

Easter Eggs

People from many different cultures have a tradition for decorating eggs, usually at Easter or in pagan celebrations for the beginning of spring. Civilizations such as the Roman and the Persian observed the ritual and there is a tradition amongst Jewish people. Some people regarded the eggs as a reward after the sacrifice of Lent and as a symbol of hope, following Christ's resurrection. Chicken eggs were painted or dyed but the Easter eggs that are part of modern culture are normally chocolate eggs. Slavic countries celebrate springtime with very brightly colored eggs.

Chocolate eggs are either hollow or filled with confectionary such as jellybeans or small chocolates. They start to appear in the stores weeks before Easter time and are varied in price, from small offerings to huge Easter Eggs filled with luxury, Belgian chocolate. It's the custom to tell children that they are gifts from the Easter Bunny but they have to go on a treasure hunt to find them. Finding the eggs is a popular pastime on Easter Sunday morning. Another tradition, which takes place in some British families, is to paint eggs and roll them down a hill. Americans also practice this but push the eggs along a flat surface with the aid of a spoon.

For people with strong stomachs, the Scottish custom of deep frying chocolate Easter Eggs is an annual treat. They are sold in fish and chip shops along with the other Scottish invention, deep-fried Mars Bars. This is all a far cry from the gorgeous creations of Peter Carl Faberge, the feted Russian jeweler. He decorated Easter Eggs for the Russian royal family and adorned them with gold and precious gems. The nearest most people get to gold eggs is the gold foil they are wrapped in.

There is a bewildering array of choice when it comes to choosing Easter Eggs. The traditional chocolate makers, such as Cadbury, Nestle and Mars are all represented. Some eggs contain bags of sweets like Smarties or chocolate buttons. There are games and puzzles on some of the boxes or pictures to color in. Children still have fun with them, even after the chocolate is long gone. The eggs are not just for the kids however. They can be a romantic gift between couples; a nice top up on the chocolate supply after the Valentine's Day stash has been scoffed. Chocolate heaven is definitely egg shaped.