

# Jack in the Green: Welcoming in the Summer [B2]

Questa festa di quattro giorni affonda le sue radici nelle tradizioni pagane del XVIII secolo, con spazzacamini, mungitrici, danze popolari e un personaggio frondoso che viene sacrificato per dare il benvenuto all'estate.

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Every year, on the first **bank holiday** weekend of May, the **seaside town** of Hastings in East Sussex hosts one of the **leafiest** events of the year: Jack in the Green. This English folk custom is associated with the celebration of May Day. While Jack in the Green events exist elsewhere in the UK, the four-day festival in Hastings is the biggest of them all. Held in its historic Old Town, it **dates back at least to** the 1700s and is associated with **milkmaids** and **chimney sweeps**. It culminates in a grand procession and the **Slaying** of the Jack on **bank holiday** Monday.

## TRADITIONS

Historically, **milkmaids** would wear their **finest clothes**, carry decorated milk **pails** and dance in front of their customers' houses in exchange for **tips**. Chimney sweeps would also **make the most of** May Day, which was their only day off. The event starts early in the day **to pay homage** to the sweeps' long working hours. They wear garlands and **greenery**, which grew more **eye-catching** and **outlandish** over time, leading to the creation of Jack. Jack is a character dressed in **foliage** and leaves. For the event, a real person wears a **head-to-toe** leafy structure and a crown made of flowers.

## PROCESSION

As the most important member of the procession, Jack leads the **revellers** down the streets of the Old Town. He is accompanied by local dancers, **chimney sweeps**, **milkmaids**, the May Queen, giant figures, and Sal and the **Bogies**. They protect Jack and prevent **onlookers** from getting too close. If anyone does so, or if the **Bogies** happen to notice you didn't **abide by** the

green dress code, they'll **dab** your nose with some green face paint as they pass by. The **paradeheads up** to Hastings' West Hill, where Jack is 'slain'; he is **stripped** of his leaves, welcoming in the spirit of summer. Traditionally, catching one of Jack's leaves as they are thrown into the air is said to bring good luck.

## REVIVAL

Until 1889, at least two groups in the Hastings area celebrated Jack in the Green. However, by the early 20th century the custom had disappeared. In the 1970s, there was a revival of many folk traditions, which led in 1983 to the creation of Hastings Traditional Jack in the Green by Mad Jack's Morris, a Morris-dancing troupe now known as Hastings RX Morris. The troupe is still involved in the organisation of the event to this day. Visitors can expect to see traditional folk dances, folk musicians in concert, and Scottish and Irish **barn dances**, called 'ceilidhs'. Don't forget to wear green if you plan on attending — **or failing that**, pick up some leaves on your way there and put them in your hair!

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# Glossary

- **bank holiday** = festività nazionale
- **eye-catching** = accattivante
- **abide by** = rispettare
- **barn dances** = balli popolari
- **dates back at least to** = risalire a
- **tips** = mance
- **greenery** = vegetazione
- **Bogies** = spiriti maligni
- **to pay homage** = rendere omaggio
- **foliage** = fogliame
- **stripped** = strappare
- **seaside town** = località costiera
- **leafiest** = più frondoso
- **milkmaids** = mungitrici
- **finest clothes** = migliori abiti
- **outlandish** = stravagante
- **head-to-toe** = dalla testa ai piedi
- **chimney sweeps** = spazzacamini
- **Slaying** = uccidere
- **make the most of** = sfruttare al massimo
- **parade** = sfilata
- **or failing that** = o in alternativa
- **dab** = applicare tamponando
- **heads up** = dirigersi verso
- **pails** = secchi
- **revellers** = partecipanti alla festa
- **onlookers** = spettatori