

Easter

Germany

- Many people attend a special church service on Easter Sunday
- festive breakfast, lunch or evening meal on Easter Sunday (Fried or boiled eggs, Roast lamb, Cookies shaped like chicks, eggs or lambs)
- People give and receive Easter eggs and Easter hares
- People in some areas of Germany (particularly in northern parts) light Easter fires late in the evening of Holy Saturday

France

- Chocolate is brought not by the Easter Bunny but by flying bells
- As a sign of respect to Jesus church bells are not rung between Good Friday and Easter Sunday → Then the bells start ringing, symbolising Christ's return.
- Easter egg hunt
- Traditional foods (Cinnamon Palmiers, roast leg of lamb, French onion soup)

Spain

- All about staying home with family
- The Easter period in Spain → known as Semana Santa, or Holy Week
- Many people parading through the streets in colourful costumes, carrying huge floats, and mourning the death of Christ.
- Religious brotherhoods: dressed in colourful silky costumes with pointed hoods, covering their heads and faces.
- Mourners: dressed all in black -- usually follow the brotherhoods
- Traditional foods: garlic soup (sopa de ajo) with a baked egg in the middle, or seafood. → torrijas, Monas de Pascua

Hungary

- All about remembering the resurrection of Christ
- During Easter Hungarians dye eggs and decorate them with traditional symbols and shapes
- Traditional food during Easter: smoked ham with horseradish, boiled eggs
- At Easter boys have to come up with original poems, which they have to recite to girls in the town.
- After the boys recite the poem they spray perfume or water on the girls, after which the girls must give chocolate eggs to the boys
- The spraying of water is supposed to be a symbolic gesture, which represents the watering of a flower, it is supposed to keep all the girls young and healthy

Christmas dinner

Germany

Christmas Eve: potato salad with sausages

- People fasted from 11th November (St. Martin's day) until 24th December (they ate simple dishes)

Christmas day: roast goose with potato dumplings and red cabbage

- before and after fasting they ate goose
- legend: St. Martin hid among geese while trying to avoid becoming a bishop

France

Christmas Eve:

- réveillon: long dinner, after mass, people stay up until midnight and later
- turkey with chestnuts, wine, champagne (or crémant wine instead)

Famous tradition: 'thirteen desserts' in Provence (Southeastern France)

- 13 different desserts represent Christ and his twelve apostles at the last supper

Spain

Christmas Eve:

- Dinner before mass
- Traditional meals: turkey stuffed with truffles, a roasted young hen but they are not the most popular now – seafood is the most widespread dish at Christmas-time
- Sweets:
 - Turrón: the most typical, a type of nougat
 - Marzipan: the best can be found in a small town, called Toledo (South of Madrid)

Hungary

Christmas Eve:

- Dinner before mass
- Fish soup, stuffed cabbage, a special kind of poppy cake
- Food brings luck:
 - As the fish moves fast the same way you can get forward in life
 - Because fish has many fish scales, you will be rich
 - Poppy brings wealth and fertility

Pentecost

What is celebrated: arrival of the Holy Spirit

Germany

- Pentecost Monday is a public holiday
- In rural areas: young men attach a birch spring to the wall beneath an unmarried woman's window
- In Lower Saxony birch trees are decorated with large wreaths
- Especially in southern Germany's mountainous areas: people decorate the strongest cattles with flowers and plants, then lead them through the streets

Hungary

- Pentecost Monday is a public holiday
- Competitions → the winner will be the King of Pentecost for a whole year
 - Prize: he is invited to all wedding balls, can drink in breweries and pubs without paying etc.
- Electing the Queen of Pentecost: choosing a girl according to her beauty and personality
 - She is carried by four other girls around the village while singing and blessing the people

France

- Pentecost Monday is a public holiday
- Trumpeting throughout the service to commemorate the wind that went through the house where the disciples of Jesus went in Jerusalem

Spain

- Pentecost Monday is a public holiday in Barcelona but not in other parts of Spain
- Particularly important in Barceloneta quarter:
 - Barcelona Pentecost is called Salseta there
 - Choirs and big bands with trumpets and drums are organised by bars and restaurants of the historic fishing district, they run the streets of the neighbourhood all day long until late night playing and dancing

Halloween

Germany

- Halloween is a fairly new tradition in Germany, it has only been celebrated in the past 25 years.
- This event became so popular in Germany in the past few years that they started doing trick or treating all over the country
- In some parts of Germany during Halloween they carve pumpkins and roam around the city dressed up as monsters

France

- Halloween is not usually celebrated in France
- Most people don't carve pumpkins or go trick or treating
- Although it's not considered a holiday, people in France in the past few years started to take up the so called „Halloween spirit“
- This means that during Halloween, even though it's not officially celebrated most shops and houses have Halloween decorations and sales.

Spain

- Even though Halloween is originally an American holiday, in Spain it has more of a traditional vibe about it compared to other European countries
- In Spain it is known as „El Dia de los Muertos“ which means „Day of the Dead“
- It is far from a commercial holiday, Halloween in Spain is all about honoring the dead and celebrating the continuity of life

Hungary

- Halloween in Hungary is more of a commercial holiday than a real one
- Trick or treating is not very popular, but some people do follow the American tradition and walk around neighbourhoods to get some candy, although it is not very common
- Pumpkin carving has seen an increase in popularity over the last few years, which led to activities such as Pumpkin Carving contests
- Although Halloween in Hungary is not often celebrated, there is another holiday during that period called „All Saints Day“ which (similarly to Spain) is a day where people can commemorate the dead