

## Easter Fun Facts From Around the World

### France

Forget about the Easter Bunny. Parents in France tell their children that Easter eggs come from Easter Bells. Churches all over France keep their bells silent starting the Thursday before Easter and only ring them again on Easter morning. As a way of explaining the bells' silence, the French say that the bells fly to Rome to meet with the Pope and then return to France on Easter, bringing with them painted eggs and chocolates.



### Czech Republic

Painting Easter eggs and ... whipping girls? Czech Republic has what can certainly be counted among the most unusual Easter traditions in the world. Czechs refer to Easter Monday as "Whipping Monday" because, on that day, it is customary for boys to slightly tap girls using willow twigs braided to form a whip known as "pomlázka." No harm is intended though. The practice is purely symbolic for it is believed that the twigs would bestow on those whipped lasting youth and wellbeing. To show their appreciation, the girls present the boys responsible for hitting them with East



## Germany

Of the many Easter traditions observed worldwide, the Easter Bunny is one that enjoys immense popularity and appeal. It traces its origins to Germany, where the story of the egg-laying rabbit or the "osterhase" started. Besides being the birthplace of the Easter Bunny, Germany is also known for its custom of using old Christmas trees to make the Easter Fire as a way of bidding goodbye to winter and welcoming spring.

## Guyana

Kite flying is a popular Easter custom in Guyana and is believed to symbolize Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven. The Guyanese start flying kites in the weeks leading to Easter, with the grand finish occurring on Easter Monday. On that day, people wielding kites of various shapes and colors can be seen along the coastland, which is also the favorite spot of many spectators and picnickers.



## Poland

For men who dislike helping in the kitchen, spending Easter in Poland should be a welcome experience. Legend has it that if the man of the house were to assist in the making of "paska" or Easter bread, the dough would not rise and his moustache (if he has one) would turn gray; thus, he is dissuaded from helping.

## Sweden

Another unusual Easter tradition—one that can get a person wondering if it's actually Halloween—is practiced in Sweden. Springing from the old belief that witches are active during Holy Week and that they get together with the Devil at a place called "blåkulla" on Maundy Thursday, Swede kids dress up as Easter witches and go around seeking treats from their neighbors.



## Switzerland

In Switzerland, the magical egg-laying rabbit doesn't receive much love as an Easter tradition. Instead of the Easter Bunny, the Easter Cuckoo is credited by the Swiss for bringing the colorful Easter eggs. Chocolate bunnies, however, are sold in most stores along with traditional Easter cakes, dyed eggs, and, of course, chocolate cuckoos.



## United States

Parades and egg rolling are just two of the many activities that make up the Easter celebration in the U.S. Every year, people in New York and other American cities participate in grand Easter parades while decked out in brand-new and stylish (or wacky, in some cases) outfits. Also an annual event, the White House Easter Egg Roll held on Easter Monday has been a tradition since 1878 when President Rutherford B. Hayes first offered the use of the South Lawn to children and their families.

