

For the Farm Wife and Family

By Mrs. Richard C. Spence, Food Editor

The Tradition Of Easter

How did the bunny ever get mixed up with eggs and Easter anyway? Easter customs are a mixture of Christian celebration and old pagan spring festivals. In India and China, the rabbit and egg were symbols of the new spring birth of crops and cattle. It did not take long for these symbols to be included in a Christian festival that came at the same time of the year.

Other lands have had customs that sound strange today. In Old Russia even the lowliest peasant might greet the Czar on Easter Sunday by giving him a kiss on the cheek while saying "Christ is Risen." In some countries the hearth fires would be put out at sunset of Holy Saturday to be relit with candles blessed by the church.

Easter customs are associated with foods, too. Rich foods have been absent during Lent, which makes an Easter feast all the more welcome. In this country we traditionally serve ham, usually decoratively glazed and garnished. Special Easter cakes and breads are a delicious feature of the season.

What could be more traditional than Hot Cross Buns? They can easily be made from a hot roll mix. Add 1 teaspoon cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cardamom and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup seedless white raisins to the flour mixture. Prepare as directed on the package, shape into 18 balls and let rise until doubled on a greased baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes in a 400 degree oven. When cool, frost the top of the buns in the shape of a cross with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon lemon extract and 3 teaspoons water combined.

Try a few quick tricks with packaged refrigerator biscuits for an easy, tasty Easter breakfast. Quick Cinnamon Twists are done in less than 10 minutes. Pull each biscuit to about 6 inches in length. Dip in melted butter, then in a mixture of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped nuts and cinnamon sugar. Bake for 8 minutes in a 475 degree oven.

Cinnamon-Pecan Biscuits are also delicious. Melt 2 tablespoons butter, add 3 tablespoons honey, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1

teaspoon grated orange peel and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat until pecans are glazed. Flatten refrigerator biscuits on baking sheet, and spoon the pecan mixture over them. Bake as directed on package.

Hard-cooked eggs are a must for a traditional Easter breakfast. They will be much more tender and flavorful if the heat is carefully controlled. Cover the eggs with water at least one inch above the eggs. Cover the pan and bring eggs rapidly to a boil, immediately remove from the heat and let stand for 15 minutes. Cool promptly and thoroughly to prevent dark surface on the yolks and to make the shells easier to remove. If desired, instead of allowing the eggs to stand 15 minutes without heat, after bringing the eggs rapidly to a boil, they may be kept in water which is just below simmering for 20 minutes.

Decorating with eggs is a colorful way to greet spring. Although hard-cooked eggs may be decorated, emptied egg shells could be used for more permanent arrangements.

To empty in a flower pot filled with any raw eggs, carefully make a reasonably firm material such as modeling clay, plastic foam, in each end of the egg. Pierce crumpled chicken wire, or even the egg yolk before blowing, hard-packed soil.

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Easter trees will display the beauty of decorated eggs most effectively. They can be made from bare twigs or branches, depending on the final size wanted. For a small tree an inverted funnel works well as a base. Put the twigs in the hole of the funnel, and cover it with Easter basket greenery. Tie eggs on with loops of cellophane tape or with ribbon slipped through the blowing holes. Large branches can be firmly planted

in the egg with cold water and allow to dry.

Let your imagination run riot when you are decorating eggs. Dye them, of course, but do not stop there. For easy but artistic results, use flowers, ribbon, sequins, beads, buttons, rick-rack, colored cellophane tape, small candy, or colored sugar.

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