**Riassunto delle festività inglesi:**

**Types of Holidays:**

In the UK, holidays are categorized into:

* **Bank Holidays** → Official holidays set by law, meaning banks and most businesses close.
* **Common Law Holidays** → Traditional holidays observed by practice but not legally mandated.

If a holiday falls on a weekend, it is celebrated on the next working day, usually Monday.

**Religious Holidays:**

* **Good Friday (Common Law Holiday)** → Commemorates Jesus Christ’s crucifixion.
* **Christmas Day (25 December)** → One of the biggest holidays in the UK, celebrating Jesus’ birth. Families exchange gifts, decorate homes, and enjoy festive meals like roast turkey, mince pies, Christmas pudding, and mulled wine.
* **Easter Monday (Bank Holiday)** → Follows Easter Sunday and serves as a day of rest and public events.
* **Boxing Day (26 December)** → Two explanations exist for its name:
  1. In Victorian times (1837-1901), wealthy families gave gift boxes containing money to their servants.
  2. In early churches (33 A.D.), donations were collected in boxes and distributed to the poor on 26 December. Today, Boxing Day is known for shopping sales, sports events, and post-Christmas relaxation.

**Patron Saints & National Days:**

Each UK nation has a patron saint, celebrated with special events:

* **St. Patrick’s Day (Ireland – 17 March)** → Honoring Ireland’s patron saint, this holiday is famous for parades, music, and traditional Irish celebrations.
* **St. David’s Day (Wales – 1 March)** → Recognized with school events, daffodil decorations, and Welsh foods like cawl (a traditional soup).
* **St. George’s Day (England – 23 April)** → Famous for the legend where St. George slayed a dragon, celebrated with parades and reenactments.
* **St. Andrew’s Day (Scotland – 30 November)** → Officially a Bank Holiday in Scotland, marked by festivals, Scottish music, and traditional food.

**Historical & Military Holidays:**

* **Battle of the Boyne (1690)** → Fought across the River Boyne between Catholic King James II (French origin) and Protestant King William of Orange (William III).
* **Remembrance Day (11 November)** → Commemorates the end of World War I in 1918. At 11 a.m., two minutes of silence are observed across the UK to honor fallen soldiers. White poppies symbolize peace, while red poppies signify remembrance.
* **VE Day (8 May 1945)** → Victory in Europe Day, celebrating Germany’s surrender at the end of World War II.

**Secular Bank Holidays:**

* **May Day (1 May)** → Celebrates workers' rights with parades, labor protests, and Maypole dances.
* **Spring Bank Holiday (Last Monday in May)** → Originally a Bank Holiday without historical significance, now used for festivals, sports events, and relaxation.
* **Summer Bank Holiday** →
* Scotland → First Monday in August.
* England, Wales & Northern Ireland → Last Monday in August.

**Popular Festivals & Legends:**

* **Bonfire Night (Guy Fawkes Night – 5 November)** → Celebrates the failed Gunpowder Plot (1605), when Catholic plotters attempted to blow up Parliament and assassinate King James I. The tradition of lighting bonfires and fireworks started after Guy Fawkes was caught guarding explosives.
* **Halloween (31 October) & The Legend of Jack-o’-lantern** →
* Halloween ("All Hallows’ Eve") involves costumes, trick-or-treating, pumpkin carvings, and spooky decorations.
* The legend of Jack: Jack tricked the Devil **twice**, making him promise never to take his soul. Upon his death, Jack was rejected by both Heaven and Hell. The Devil threw him a burning coal, which Jack placed inside a hollowed-out turnip. Irish immigrants brought this tradition to America, replacing turnips with pumpkins.

**Family Celebrations:**

* **Mother’s Day (Three weeks before Easter)** → Mothers receive flowers, chocolates, or jewelry as gifts.
* **Father’s Day (Third Sunday in June)** → Families give fathers shirts, ties, household tools, and spend time outdoors together.
* **Grandparents' Day (First Sunday in October)** → Celebrates the bond between grandparents and grandchildren, encouraging family gatherings.