

PANCAKE DAY

Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day, falls on February 16th this year. It changes on a yearly basis because the date is linked to Easter and it is fixed as 47 days before Easter Sunday. It is not an official bank holiday, but is definitely a day to celebrate. The following day is Ash Wednesday, the day when Lent begins. Lent is a season of reflection and preparation for the celebrations of Easter, a period in which people have traditionally fasted from rich food and festivities. As such, people would use up the last of their eggs, butter and sugar on Shrove Tuesday, indulging themselves before the prohibitive season of Lent began. It was also the habit to attend church to confess ('shrive') and be absolved. Nowadays, fewer people keep to the tradition of giving something up for Lent, but some will still commit to not eating chocolate for the 40 days or to not allowing themselves a food they normally enjoy.

We accept Pancake Day as a Christian tradition, but the idea has also been put forward that it might be Pagan. It is thought that people were celebrating the arrival of spring by eating the warm, round pancakes which symbolised the sun.

When I was a child, the pancakes themselves were a treat and we normally enjoyed them with just a little sugar and lemon juice, or syrup if we were lucky! Today, pancakes are much more sophisticated. Looking at some of the recipes that have been appearing in newspapers and magazines over the last few days, it would appear that the humble pancake is now normally swamped by chocolate/caramel sauce, cream, peanut butter and/or berries. The most exotic I've seen to date is the 'Espresso Martini Pancake' which contains coffee liqueur, vodka and chocolate-coated coffee beans. That must be the true definition of indulgence!



Whatever we do with our pancakes, one thing is certain – we use an awful lot of eggs on one particular day of the year. It is estimated that we use 52 million in Britain alone!

How we've moved on from just finishing up the leftovers.