

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAY

The tradition of birthday parties started in Europe a long time ago. It was feared that evil spirits were particularly attracted to people on their birthdays. To protect them from harm, friends and family would come to be with the birthday person and bring good thoughts and wishes. Giving gifts brought even more good cheer to ward off the evil spirits. This is how birthday parties began.

Some traditions are quite similar in many parts of the world. Cake, candles and song. A cake is made, and candles are put on top based on how old the person is. Then everyone sings the "happy birthday" song, and at the end of the song, the birthday person blows out the candles. If they blow them all out with one blow, their birthday wishes will come true.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. The New Year is an event that happens particular on January 1st when a culture celebrates the end of one year and the beginning of the next. Cultures that measure yearly calendars all have New Year celebrations. It is very popular to make New Year's promise to lose weight or quit smoking.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Saint Valentine's Day or Valentine's Day falls on February 14. It is the traditional day on which lovers express their love for each other; sending Valentine's cards, often anonymously.

The day was most closely associated with the mutual exchange of love notes in the form of "valentines". Modern Valentine symbols include the heart-shaped outline and the figure of the winged Cupid. Since the 19th century, handwritten notes have largely given way to mass-produced greeting cards. Valentine's day is the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas.

EASTER MONDAY

Easter Monday is celebrated as a holiday in some largely Christian cultures.

Formerly, the post-Easter festivities involved a week of secular celebration, but this was reduced to one day in the 19th century. Events include egg rolling competitions and dousing other people with water which, at one time, had been holy water blessed the day before at Easter Sunday Mass and carried home to bless the house and food.

HALLOWEEN

Halloween sucker is a tradition celebrated on the night of October 31, most notably by children dressing in costumes and going door-to-door collecting sweets, fruit, and other treats. Apart from this trick-or-treating, there are many other traditional Halloween activities. Some of these

include costume parties, watching horror films, going to "haunted" houses, and traditional autumn activities such as hayrides.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving, or Thanksgiving Day, is an annual one-day holiday to give thanks, traditionally to God, for the things one has at the close of the harvest season. In the United States, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November.

At Thanksgiving meals are traditionally served certain kinds of food. First and foremost, turkey is usually the featured item on any Thanksgiving feast table (so that Thanksgiving is sometimes named as "Turkey Day").

CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas is an annual holiday that marks the traditional birth date of Jesus. Over time, many popular Christmas traditions have developed including Nativity scenes, Santa Claus, the exchange of gifts and cards, holiday decorations, and the display of Christmas trees. Popular secular traditions include emphasis on themes such as family, goodwill, giving and compassion.

Christmas is traditionally on December 25. It is preceded by Christmas Eve and in some countries is followed by Boxing Day. Some Eastern Orthodox Churches celebrate Christmas on January 7, which corresponds to December 25 of the Julian calendar. These dates are just traditional and neither is thought to be the actual birth date of Jesus.