

Good Friday in United Kingdom

Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and is a public holiday in the United Kingdom. It falls just before Easter Sunday, which is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the March equinox.

What do people do?

People who regularly attend church will probably attend a special church service on Good Friday. For other people, it is a day off work in the spring. Some people use the day to work in their gardens, while others take advantage of the long Easter weekend and the school holidays at this time of year to take a short vacation.

Many Catholics do not eat meat on Good Friday. This means that, in some areas, it is common to eat fish on this day. It is traditional for all denominations to eat hot cross buns. These are made of leavened dough, to which sugar, currants and spices have been added. The top of the bun is marked with a cross made of flour and water paste or rice paper. The buns are eaten as they are or split in half, toasted and spread with butter. There is a traditional rhyme about these buns, which is often used to teach children basic music notes.

Public life

Good Friday is a public holiday. A lot of businesses and organizations are closed, although some stay open. Stores are generally open. Public transport systems may run to their usual or a different timetable. As many people have a four day weekend at Easter and choose to make trips, there can be some congestion on trains and the roads. There is no horse racing on Good Friday.

Background

Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ following his time in the desert and his triumphal re-entrance into Jerusalem. This is a very important event in many Christian churches and is seen by some as the foundation of the Religion. Many churches hold special services on Good Friday to remind their congregations about Christ's suffering. Good Friday falls on the Friday before the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

It can seem strange that a day of death and suffering is known as 'Good' Friday. There are a number of theories as to why the day marking the crucifixion of Jesus is known in this way. The word 'Good' may be a different spelling or rendering of 'God' or it may have another, now lost, meaning of 'holy'. Another theory is that the tragedy of the crucifixion of Jesus brought great 'good' to his followers.