

## Eastern

Some historians support that Easter Eggs have a pagan origin.

Eggs have always been considered symbols of new life and fertility through the ages. Many ancient cultures, including the Ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Romans, used eggs during their Spring festivals.

The Celts celebrated the arrival of spring giving eggs to each other. The eggs were dyed red and symbolized rebirth. The ritual to crush away the cuticola, (=parte esterna dell'uovo) meant sending winter away. Then the eggs were put in evergreens as good omen (=buon auspicio) for a fertile Spring.

Early Christians adopted the egg as a symbol of Jesus' resurrection and it continued to be considered the appropriate gift for spring. The Easter egg tradition assumed the meaning of celebrating the end of the privations of Lent (=Quaresima). During the Middle Ages, eggs could not be eaten in the period of Lent, during which fast (= digiuno) was strictly observed.

According to an old tradition, the custom of giving eggs derives from a biblical event. After Christ's resurrection, Mary Magdalene went to the Emperor of Rome and said "Christ is risen", and he answered "Christ has not risen no more than that egg is red" pointing to an egg on his table. The egg immediately turned blood red. The red symbolizes the blood of Christ who was born, died and resurrected (the egg) to redeem Men.

Also Easter bunny has its origin in pagan spring rituals. Hares and Rabbits were the most prolific animals once known and they symbolized fertility. As a symbol of Easter, the bunny has German origins. First it was mentioned in German writings in the 1500s, but the early eatable Easter bunnies were made of pastry and sugar in Germany during the early 1800s. Then it was introduced in America by the first German settlers who arrived in Pennsylvania during the 1700s.

Once the children considered the gift of the egg like a Christmas present: if they had been good the hare would have given them a nest of coloured eggs. Boys used their caps and girls their bonnets to make the nests .