



Monthly newsletter for TRACEUS, co-funded by Erasmus+ programme of the EU



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Happy Easter!

Easter is one of the most important festivities for Christians. Once a year millions of people celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Although celebrations in Europe are similar, Easter traditions are as diverse as the countries themselves. From colouring eggs in central and eastern Europe to eggs hunting in Western European countries, Easter celebrations demonstrate the cultural richness of European traditions. In this newsletter, Traceus partners wish you Happy Easter and share their countries' traditions and recipes for your perfect celebration.



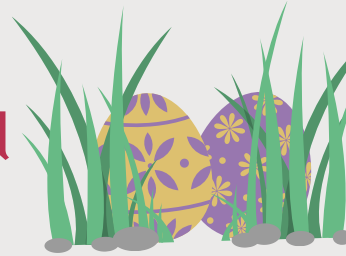
✦ Easter tradition in Belgium: it's all about chocolate eggs and flying bells!

An old legend in Belgium tells the story that church bells disappear in the days before Easter and only return on Easter morning bringing chocolate and eggs. Around Belgium, especially on Silent Saturday, you won't hear bells ringing before Easter, in mourning for the crucified. Usually, most shops are closed and families gather for huge feasts to celebrate Easter in Belgium. But there's plenty to do for those looking for an active Belgian Easter, including public Easter egg hunts.

Easter eggs and rabbits are symbols of fertility. Easter trees may also be seen in Belgium where trees are decorated with colourful eggs and other decorations. As one of the world's tastiest chocolate producers, Belgium is also where you can find some delicious chocolate eggs. Forget empty chocolate eggs: in Belgium, you'll find gourmet Easter eggs with fillings such as pistachio, marzipan, or hazelnut cream.

As a result, the Easter feast is a typically grand affair. Easter in Belgium, like most Belgian celebrations, is time for family. It includes a lengthy feast on Easter Sunday of lamb, ham, asparagus, potatoes, pancakes, and sweetbreads. Many families also attend Mass on Easter Sunday, marking the resurrection of Christ. They also organize family egg hunts in their gardens for their children.

The Cake Dance, Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday and Good Friday in Ireland



The Cake Dance

A cake dance is a tradition that has largely now passed but it was a big part of the celebrations before or on Easter Sunday. The cake would usually be a barm brack marked out with symbols such as birds or fish. The cake would be placed at the center of the table prominently on a piece of white linen, the music would start and the dancing would begin – hence the Cake Dance. The best dancer would win the cake.



Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday

Easter Saturday and Sunday were, and still are for many, the culmination of the 40 days and 40 nights of Lent and fasting. Traditionally in Ireland, people would light a Paschal candle as a symbol of Christ being risen. They would get up at sunrise and dance to celebrate.

Good Friday in Ireland

Since medieval times, all bread baked on Good Friday was marked with a cross in remembrance of Christ's crucifixion on this day. The custom survives in the Hot Cross Buns we eat in modern times. But it doesn't just stop there. This most simple of Irish Easter traditions can be witnessed every day of the year; the custom of marking home-made bread with a cross persists all over Ireland.



Easter is a particularly solemn holiday in the calendar of Orthodox Christians. Bulgarians celebrate Easter with a service in their own language from the far IX century when the Holy Bible was translated into Bulgarian and rewritten in numerous manuscripts by monks.

On the evening of Easter Orthodox Christians go to church for a solemn mass. The culmination is at midnight when a symbolic resurrection of Christ is performed. Shortly before midnight, the priests lock themselves in the altar of the temple to pray for the divine fire.



Afterwards, they go outside in front of the church and give it to the people. A priest announces "Christ is risen" and the people respond in a choir "Indeed He is risen". People light the candle from the priest and pass it on to those standing nearby. Then everyone goes around the temple three times with the lighted candles. An Easter candle is brought into the home with care so that keep the flame.

