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12 Surprising Things You Didn't Know About Good Friday

BY ELISA ROLAND ([HTTPS://WWW.RD.COM/AUTHOR/SW-58448/](https://www.rd.com/author/sw-58448/))

Good Friday marks the day Jesus was crucified on the cross. From flying a kite to abstaining from booze, here's the scoop on this religious holiday.

It doesn't seem very good





JACOB_09/SHUTTERSTOCK

The earliest known use of "Guode Friday" is found in The South English Legendary, a text from around 1290, reports [BBC News \(http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-27067136\)](http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-27067136). But it seems contradictory to call a day that is about death "good." The thing is, despite Good Friday representing the anniversary of Jesus's death, it's also about the triumph of his rising again.

[Christianity.com \(https://www.christianity.com/god/jesus-christ/what-s-so-good-about-good-friday.html\)](https://www.christianity.com/god/jesus-christ/what-s-so-good-about-good-friday.html) explains it in this way: "...the name Good Friday is entirely appropriate because the suffering and death of Jesus, as terrible as it was, marked the dramatic culmination of God's plan to save his people from their sins."

Find out more [fascinating Easter traditions from around the world \(https://www.rd.com/culture/easter-traditions-around-the-world/1\)](https://www.rd.com/culture/easter-traditions-around-the-world/1).

It's an unofficial holiday





IOFOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Various institutions around the U.S. including schools and banks may shut down on Good Friday, but according to [The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention \(https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter\)](https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter), there are only 12 states that consider it an official holiday: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Texas, and Tennessee.

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Some take it a little too far



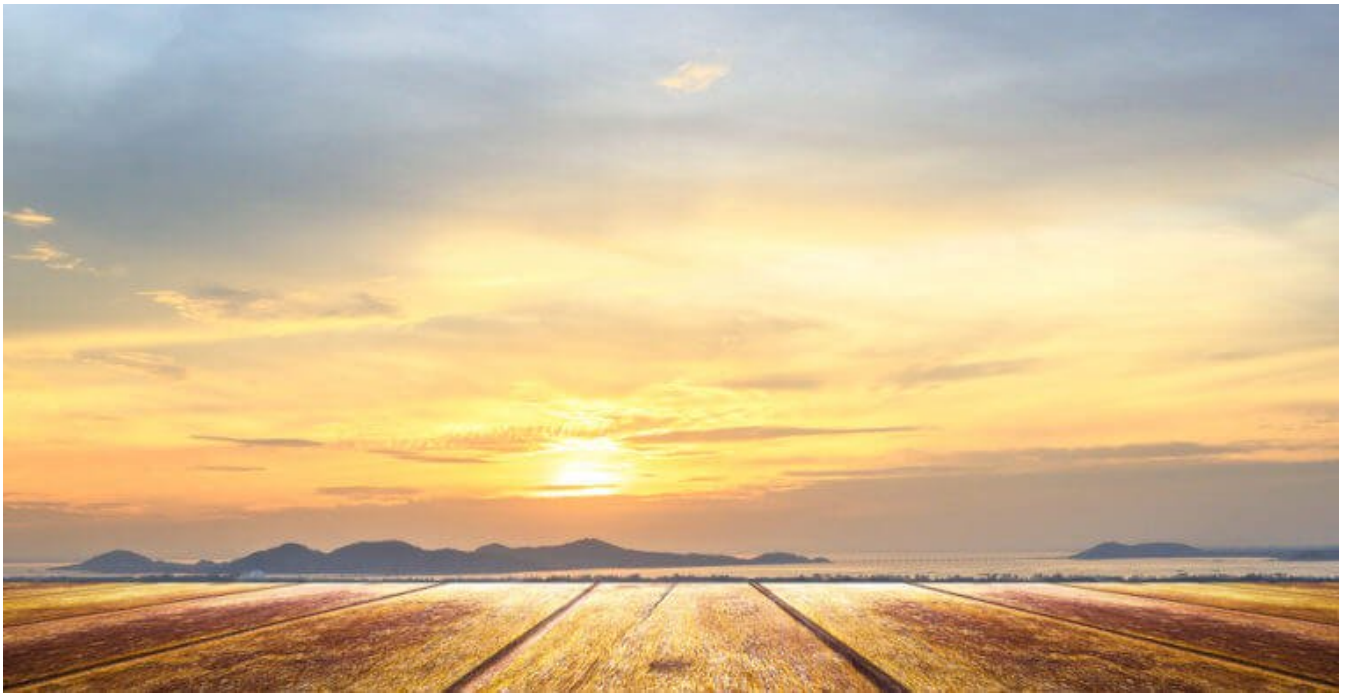


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Although it is condemned by the Church, [Mic.com \(https://mic.com/articles/31168/good-friday-2013-5-facts-you-didn-t-know-about-the-christian-holy-day#.rEx51KbQK\)](https://mic.com/articles/31168/good-friday-2013-5-facts-you-didn-t-know-about-the-christian-holy-day#.rEx51KbQK) reports there are people who, in an act of faith, nail themselves to a cross to re-enact the Crucifixion.

