

MOTHERING SUNDAY IN THE UK



Mothering

Sunday



Mothering Sunday, sometimes known as Mother's Day, is held on the fourth Sunday of Lent. It is exactly three weeks before Easter Sunday and usually falls in the second half of March or the beginning of April.

In 2014, Mothering Sunday will be held on 30th March

Traditionally, people visited the church where they were baptized. Mothering Sunday is now a celebration of motherhood. People visit and take gifts to their mothers and grandmothers.

What do people do?

Mother's Day, or Mothering Sunday, is now a day to honor mothers and other mother figures, such as grandmothers, stepmothers and mother-in-laws. Many people make a special effort to visit their mother. They take cards and gifts to her and may treat her to brunch, lunch or high tea in a cafe, restaurant or hotel. People who cannot visit their mother usually send gifts or cards to her.

An important part of Mothering Sunday is giving cards and gifts. Common Mother's Day gifts are cakes, flowers, chocolates, jewelry, and luxurious clothing. Some people do not give a physical gift, but choose to treat their mother or grandmother to a special meal, beauty treatment or fun outing.

Specially decorated Mother's Day cakes are available in many stores. In the days and weeks before Mothering Sunday, many schools, Sunday schools and children's organizations help their pupils to prepare a handmade card or gift for their mother.

Public life

Mothering Sunday is not a bank holiday in the United Kingdom. Public transport services run to their usual Sunday timetables. Cafes, restaurants and hotels may be fully booked a long time ahead, as many people treat their mother to a special meal on Mothering Sunday. Those wishing to eat in a restaurant on Mother's Day may need to reserve a table in advance.

Background

Mothering Sunday was originally a time when people returned to the church, in which they were baptized or where they attended services when they were children. This meant that families were reunited as adults returned to the towns and villages where they grew up. In time, it became customary for young people who were working as servants in large houses, to be given a holiday on Mothering Sunday. They could use this day to visit their own mother and often took a gift of food or hand-me-down clothing from their employers to her. In turn, this moved towards the modern holiday, on which people still visit and take gifts to their mothers.

Traditionally, people observed a fast during Lent. Lent is the period from Ash Wednesday until Good Friday. During the Lent fast, people did not eat from sweet, rich foods or meat. However, the fast was lifted slightly on Mothering Sunday and many people prepared a Simnel cake to eat with their family on this day.

A Simnel cake is a light fruit cake covered with a layer of marzipan and with a layer of marzipan baked into the middle of the cake. Traditionally, Simnel cakes are decorated with 11 or 12 balls of marzipan, representing the 11 disciples and, sometimes, Jesus Christ. One legend says that the cake was named after Lambert Simnel who worked in the kitchens of Henry VII of England sometime around the year 1500.

