with a little flag ('Fahne' in German, 'Fahndal' in Bavarian), which is the sign of victory over the death.



Easter eggs

In Germany all eggs are colourful at Easter time. You can find the boiled eggs in the supermarket in different colours, but most people decide to colour them at home as a little Easter activity. You buy a packet of egg dye, boil a little water, let the dye tablets dissolve in the water and finally add a hard-boiled egg to each colour. The egg should then be left in the water according to the need for the time the dye is left to work or according to the desired colour intensity. Then it is dried and smeared with a little oil to give it a nice shine. So quickly you have colourful Easter eggs perfect for a beautiful Easter Sunday morning.



„Palmbuschen“

There are not only Easter eggs to eat, there are also coloured eggs for decorating in Easter style, so you can also use eggs as a homemade decoration. To do this you have to blow out the eggs.

The egg is pierced with a small hole at each end, where on one side you blow into the egg and on the other side the

egg white and yolk comes out. After the hard work, the egg is cleaned and the pleasure of creating the egg begins. Depending on your mood, circles, zigzag patterns or simple lines are painted on the egg. Finally, a small string can be carefully placed in one of the holes around the egg and then hung on the Easter shrub, as is customary in Bavaria.



Good Friday rattle

A Good Friday rattle is a special instrument which is made out of wood and makes rattling or clattering and a penetrating loud sound. Good Friday is also known as the "silent Friday" due to the mute bells in remembrance of the suffering of Christ. "The bells are flying to Rome for their shrift". On Easter Sunday they return and the sound of the bells can be heard again.



„Karfreitagsratschen“

The Good Friday rattles were introduced to remind the people to still worship during this period of time. Young children walk through the village to announce the church service. This is a typical tradition in Catholic communities.

The altar servers let on Good Friday still the rattles sound before the Holy Mass in the church starts and it is a very loud experience!



Easter in Slovakia

Easter is originally a religious festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, described in the New Testament of the Bible. It is the culmination of the Passion of Jesus, preceded by Lent, a forty-day period of fasting, prayer, and penance. In our country the various celebrations and traditions are linked to Christian traditions, pagan rituals and modern customs as well.

The Lent period

The Lent period in Slovakia always starts with Ash Wednesday. On this day Christians go to church and “receive” a cross onto their forehead – from ash. The ash is from the previous year’s grain, which is sanctified. After that follows Holy Thursday, on which Jesus got his followers together, and was betrayed by Judas. People usually eat “green” food, f.e. soup from spinach, or fried broccoli.



Great Friday is the day, when Jesus’ anguish and suffering, death and funeral is remembered by Christians. It’s a public holiday, and is also the quietest day in the year. It is a fast-day too: for purgation and rejuvenation. People used to wash themselves in rivers, which was believed to bring them good health and luck.



For those who follow Christian traditions, on Good Friday it is customary to keep a strict fast, and on Easter Sunday meat dishes are eaten. Typically we eat smoked ham served with horseradish and boiled eggs on Easter Sunday and a kind of braided milk loaf (kalács) is also prepared.

„Kraslice“ – painted eggs

Painted Eggs are also part of the Easter traditions. Within the Christian tradition eggs were painted red (to symbolize the blood of Jesus Christ), however in recent centuries this has changed, we dye the eggs to many different colours and decorate them with beautiful folk and other patterns. Nevertheless, eggs are one of the symbols of spring and new life.



Slovak easter eggs

Easter Monday - watering the girls and women

Easter in Slovakia has never been about bunnies, playing Easter games or collecting eggs with families in the garden. When you mention Easter in front of a Hungarian or a Slovak person, the first thing that comes to their mind is water (colder the better) and spanking. It is based on a former pagan fertility ritual and originally the “victims” were young maidens, but nowadays men do this to women of all ages, relatives, friends, too.



Mostly young boys visit every house in the village and sprinkle girls and women with water (it can be in any form: glass, bottle, bucket or scented perfume too) and spank them with whips (they are made of willow branches, with lots of ribbons and colourful strips). Boys don’t spank and sprinkle young, single girls without their permission: they recite a kind, sweet poem. But why is it needed? People believe that doing so on Easter Monday brings health and beauty to women.



Hungarian easter eggs

In return girls reward the boys and men with painted eggs, sweets, money or a nice dinner. The girl with the most male-visitors should be the proudest in the village. On Easter Monday people prepare big feast. The most common meals are the well-known potato salad with mayonnaise, cooked ham and sweet, delicious pastries. On every table in Slovakia during Easter holiday is a great, home-made bottle of alcohol as well.

