

AUBURN SCALLON (US)

An Easter Calendar

ONE SPECIAL SUNDAY
OR A WEEK OF
TRADITIONS?

The first time I spoke to Czech friends about Easter, I was surprised to learn the specific names for so many different days. In the US, where I grew up, Easter is not a **public holiday**¹. It is more of a **religious**² holiday for **Christian**³ families. **Jewish**⁴, Muslim, and **atheist**⁵ Americans, for example, do not celebrate Easter. Most Americans learn the meaning of one day, Easter Sunday, and Christian families usually know the meaning of the other days.

Let's have a look at what happens during the Easter week in English-speaking countries and how it's different from the Czech Republic.

Task 1

Do you know the names of the days of Easter in Czech?

Maundy (or Holy) Thursday

CHRISTIAN STORY This is the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus had dinner with his twelve apostles (followers). He also washed their feet as a symbol that no person is too important to help another person.

US This day is not often celebrated.

UK The Queen gives Maundy ['mɔ:ndi] money to British people at a different church each year. The amount matches her age. For example, when she was 80 years old she gave 80 pence to 80 men and 80 women.

CR This day is called Green Thursday in Czech. It is common to cook green food, often with **herbs**⁶ that grow in the spring. Another tradition in some places is for boys to shake a **rattle**⁷ to **scare away**⁸ Judas (the man who **betrayed**⁹ Jesus).

Good Friday

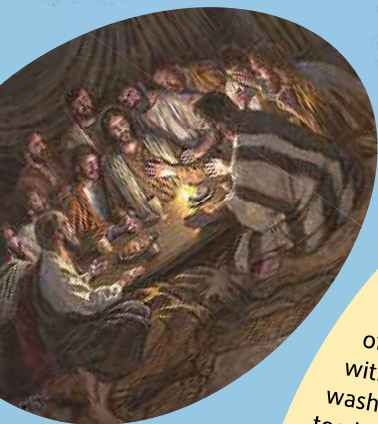
CHRISTIAN STORY On this day, the Bible says that Jesus was crucified ['kru:sɪfaɪd] (= his hands and feet were **nailed**¹⁰ to a wooden cross) and died.

US, UK & CR Christians may go to church in the afternoon. Some people either fast (= don't eat anything) or they don't eat meat all day.

US Normal school and work day.

UK Public holiday. This day is also connected with baking and eating hot cross **buns**¹¹, a sweet bun with a cross on top. There is also a British **nursery rhyme**¹² called "Hot Cross Buns".

CR Public holiday. This is the second day that boys may shake a rattle through their town or village. Also, according to **folk**¹³ traditions, this was a magic day when mountains opened and treasures could be found inside.



Holy (or Black) Saturday

CHRISTIAN STORY This is a quiet day for many Christians, thinking about when Jesus was still dead. It is also the last day of Lent (= půst).

US & UK Normal weekend day.

CR This day is called White Saturday in Czech. This is the third (and last) day that boys may shake a rattle through their town or village. Also, on this last day of Lent, people bake sweet Easter bread with **raisins**¹⁴ and cake in the shape of a lamb.



Easter Sunday

CHRISTIAN STORY Christians believe that Jesus was resurrected [rezə'rektɪd] (= came back to life) on Easter Sunday.

US, UK & CZ Many Christian families wear their best clothes and go to church.

US & UK This is the main day for Easter celebrations. It's popular to have an egg hunt in the yard, with children searching for painted **hard-boiled**¹⁵ eggs or chocolate eggs.

US Many Christian children also receive an Easter **basket**¹⁶ filled with gifts and candy from the Easter Bunny.

CR This is a day of preparation for Easter Monday. Girls decorate eggs and boys make their **whips**¹⁷.

Easter Monday

CHRISTIAN STORY The Christian Bible does not say anything about Easter Monday.

US & UK British children may play a game of **rolling**¹⁸ eggs down a hill. In the US, this game only happens on the lawn of the White House (where the US president lives and works) with a few lucky children who aren't at school.

US Normal school and work day.

UK Public holiday in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (but not in Scotland).

CR Public holiday. This is the main day for Easter celebrations. Boys go from door to door, visiting their neighbors and singing a song. They carry a whip with **ribbons**¹⁹ and they softly (I hope) hit the women and girls who answer the door. Then they get a **treat**²⁰, maybe candy or a painted egg. The whipping should bring health and youth to the girls and women.



Task 2

Put the activity with the correct country and the day in the Easter calendar.

- 1 baking Easter bread 2 fasting 3 painting Easter eggs
4 playing a game of pushing eggs on the ground
5 giving money to people in church 6 whipping girls for good health

	US	UK	CR
Maundy Thursday			
Good Friday			
Holy Saturday			
Easter Sunday			
Easter Monday			

Vocabulary

- ¹ public holiday [pʌblɪk 'hɒlədeɪ] – státní svátek
² religious [rɪ'lɪdʒəs] – náboženský
³ Christian ['krɪstʃən] – křesťanský
⁴ Jewish ['dʒuːɪʃ] – židovský
⁵ atheist ['eɪθiɪst] – ateista
⁶ herbs [hɜːbz] – bylinky
⁷ rattle ['rætl] – řehlačka
⁸ to scare away [skeə(r)] – odehnat
⁹ to betray [bi'treɪ] – zradit
¹⁰ to nail [neɪl] – přibít
¹¹ bun [bʌn] – sladký bochánek
¹² nursery rhyme ['nɜːsəri raɪm] – říkadlo
¹³ folk [fɔːk] – lidový
¹⁴ raisin ['reɪzn] – rozinka
¹⁵ hard-boiled [hɑːd bɔɪld] – natvrdo
¹⁶ basket ['bɑːskɪt] – košík
¹⁷ whip [wɪp] – pomlázka
¹⁸ to roll [rɒl] – kutálet
¹⁹ ribbon ['rɪbən] – stuha
²⁰ treat [tri:t] – dobrota