The tradition is that eggs be coloured for Easter. This is done early in the morning on Thursday or Saturday of Passion Week. The first egg is always red and decorated with a cross. A cross mark is made with it on the foreheads of the family members as a spell for health. This egg is kept until the next Easter. The second egg is also red and it is left in the church after the liturgy on the night before the holiday. The red eggs are a symbol of Christ's martyr's blood, and the festive bread is a symbol of the Lamb of God - Christ. The widely spread custom of making decorated sweet bread called kozunak was introduced to Bulgaria at the end of the 19th century. Most people break the first eggs and Easter cakes right away during the night in front of the church. There they share them with relatives and friends. The Easter holiday lasts for three days. Relatives and friends visit each other and exchange coloured and decorated eggs and Easter cakes. The Easter table is especially rich after the 7 weeks of fast. Traditionally it is full of eggs, delicious lamb dishes, fresh green salads, pastries and Easter cakes. The custom is to drink red wine.





Fried milk



1 litre of milk • 120 g sugar • 120 g cornflour • 1 lemon peel • 1 orange peel • 1 teaspoon vanilla • 1 stick of cinnamon •

For the batter:

3 eggs • 50 g flour • Oil for frying • Sugar for the batter

Fried milk is a delicious dessert that is very typical of Spain, especially in the north of Spain. It is quick and easy to prepare and you will see how creamy it is. With just a few basic ingredients, you get a perfect dessert that the little ones will love. You can prepare it the day before, and dip it in sugar just before serving, because it is a dessert that is eaten cold. This Easter is a perfect time to prepare it and surprise your family and friends.

- Cut some orange and lemon peel; Set aside approximately one glass of milk and reserve. Pour the rest of the milk into a saucepan. Add the lemon and orange peels, the cinnamon stick and the sugar. Bring the saucepan to the heat. Lower the heat when the milk starts to boil and leave the saucepan on the heat for 10 minutes to allow the milk to take on all the flavours. Let it boil very slowly. After 10 minutes, remove the pan from the heat
- Add the cornflour to the reserved milk and stir until well dissolved. Stir in the vanilla
- Strain all the fried milk into a separate pan and add the milk in which you have dissolved the cornflour. Mix well and bring to the boil to thicken, stirring constantly. Remove the pan from the heat when you have obtained a very creamy texture
- Pour the mixture into a plastic tray to cool and cover it with cling film to prevent it from crusting. Leave to cool completely. First at room temperature and then in the fridge overnight
- Cut the portions into the desired size with a knife and carefully remove them from the tray
- Coat the fried milk with batter. Prepare a plate with flour and another with beaten eggs
- Fry the fried milk. Heat plenty of oil in a frying pan. Dredge the pieces of fried milk first in flour and then in beaten egg. Leave the fried milk in the frying pan when the oil is very hot. Turn them until golden brown on all sides and remove them to a plate with absorbent paper
- Coat with a little sugar. Just before serving, remove the excess oil with a napkin and dip each portion in sugar



Pâté de Pâques or Easter pie

As its name suggests, the Berrichon Easter pie has its origins in the culture of Berry. In this French province, each family has its own recipe, which is passed down from generation to generation. Also known as Easter pie, this Berrichon specialty usually consists of a puff pastry or shortcrust pastry, a meat filling, spices, shallots, and hard-boiled chicken or quail eggs. Traditional recipes called for a mixture of two types of meat: pork (mainly ham and loin) and veal. For convenience, sausage meat now replaces them in most preparations. It can be eaten hot or cold and served with a fresh green salad.

2 sheets of puff pastry • 300g sausage meat • 200g minced veal
• 6 eggs (4 hard-boiled eggs • 1 egg for the pâté • 1 egg yolk for the pastry) • 50g breadcrumbs • parsley, salt, pepper • 1 shallot and nutmeg

- Hard boil 4 of the eggs
- Mix the meat with the finely chopped shallot, parsley, one egg (beaten), the breadcrumbs and season it with salt, pepper and nutmeg
- Place one sheet of puff pastry on a baking tray and put half of the meat in the pastry
- Slice the hard boiled eggs in half and place them on the meat face down
- Cover the eggs with the remaining meat filling
- Cover the meat with the remaining puff pastry and press it down to seal the pastry
- Brush the pastry with the yolk of the remaining egg and make 2 large incisions in the pastry to allow the steam to go off while cooking
- Cook in oven at 180°C for 20 minutes and then lower the temp to 150°C and cook further for 30 minutes





Flaounes



Flaouna is the traditional Cypriot Easter dish made from a pastry sheet filled with unique Paphitiko cheese, raisins and mint, flavoured with mahlepi and mastic.



