

Family holidays

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New Year's Day

is the first day of the year, in the Gregorian calendar. In modern times, it is the 1st January. It is a time for looking forward and wishing for a good year ahead. It is also a holiday.



People welcome in the New Year on the night before. This is called New Year's Eve. In Scotland, people celebrate with a lively festival called Hogmanay. All over Britain there are parties, fireworks, singing and dancing, to ring out the old year and ring in the new. As the clock - Big Ben - strikes midnight, people link arms and sing a song called Auld Lang Syne. It reminds them of old and new friends.



The door custom

In the old days, the New Year started with a custom called 'first footing', which was suppose to bring good luck to people for the coming year. As soon as midnight had passed and January 1st had started, people used to wait behind their doors for a dark haired person to arrive. The visitor carried a piece of coal, some bread, some money and some greenery.



These were all for good luck - the coal to make sure that the house would always be warm, the bread to make sure everyone in the house would have enough food to eat, money so that they would have enough money, and the greenery to make sure that they had a long life.

The visitor would then take a pan of dust or ashes out of the house with him, thus signifying the departure of the old year.

New Year superstition



The 1st of January was a highly significant day in medieval superstitions regarding prosperity, or lack of it, in the year ahead. A flat cake was put on one of the horns of a cow in every farmyard. The farmer and his workers would then sing a song and dance around the cow until the cake was thrown to the ground. If it fell in front of the cow that signified good luck; to fall behind indicated the opposite.

Mothering Sunday



Mothering Sunday

What is Mothering Sunday?

Mothering Sunday in the UK is the equivalent of Mothers' Day in other countries.

What happens on Mothering Sunday in the UK?

Mothering Sunday is a time when children pay respect to their Mothers. Children often give their Mothers a gift and a card.



Mothering Sunday church service



Many churches give the children in the congregation a little bunch of spring flowers to give to their Mothers as a thank you for all their care and love throughout the year.

When is Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day)?



Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day) is always the fourth Sunday of Lent.

18 March 2012	6 March 2016
10 March 2013	26 March 2017
30 March 2014	11 March 2018
15 March 2015	31 March 2019

Why is Mothering Sunday on different dates each year?

Mothering Sunday is not a fixed day because it is always the middle Sunday in Lent (which lasts from Ash Wednesday to the day before Easter Sunday). This means that Mother's Day in the UK will fall on different dates each year and sometimes even fall in different months.

Mothering Sunday has been celebrated in the UK on the fourth Sunday in Lent since at least the 16th century.



Easter



When is Easter in 2012?

This year Easter will fall on Sunday 8 April 2012



What is Easter?

Easter is the time for holidays, festivals and a time for giving chocolate Easter eggs. But Easter means much more....

Easter is the oldest and the most important Christian Festival, the celebration of the death and coming to life again of Jesus Christ. For Christians, the dawn of Easter Sunday with its message of new life is the high point of the Christian year.



Why do we have eggs at Easter?



Eggs are a forbidden food during Lent, making them a welcome return to the menu on Easter Day.

Why do we give eggs at Easter?

Easter is a Christian festival. For Christians the custom of giving eggs at Easter celebrates new life.

Christians remember that Jesus, after dying on the cross, rose from the dead. They believe that, through his resurrection, Jesus defeated death and sin and offers people the promise of eternal life if they follow his teachings.



St George's Day (England's national day)



Who was St George?

St. George is the patron saint of England. His emblem, a red cross on a white background, is the flag of England, and part of the British flag. St George's emblem was adopted by Richard The Lion Heart and brought to England in the 12th century. The king's soldiers wore it on their tunics to avoid confusion in battle.



Dragon-Slaying Patron Saint of England

One of the best-known stories about Saint George is his fight with a dragon. But it is highly unlikely that he ever fought a dragon, and even more unlikely that he ever actually visited England. Despite this, St George is known throughout the world as the dragon-slaying patron saint of England.



Trooping the Colour



What is the Trooping the Colour?

The official birthday of Queen Elizabeth II is marked each year by a military parade and march-past, known as **Trooping the Colour** (Carrying of the Flag). The official name is “the Queen’s Birthday Parade”.



Each June, the Queen and other members of the Royal Family attend the Trooping the Colour ceremony on Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall in London. The Queen attends the ceremony to take the salute from thousands of guardsmen who parade the Colour (their regiment's flag).



Trooping the Colour will take place on **Saturday 16 June 2012** on Horse Guards Parade. Events begin at approximately 10am and the parade starts at 11 a.m. (lasts approximately one hour).

Harvest Festival



What is a Harvest Festival?

Harvest Festival is a celebration of the food grown on the land.

When is Harvest Festival?

Harvest festivals are traditionally held on or near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon. This is the full Moon that occurs closest to the autumn equinox (about Sept. 23). In two years out of three, the Harvest Moon comes in September, but in some years it occurs in October. Unlike the USA and Canada, the UK does not have a national holiday for Harvest Festival.



Remembrance Day in Britain

Always
&
Forever



The Royal British Legion

What is Remembrance Day?

Remembrance Day is on 11 November. It is a special day set aside to remember all those men and women who were killed during the two World Wars and other conflicts.

Remembrance Sunday is held on the second Sunday in November, which is usually the Sunday nearest to 11 November. Special services are held at war memorials and churches all over Britain.

