

# Pancake Day

Pancake Day, also known as Shrove Tuesday, is celebrated in many parts of the world. It falls on the last Tuesday before Lent, 47 days before Easter Sunday.



Making pancakes is a way of using up all the rich food in the house, such as fat and eggs, before the season of Lent begins.



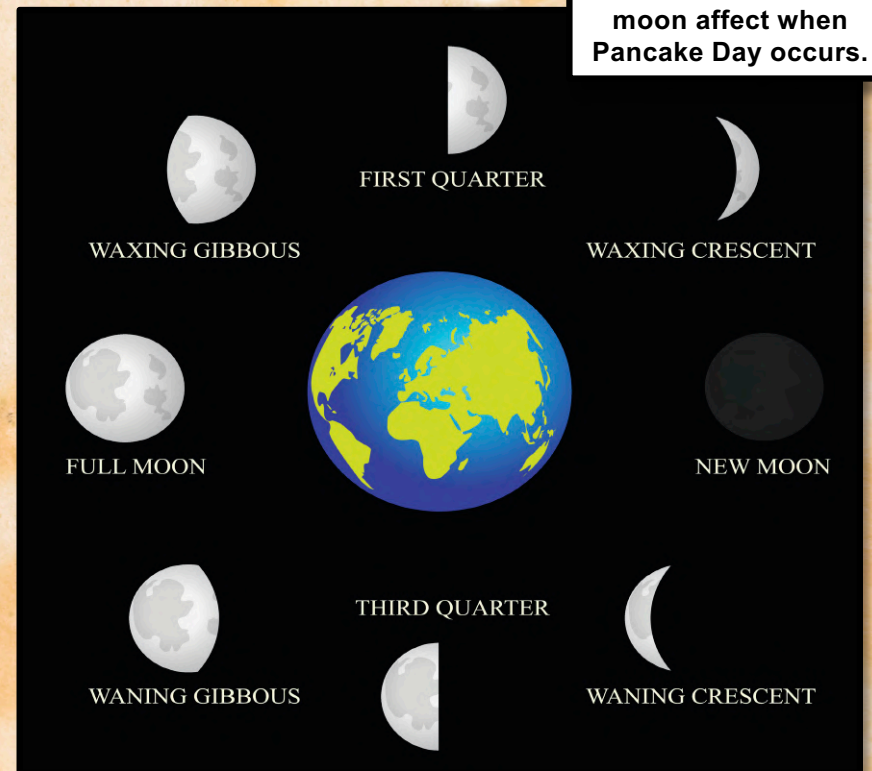
# Pancake Day

Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until Maundy Thursday (the Thursday before Easter Sunday) in the Western Christian tradition. During Lent, Christians often give up something they really enjoy. This is because Jesus spent forty days praying in the desert before Easter. Some Christians fast during this time, reducing the amount of food they eat.



A carved relief depicting Jesus' forty days in the desert.

The phases of the moon affect when Pancake Day occurs.



The date of Easter Sunday depends on the phases of the moon, so the date of Pancake Day changes every year. It always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, some time between 2 February and 9 March.



# The History of Pancake Day

The origins of Pancake Day stretch back before Christianity began. Many cultures celebrated the coming of spring with feasting and other rituals. In Eastern Europe, for example, spring festivals were held in honour of the Slavic god Jarilo. Pancakes were one of the foods eaten there.

People worshipped in medieval churches like St. Martin's in Canterbury, UK.



A chef flipping a pancake.

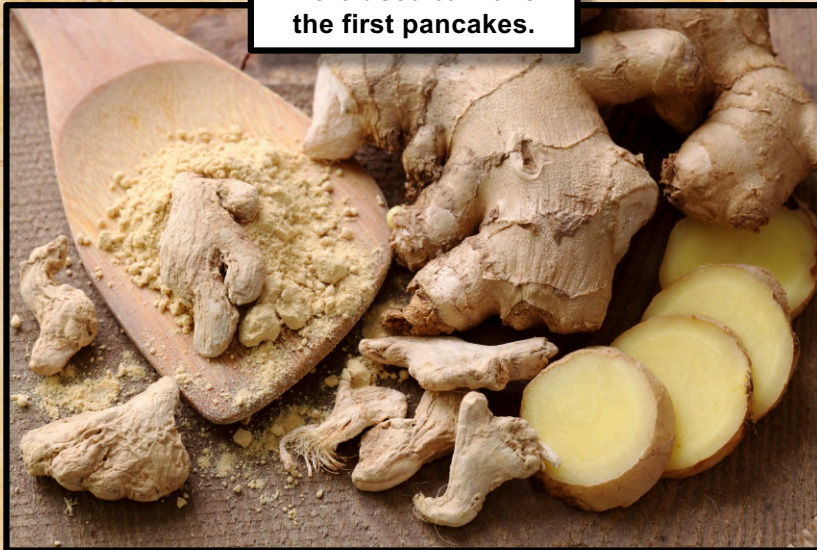
Shrove Tuesday comes from the verb “to shrive”, which means to make a confession and be forgiven. During the Middle Ages, people went to church to be shriven on this day.



