



Easter is a time of springtime festivals. The celebrations of Easter have many customs and legends that are pagan in origin 'Ostra' or 'Eastre,' both Goddesses of mythology signifying spring and fertility whose festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox. These origins survive in the Easter rabbit, a symbol of fertility, and in coloured Easter eggs, originally painted with bright colours to represent the sunlight of spring, and a return to life after winter.

The Christian celebration of Easter borrows from other traditions - the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach (Paschal), another name used by Europeans for Easter. The early Christians, many of whom were of Jewish origin, were brought up in the Hebrew tradition and regarded Easter as a new feature of the Passover festival, a commemoration of the advent of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets. Easter is observed by the churches of the West on the first Sunday following the full moon that occurs on or following the spring equinox (March 21). So Easter became a 'movable' feast which can occur as early as March 22 or as late as April 25.

Easter Dates

2010	April 4 th
2011	April 24 th
2012	April 8 th
2013	March 31 st
2014	April 20 th
2015	April 5 th

Can Easter Eggs be Good for You?!!

The original Easter eggs started in Germany and France in the 19th century, and were made of bitter dark chocolate. Chocolate contains more than 300 known chemicals. Three, in combination, theobromine, phenylethylamine, and caffeine create the pleasurable feeling after eating chocolate. Additionally, Easter eggs and other chocolate may be good for the heart and lower blood pressure, provided you eat a tiny amount each day and prefer dark rather than milk or white chocolate. Research suggests that complex molecules called flavanols (found in cocoa) are beneficial to us. They recruit the gas nitric oxide to the cells that line the inner walls of blood vessels. Nitric oxide causes smooth muscles to relax, which may lower blood pressure.

The experts warn anyone tempted to gorge on chocolate as a result of these findings, of the following fact: A 100g (3.5-ounce) slab of dark chocolate (or one medium sized Easter egg) contains roughly 500 calories, so you would have to subtract this figure from your daily food intake - or do exercise to burn it up - to avoid weight gain.

How to Relax at Easter time

It can be hard to switch off at the end of the work day. Most of us might have 4 days break over Easter, but even then it can be difficult. Often some part of your mind is engaged with work; and emails and mobile phones can make us 'always on call'. Often we try to fit in the obligations that we don't usually have time for. Even if these obligations are pleasurable, they can make us feel our time is still not our own.

We all need to take time out to relax at some point. If we stay mentally busy all the time we risk burnout, and limit our creativity and problem solving capabilities.

Tips to Relax over Easter

- ☺ Eat a nice hot breakfast on one of the days you are off. Make it different from the breakfasts you usually eat. Your day then will feel different from the very start.
- ☺ Take a long, hot shower or bath to get you up and awake
- ☺ Plan one thing you would like to do
- ☺ Turn off your mobile phone - even for an hour
- ☺ Buy (or pick) some flowers - just to remind yourself that there is life and renewal (even though there may be gloom in the country)

