

FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS · GRADES 1–3

Pancake Day

(Shrove Tuesday)

Quick facts

When	The day before Lent begins — usually February or early March.
Where	Especially big in the UK, Ireland and other Christian countries.
Why pancakes	Pancakes use up rich foods (eggs, butter, milk) before Lent — a time of fasting.
Other names	Mardi Gras (French — 'Fat Tuesday'). Carnival (Latin America).

Pancake races

Famous in the UK — people race down the street holding a frying pan, flipping a pancake as they go. The story goes back to 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire — a woman heard the church bells and ran out, still holding her pan. The Olney pancake race still happens every year and competitors must be local women, wearing aprons and headscarves.

Discuss

1. Why might a tradition like 'using up rich food before fasting' have made sense long ago?
2. What's the most pancakes you've ever flipped in a row?
3. Mardi Gras in New Orleans is huge — parades, parties. Why might the SAME day be celebrated so differently?