# The History of Pancake Day



Cinnamon and ginger were used to make the first pancakes.



The earliest published pancake recipe can be found in the 1594 cookbook "*A Good Huswifes Handmaide*". The recipe is very similar to the egg and flour batter we use today, although ale is used instead of milk or water, and the mix is flavoured with cinnamon and ginger.



The 'Pancake Bell' was rung as early as 1620.

Shrove Tuesday was a half-day holiday, and a church bell was rung at 11am to warn the housewives to make their pancake batter. This became known as the Pancake Bell.



# Pancake Day Around the World

Around the world, the day has been given different names, and has different customs, all related to eating up foods that will not be allowed during Lent.

Carnivals take place during Fastnacht and Mardi Gras.



In Germany, it is known as “Fastnacht”, meaning “The Eve of the Fast”. In many countries around the world, such as France, the day is known as Mardi Gras (“Fat Tuesday”).

Pączki



In Poland, people celebrate Pączki Day by eating Pączki, delicious filled doughnuts.

In Iceland, the name Sprengidagur means “Bursting Day” because people eat salted meat and peas until they are full!



A traditional Sprengidagur meal.



The tradition of ‘Bear guiding’.

A tradition called ‘bear guiding’ still takes place on Shrove Tuesday in some areas of Poland, where a person dressed as a bear is led from house to house!



# Pancake Day Traditions

Pancake Day races are a popular event in the UK. The story goes that they began in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire, England. A local woman ran to the church for mass, with her pancake pan and pancake still in her hand – she had forgotten the time!

The Olney pancake race is still held annually and only local women can enter. The competitors race to the church from the market square and the winner serves their pancake to the bell ringer.

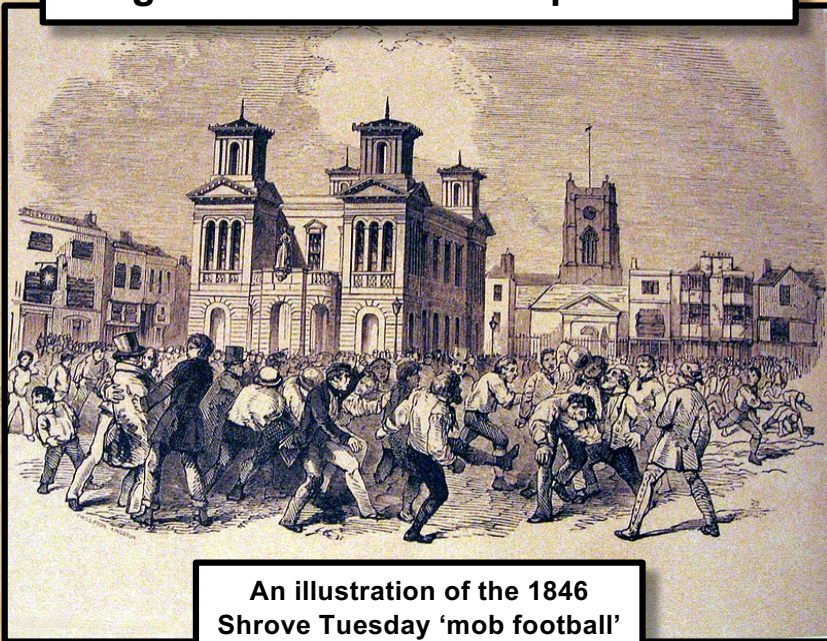
The start of a pancake day race.





# Pancake Day Traditions

Many UK towns traditionally held a mass football game on the streets to mark Pancake Day. Known as “mob football”, these largely died out but a few still happen, such as the Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football, held in Ashbourne, Derbyshire. Thousands of people take part, and the goals are three miles apart!



An illustration of the 1846 Shrove Tuesday 'mob football' in Kingston-Upon-Thames.



Traditional pancakes.

Traditional English pancakes are thin and served straight from the pan. The most traditional topping is lemon and sugar.



# Pancake Records

In February 2012, the world record for the largest number of people tossing pancakes at the same time was set. Eight hundred ninety people took part in the event at the University of Sheffield.



Tossing a pancake.

A line of pancakes 130m (430 ft) long set the world record on the 25 February 2020. After the event, held at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London, the organising company, Kenwood, and a local charity, The Felix Project, distributed the 1,135 pancakes to local people.

The largest pancake ever made was cooked up in Rochdale, Greater Manchester in 1994. It was an enormous 15m (49ft) wide and 2.5cm (1 inch) thick.



Pancakes



A line of rolled pancakes.