

April Fool's Day

April Fool's Day is celebrated on 1 April in many countries around the world. On this day, people play practical jokes on each other and have fun trying to make other people believe things that are not true.

Jokes with your friends and family

In the UK and many other places, people play any kind of practical joke, but it's important to remember that the joke should be funny for everybody and not make the other person feel bad. Some jokes you can play include these.

- Make some fruit jelly in a glass. Then ask someone if they want some juice. Give them the glass and watch them try to drink it!
- Have you got a toy plastic spider? Put it in someone's shoe! Then, when they get scared, you can be the hero who takes the scary spider away!
- If you have a clock in your kitchen, get up early and change it to show it's one hour later. Then, when your family is having breakfast, they'll think that they're late for work or school!

Then shout 'April Fool!' so that everyone knows it was a joke!

In France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and French-speaking areas of Canada and Switzerland, the 1 April tradition is known as the 'April Fish'. A common joke is to try to stick a paper fish onto someone's back when that person isn't looking.

In many Spanish-speaking countries as well as the Philippines, there is also a special day for playing jokes, but it's in December instead of April.

Jokes in the news

On April Fool's Day, there are often jokes in the news, on TV or on websites.

In 2008 the BBC made a short video which showed the 'news' that some penguins had learned to fly! Two big UK newspapers wrote about the 'important story' on their front pages.

One year in the UK, a children's news programme said that scientists had invented a 'Brain Band'. It was a coloured headband that you put on your head and it helped to make you more intelligent!

Another famous joke is 'Google Nose'. Google said it was a new app you could use to search the internet for a smell. For example, if you searched for 'flowers', you could click a button and smell them!

Of course, every day we need to think carefully about what we believe when we read or watch news and other stories, especially online. But on 1 April, be extra careful!

Happy April Fool's Day!

Diwali

Diwali is one of the most popular festivals in India. It is celebrated by millions of people not just in India but in many other countries across the world.

When is Diwali?

The date of Diwali changes every year, because the Hindu calendar depends on the position of the moon. In the Western calendar, it's usually sometime in October or November. Diwali lasts for five days, but the main celebration is on the third day. This is the darkest night of the month in the Indian calendar.

The meaning of Diwali

Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights. In the very old Indian language, Sanskrit, *Diwali* (or *Deepavali*) means 'row of lamps'. People light lamps at Diwali to show that light is more powerful than darkness, and good is more powerful than evil. Diwali also celebrates new beginnings.

Preparing for Diwali

To prepare for this very special festival, people often clean and decorate their homes. They go shopping for food and new clothes for Diwali. It's also an important time of year for buying gold and silver.

Rangoli

Rangoli are colourful patterns that people make on the floor out of coloured powder, rice and flowers. Some of the most popular patterns to make are flowers. People make *rangoli* to welcome the gods into their homes and to bring good luck.

Diyas and fireworks

People often decorate their homes with small lamps called *diyas*. They light lamps and leave the windows open so that the Indian goddess, Lakshmi, will enter their home and bring good luck. They often watch big, colourful firework displays and also enjoy shows of music and dancing.

A time for families

At Diwali, people spend time with their family and friends. They pray to the goddess Lakshmi to bring peace and good fortune to their homes. They wear their best clothes, give and receive presents, and eat delicious food and sweets together.

Diwali has a different meaning for different religions, and their Diwali stories are different. But for everyone, Diwali is a time for good and happy things, and it's a beautiful, colourful festival of lights. Happy Diwali!

Bonfire Night

What is Bonfire Night?

In the UK, Bonfire Night is the anniversary of a plan to kill the king in 1605. At that time, King James I treated Catholic people badly because they had a different religion from him. Life was very unfair and dangerous for Catholic people. A group of men were so unhappy about this that they decided to try to kill the king when he was inside the Parliament building on 5 November 1605.

The men put lots of gunpowder under the Parliament building. Gunpowder is something that can explode like a bomb. One man, called Guy Fawkes, stayed with the gunpowder, ready to make it explode when the king arrived. But the king found out about the plan, and Guy Fawkes was caught. Later, he was executed.

After Guy Fawkes was caught, everybody was allowed to have a big fire (a 'bonfire'), to celebrate that the plan didn't happen and the king didn't die. And so, 5 November became Bonfire Night, and it's celebrated every year.

How do people celebrate?

Lots of towns organise a big bonfire and a fireworks display. They build a very big fire, usually in a big, open park, and they make a model of a man that looks like Guy Fawkes. This model is called a 'guy'. Then they put the guy on top of the fire. Lots of people go out in the evening to watch the fire and the fireworks. They can look amazing!

There is also a special poem about Bonfire Night, which many children learn and say:

*Remember, remember the fifth of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.*

In the UK, it's usually very cold in the evenings in November, so people like to eat hot food while they watch the bonfire and fireworks. Things like baked potatoes, sausages and burgers are very popular, as well as toffee apples – an apple on a stick, covered in sweet, sticky toffee. Yum!