

SHROVE TUESDAY

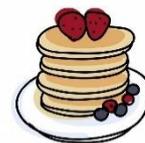


What is Shrove Tuesday and when is it?

Shrove Tuesday is the traditional fast day before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. It is also known in the UK as Pancake Day, as it is traditional to make and enjoy pancakes on this day.

Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, so the date varies from year to year between February 3 and March 9.

This year Shrove Tuesday falls on February 16th.



What does “Shrove” mean?

“Shrove” comes from an Old English word that relates to confessing sins, **doing penance** (showing sorrow) for them and being **absolved** (forgiven).

Lent was traditionally a time of fasting when people didn't eat meat or dairy products and on Shrove Tuesday, Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were “shriven”, or absolved from their sins after being penitent.





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Where do the pancakes come in?

Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before Lent and pancakes were the perfect way of using up these ingredients, with just the addition of flour.

The French call this day “**Mardi Gras**”; meaning Fat Tuesday, which is also a reference to the last day before the start of Lent.

The Middle English word “pancake” appeared in the 15th century and featured in cookery books as far back as 1439.

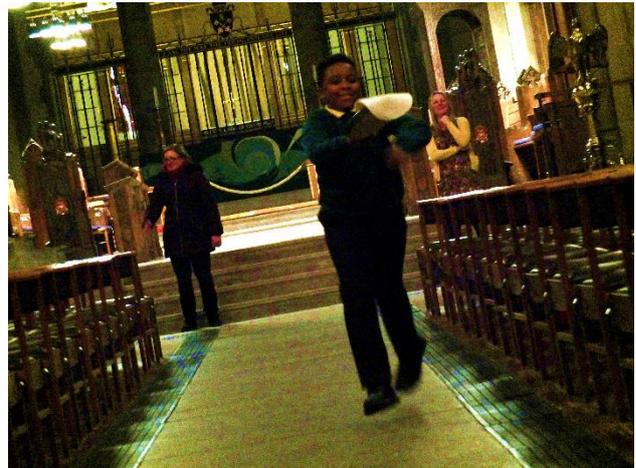


Why do we have pancake races?

In the UK, pancake races are a popular tradition on Shrove Tuesday.

The choristers at Bradford Cathedral, as at many other places, enjoy taking part in pancake races on this day, either outside the Cathedral if the weather is fine, or inside the building if it is raining.

Here are pictures of some of our choristers during a pancake race inside the Cathedral on Shrove Tuesday 2020:





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The most famous pancake race takes place at Olney in Buckinghamshire. It is run to commemorate the time in 1445 when, according to tradition, a woman of Olney heard the bell calling people to confession while she was making pancakes and ran to the church in her apron, still clutching her frying pan.



What was the Pancake Bell?

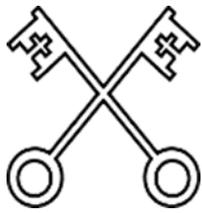
There are historical references to a “Pancake Bell” in English towns being rung around 11am on this day, which served both as a reminder to go to confession and also to start using up the **perishable** foodstuffs (things that would go off) before Lent, by making the pancakes. The tradition of ringing the pancake bell still survives in a number of English churches.

For many years the Pancake Bell has been rung at All Saints Church, Bingley (pictured), and in 2020 the tradition was revived at St. John the Baptist, Knaresborough.



Many towns in England also used to hold traditional Shrove Tuesday football or “Mob Football”. This practice dates back 900 years but has mostly died out. A small number of towns have managed to keep up the tradition, such as Ashbourne in Derbyshire- with its Royal Shrovetide Football Match.





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Do other countries mark Shrove Tuesday as we do in the UK?

Shrove Tuesday isn't Pancake Day all over the world. In many of the countries where Shrove Tuesday is celebrated there are different customs and traditions.

- In Spain, Shrove Tuesday is “Omelette Day,” and the traditional food is an omelette made with sausage or pork fat.
- In Madeira, Portugal, and Hawaii, **malasadas (mal-a-sard-as)**– which are doughnut-like, sugar-coated confections – are eaten.
- In Iceland Shrove Tuesday is called “Sprengidagur” (**Spreng-i-dag-oor**) - Bursting or Exploding Day! People traditionally eat salted meat and peas.
- In Finland and Estonia people traditionally eat green pea soup and a whipped-cream-filled pastry- although not at the same time! It is also a tradition in these countries for children to go sledging. This is linked to an old **agricultural** (farming) tradition that stated that those who slid the farthest would have the best crop yield in the coming year.
- Norway, Sweden and Denmark also have traditions that involve eating particular types of buns or pastries on this day

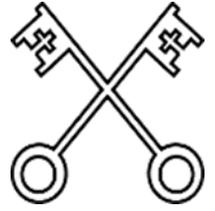
Mardi Gras celebrations

In a number of countries, Shrove Tuesday is known by the French name “Mardi Gras” (Fat Tuesday), which has also given its name to some large celebrations in different parts of the world. These celebrations date back to the time when the majority of people in these countries used to fast or give up meat, eggs and dairy products during Lent, so Shrove Tuesday was the last day to celebrate and use up food before the long period of Lent began.





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In Rio de Janeiro in Brazil they hold a 5 day festival of parades, music and dancing, with up to two million tourists visiting the spectacle each year and up to five million Brazilians. In Venice, Italy, elaborate masquerade (masked) balls are held on this day.



New Orleans in the USA also has a carnival that includes a giant parade through the city.

Other countries that have cities that hold big “Mardi Gras” celebrations include Belgium, Trinidad and Tobago, France and Canada.

FASCINATING PANCAKE FACTS

You can find out all about these in our video, filmed by our choristers and music team. You can also see how much you can remember about Shrove Tuesday by having a go at our “Did You Know...” quiz afterwards.



Acknowledgements

These sites were helpful in researching Shrove Tuesday:

Church of England

Historic England

This Is Church

National Geographic Kids

BBC Newsround