The first Good Friday





JACOB_09/SHUTTERSTOCK

It's celebrated in the spring, but what is the exact date for Good Friday? You'd have to go back a few thousand years to figure it out, and that's exactly what authors Andreas Köstenberger and Justin Taylor did, reports [The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission \(https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter\)](https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/5-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter) using historical data starting with Tiberius's reign in A.D. 14. The authors determined in their book, [The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived](https://www.amazon.com/Final-Days-Jesus-Important-Person/dp/1433535106/?tag=reader0b-20), (<https://www.amazon.com/Final-Days-Jesus-Important-Person/dp/1433535106/?tag=reader0b-20>) that the date of the first Good Friday was Friday, April 3.

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Church bells toll 33 times



BE GOOD/SHUTTERSTOCK

There are many various traditions and rituals that surround Good Friday from all over the world. Some include a life-sized cross placed at the center of the altar in church that parishioners can then touch, reports *India Today*

(<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/good-friday-314750-2016-03-25>). Then there are some church services that conclude with a bell

tolling 33 times in succession to represent each year of Jesus's life. [Here are the myths and legends that sparked Easter traditions \(https://www.rd.com/culture/symbols-of-easter/1/\)](https://www.rd.com/culture/symbols-of-easter/1/).

Go fly a kite



ROMAN KHOMLYAK/SHUTTERSTOCK

Bermuda is known for its pastel houses and pink beaches, and it's also known for a custom that dates back to the 19th century: flying a kite on Good Friday. Why? Perhaps besides having a lovely beach to fly it on, a kite is flown to symbolize the cross that Jesus died on and his ascension into heaven, according to [Timeanddate.com](https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/common/good-friday). (<https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/common/good-friday>)

Dancing is outlawed in some places





ELENA DIJOUR/SHUTTERSTOCK

In Germany, the day is referred to as Sourowful Friday, which reflects on the sadness of Jesus's death. In fact, even dancing is frowned upon in Germany on that day.

A parade in Ecuador





KSENIA RAGOZINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

In the historic district of Quito, Ecuador, there are men, called cucuruchos, that dress up in purple robes and pointed masked headdresses and walk in a special procession on Good Friday, explains [theculturetrip.com \(https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/ecuador/articles/seven-interesting-facts-about-holy-week-in-quito/\)](https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/ecuador/articles/seven-interesting-facts-about-holy-week-in-quito/). They are joined by other Ecuadorians who dress up like Christ and lug about a heavy wooden cross to partake in the Procession of the Penitents. The event draws about 250,000 people to each year.

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Good Wednesday instead





RPBAIAO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Not everyone celebrates Good Friday on a Friday, says [lasvegasnow](http://www.lasvegasnow.com/news/history-and-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter-sunday/81500772) (<http://www.lasvegasnow.com/news/history-and-facts-about-good-friday-and-easter-sunday/81500772>). Rather than the more traditional Friday observance, Wednesday becomes the "good" day for many Baptist and non-Protestant churches. They use the date of the Jewish sacrifice of the Passover Lamb as their observance of the crucifixion.

No pint for you





ANTON_IVANOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

A pub in Ireland isn't hard to find, but a pint on Good Friday might be. Alcohol is mostly missing from Irish routines on this one day. However, if you really need to get your drink on, [Irelandplanner.com \(http://www.irelandplanner.com/5-things-good-friday/\)](http://www.irelandplanner.com/5-things-good-friday/) reveals that you could head out to the train station, airports, or ferry ports. Heads up: You might have to show your trip ticket in order to get that pint.

Eggs are not just about Easter





CGISSEMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

The legend in Ireland is that if you collect eggs laid on Good Friday, they'll never rot. Some hold on to eggs for decades just to prove the myth, shares [Irelandplanner.com](http://www.irelandplanner.com) (<http://www.irelandplanner.com/5-things-good-friday/>). Another Irish tradition that isn't as risky is to eat in an egg on Easter Sunday that was laid on Good Friday. Supposedly, you'll reap health benefits all year long. Find out [why eggs are associated with Easter in the first place](https://www.rd.com/culture/eggs-and-easter/1/) (<https://www.rd.com/culture/eggs-and-easter/1/>).

Time to fast





IRYNA1/SHUTTERSTOCK

Many Christians fast or abstain from eating any type of meat on the day. Others are slightly more lenient, indulging in one full meal and two smaller ones.

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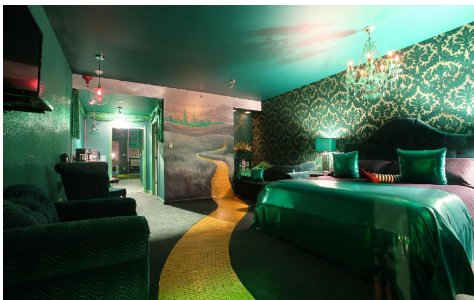
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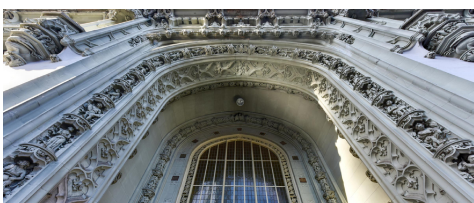
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