“Flaounes” have been made in Cyprus since the 19th century. According to tradition, they were made on Holy Saturday and then taken to the churches and consumed after the Resurrection. They were also offered to foreign visitors and people who could not prepare them themselves. But the dish, apart from being an “Easter traditional cheese pie”, had a functional role. In earlier times, “flaounes” were carried to church on the evening of Holy Saturday and offered to the faithful to help them transition from fasting to eating meat without causing stomach upset. Until recently, however, flaounes were used to either cherish children going from house to house to announce the resurrection of Christ or to wake up housewives to go to church.

It is believed that flaouna is the Christian continuation of an ancient Greek custom of making a kind of sweet from nuts called palathi. The ancient Greek palathi was offered to children who returned singing to their homes to welcome the swallows and thus spring.

In some villages, in order to bake them successfully, the women would jump on the oven and sing “Red like candles and tall as the furnaces”, while in the area of Tilliria, the women used to throw the “martouthkia” worn by the children into the oven. In the case of funerary flaounes, as in Armali, the cheese symbolized the dead, while the egg in the resurrectional Cypriot “flaounes” symbolized life.

Ingredients

For The Filling

1 tsp mastic • 1 tsp mahleb • 1 tsp sugar • 228 gr haloumi cheese • 228 gr soft, mild cheddar • 115 gr raisins • 84 gr semolina flour • 1 tsp baking powder • 1/2 tsp dry mint, crushed • 2 eggs

For The Dough

2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast • 300 ml lukewarm milk, divided 1 tsp mastic • 1 tsp mahleb • 1 tsp sugar • 512 g flour • 1 tsp baking powder • 1/2 tsp salt • 1/3 cup olive oil

For The Topping

1 egg, beaten • 70 gr sesame seeds

Cheese Mixture Prep

- Using a mortar and pestle, pound the mastic and mahleb with 1 tsp sugar until you have a fine powder
- Grate the cheeses and mix them with the raisins, semolina flour, baking powder, pounded mixture, and crushed mint
- Add the eggs, one by one, mixing until the cheese has come together as a firm mixture that can be shaped into a ball (less or more eggs may be needed depending on the moisture level of the cheese)
- Cover the filling and refrigerate overnight, or at least 4 hours, to let the flavors come together

Dough and Baking

- Remove cheese mixture from the refrigerator and let it come to room temperature
- Mix yeast with 1/2 c lukewarm milk. Set aside for the yeast to hydrate
- Pound the mastic and mahleb with 1 tsp sugar until fine
- Mix the flour, baking powder, salt, and pounded mixture in a large bowl
- Add the oil and rub it into the flour using your fingertips, until mixture has a sandy texture
- Pour the softened yeast mixture into the flour and mix well with your hands
- Add the remaining 3/4 c of lukewarm milk gradually, kneading with your hands as you add, and adding just enough to incorporate all the dry ingredients and create a firm dough that does not stick on your hands
- Cover the dough and set it aside to rise for 1-2 hours, until nearly doubled
- Roll out the dough 1/8 inch thick (it should measure roughly 15x20 inches). Cut the dough into 5 inch squares. (Or cut the dough your desired shape and size.)
- Brush one side of the cut dough with the beaten egg and place it egg-side down onto the seeds
- Place a heaping 1/4 cup of the cheese filling on top of the dough (on the un-seeded side)
- Brush the egg wash on the outer edges of the dough and fold them up towards the center (leaving the top center of the filling uncovered). Pinch the un-seeded side of the corners of the dough together to keep the sides in place over the filling
- Place the shaped flaounes on a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Brush the exposed filling with a little beaten egg
- Let the flaounes rise for 30-45 minutes, until slightly puffy
- Near end of rising time, preheat your oven to 375F
- Bake the flaounes for 30 min, until deeply golden
- Serve with honey and cinnamon for a sweet treat or olives and sliced meat for savory

