**EASTER IN FRANCE**

Easter in France is called ‘**Pâques’![C:\Users\Eleanor\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\X8T99N3X\MC900436379[1].png]()**

On the Thursday before Good Friday, all the church bells stop ringing and the children are told the bell’s chimes have flown back to Rome to see the Pope!

On Easter Monday the bells ring again.

On Easter morning, children search for Easter eggs ( **les oeufs de Pâques) in the garden.**

Children are told that the Easter Bunny ( **le lapin de Pâques**) has brought them

**APRIL FOOL’S DAY IN FRANCE**

On the 1st April, children stick paper fish on the backs of other people for a joke. When the fish is discovered they shout ‘Poisson d’avril!’ They also play practical jokes like we do in Britain.

Some believe April Fool’s Day originated in France. April 1st was the beginning of the new year, according to the pre-Gregorian calendar. When the Gregorian calendar was introduced, the new year’s celebrations changed to January 1st. Those people who resisted the change and still celebrated on 1st April were called ‘Poissons d’’avril’ and people would play tricks on them!

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**EASTER IN GERMANY**

Good Friday ( Karfreitag) is a public holiday and everything is closed. The church bells stop chiming until mass on Easter Sunday. Drinking and dancing are not allowed on Good Friday – it is a ‘quiet’ day. All pubs have to close for 24 hours from midnight the day before. Easter Sunday and Easter **Monday are also public holidays.**

**Some of the biggest events on Easter Saturday are Easter fires ![C:\Users\Eleanor\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\C4HLQ808\MC900324598[1].wmf]()**

**( Osterfeuer), when huge bonfires are lit and people gather to celebrate. This tradition comes from an old** **Germanic celebration to mark the beginning of Spring. The fire is supposed to drive away bad spirits. ![C:\Users\Eleanor\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\EXWC4S60\MC900436394[1].png]()People decorate trees and branches with colourful wooden, plastic or blown eggs and put pictures of Easter bunnies in their windows. ![C:\Users\Eleanor\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\EXWC4S60\MC900382561[1].jpg]()**

**On Easter Sunday, children look for hidden ‘Easter nests’, little baskets with artificial grass, chocolate eggs or little presents. In some area**s **children play ‘Eiertrudeln’, rolling eggs down a hill to see which one reaches the bottom first.**

**APRIL FOOL’S DAY IN GERMANY**

In Germany, the first of April is the day you can play practical jokes on people until twelve noon. After that it is considered bad luck. Usually newspapers, TV and radio stations join in. An April Fool’s joke is called an ‘Aprilscherz’ and you say ‘April April’ when you have successfully tricked someone.

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