

Easter: A Tradition for Everyone

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for Inter Tribal Times

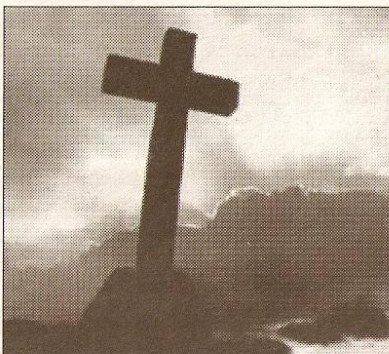
Once again, as the winter's snow, slowly starts to melt and give way to the rebirth of mother earth, it's time to think about Easter.

One of the biggest and most complicated questions concerning Easter is why Easter falls on different calendar days and not on a specific date such as Christmas?

Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. On March 20 of this year, at precisely 1:48 a.m. EDT 05:48 universal time, the sun will cross directly over the earth's equator. This moment is known as the vernal equinox. Translated literally, equinox means "equal night" Since the sun is positioned above the equator, day and night are about equal in length all over the world during the equinoxes.

This date was settled upon a series of synods and councils in the second and third centuries and enforced by Pope Saint Victor 1: The first ecumenical council, the Council of Nicea, held in the year 323AD made this the rule for the Universal Church. After they separated themselves from the See of Peter, many of the Eastern Orthodox added to the rule (first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox after the Jewish Passover). They have supposedly done this to demonstrate their defiance of the pope.

Easter is associated with spring or rebirth and the Easter bunny is also a big part of the holiday.



The Easter bunny has its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore. The hare and the rabbit were the most fertile animals known and they serve as symbols of the new life during the Spring season. The bunny as an Easter symbol seems to have its origins in Germany, where it was first mentioned in German writings in the 1500s. The first edible bunnies were made in Germany during the 1800s.

The bunnies were made of pastry and sugar. The Easter bunny was introduced to American folklore by the German settlers who arrived in the Pennsylvania Dutch country during the 1700s. The arrival of the "Oschter Haws" was considered the next best thing to a visit from Christ-Kindel on Christmas Eve.

Children believed that if they were good then "Oschter Haws" would lay a nest of colored eggs. The children would build their nest in a hidden place in the home, barn, or garden. Caps for

the boys and bonnets for the girls were used to make the nests. Fancy and colourful Easter baskets would appear in stores years later as the tradition of the Easter bunny spread through out the country.

Many people believe that the exchange of treats, which dates back hundreds of years, at Easter got started with Hot Cross Buns. These buns became the traditional breakfast of Good Friday. In 1361, Father Thomas Rockcliffe began a tradition of giving Hot Cross Buns to the poor of St. Albans on Good Friday.

In Europe perhaps during the early 1800s chocolate was all the rage with most middle and upper class citizens. Chocolates used the egg as symbols to celebrate Easter and sell their products. The first chocolate eggs were solid, soon followed by hollow eggs. Making hollow eggs were difficult at the time since the invention of machines which made the work easier wouldn't be invented until the 19th century. By the 1960s the chocolate egg was well established worldwide.

In the 1930s the Jelly Bean wobbled into the Easter season, baskets and stomachs. Jelly Beans, believed to be the descendants of a mid-eastern and popular candy, Turkish Delight. Currently, 16 billion jelly beans are made for Easter and the rest of the year.