

Pancake Day

Pancake Day, which is also known as Shrove Tuesday, is a Christian festival that has been celebrated by Christian people for over 1000 years. Traditionally, people celebrate by making pancakes. Shrove (which means 'forgiven') Tuesday is the last chance to indulge in a treat before Lent begins by using up rich food, such as fat, butter and eggs. Lent is a time when Christian people abstain from eating luxurious foods in order to help them focus on Jesus and the sacrifice that he made by dying on the cross.



Across the United Kingdom, there are different traditions associated with Pancake Day.

In Northern Ireland, pancakes used to be cooked over an open fire whilst families and friends gathered together. The eldest unmarried daughter of the family would toss the first pancake. If she tossed it successfully, it was believed that she would get married that year. However, if it did not turn over or if she dropped it, it was believed that she would remain unmarried.

In some parts of Wales, on the evening before Shrove Tuesday, tin cans were kicked up and down the streets to remember the task of putting away all the pots, pans and utensils used to make the food that was forbidden during Lent. Crempogs, also known as 'ffroes', are thicker than traditional pancakes. Traditionally, they were cooked on a cast iron bake stone, griddle or 'planc'.

Scottish pancakes are smaller and thicker than traditional pancakes and are called 'drop scones' or 'dropped scones'.



In Buckinghamshire, England, a famous pancake race takes place every year. Legend has it that in 1445, a woman heard the church bells ringing as she was making pancakes. Rather than be late, she ran to church still holding the frying pan and pancake. Today, people take part in the race wearing an apron, hat or scarf carrying a pan containing a pancake. Pancakes must be flipped three times during the race and the winner is the first person to cross the finish line, serve their pancake and kiss the bell ringer at the church!

Pancake Day Around the World

Christian people all over the world celebrate Shrove Tuesday although the name and traditions vary from country to country.

In France, America and Brazil, Shrove Tuesday is known as 'Mardi Gras' or 'Fat Tuesday' carnival. In Sweden, it is called 'Fettsdagen' or also 'Fat Tuesday' and a pastry called semla is eaten rather than pancakes. The festival is called 'Sprengidagur' or 'Day of Bursting' in Iceland and people eat salted meat and peas in the lead up to Lent. Similarly, in Finland, green pea soup and pastry is eaten. 'Apocreas', meaning 'from the meat' is the Greek name for Shrove Tuesday and Christian people in Greece give up meat during Lent.

Pancake Recipe

Makes 12 pancakes.

Method

1. Put the flour, eggs, milk, oil and a pinch of salt into a bowl or large jug and whisk to make a smooth batter.
2. Set aside for 30 minutes to rest if you have time. Otherwise, start cooking straight away.
3. Wipe a medium frying pan with some oiled kitchen paper and put over a medium heat.
4. When hot, place a tablespoon of pancake mixture into the pan and cook for 1 minute on each side until golden. If you cannot toss your pancake, use a spatula to turn it instead.
5. Serve with lemon and caster sugar or a topping of your choice.

100g plain flour

2 large eggs

300ml milk

1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil, plus a little extra for frying.

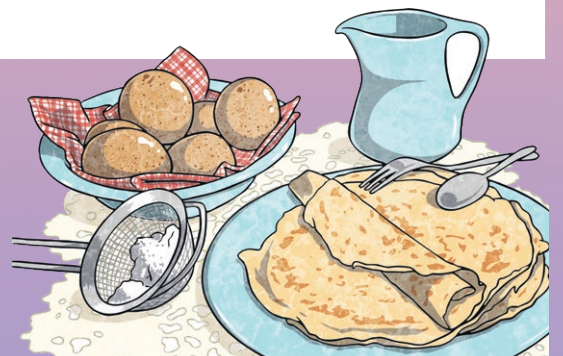
Pinch of salt

Lemon wedges, to serve (optional)

Caster sugar, to serve (optional)

Did You Know...?

The most tosses of a pancake in one minute is 140 and was achieved by Brad Jolly in Sydney, Australia on 21st February 2012.



Questions

1. What is a Welsh name for pancakes? Tick one.

- drop scones
- semla
- crempogs
- planc

2. How many eggs would you need to make 12 pancakes? Tick one.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 6

3. What is the name of the period when Christian people reflect on and remember that Jesus died on the cross?

4. In what country is semla eaten instead of pancakes?

5. What can you use to help you turn the pancake if you are not able to toss it?

6. Explain in your own words why people in Buckinghamshire take part in a race carrying a pancake in a frying pan. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

7. Explain why you think that Shrove Tuesday is known as the 'Day of Bursting' in Iceland?

8. Why do you think that the word 'optional' is used after lemon wedges and caster sugar in the ingredients list. Explain fully.

9. What would you need to do to achieve a new world record? Explain fully.
