

# Easter Family Fun





# Easter Sweets to Make at Home

Everyone loves a jellybean, but some Easter delights are best when made at home. Here's a sweet truffle recipe that is as adorable as it is delicious.

## BUNNY OREO BALLS

Makes 36 candies. Recipe is from the Food Network.

- 1 14.3-oz. package of chocolate sandwich cookies
- 6 oz. cream cheese
- ¾ cup confectioners sugar
- ¾ tsp. meringue powder
- Pink gel food coloring
- Black gel food coloring
- 2 cups white candy melting wafers (about 13 oz.)
- 1 tsp. refined coconut oil
- White sanding sugar
- Pink sanding sugar
- 45 mini marshmallows

1. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. Pulse the cookies in a food processor until they are fine crumbs. Add the cream cheese and pulse until the mixture begins to ball up. Transfer to a large bowl and knead until completely combined.

3. Roll out about a third of the mixture into 18 small truffles. Place them on a prepared baking sheet. These are your bunny heads.

4. Roll the remaining mixture into 10 larger truffles and place on the second sheet. Refrigerate both sheets until firm, about an hour. These are



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your bunny butts.

5. Prepare the decorations. For the royal icing, combine the confectioners sugar and meringue powder in the bowl of a stand mixer. Beat on low speed to combine. Add 2 ½ teaspoons of water and increase the speed to medium.

6. Beat the mixture until the

icing is stiff enough to hold a peak but still soft enough to pipe. It should take about 2 minutes. If the icing is too stiff, add a little more water.

7. Divide the icing evenly into two bowls. Tint one bright pink and the other black with the food coloring. Put the colored frosting into piping bags

and set aside.

8. Combine the candy melting wafers and coconut oil in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave it in 20-second intervals, stirring between, until the wafers are smooth and melted. Set aside.

9. Place the sanding sugars in separate bowls.

10. Cut 9 of the marshmallows crosswise to form 18 halves. Carefully dip each half into the white candy coating. Let the excess drip, then dip into the white sugar. Place the marshmallows sugar side up on a plate. These are your bunny tails.

11. Cut 18 marshmallows on the diagonal to create 18 pairs of bunny ears. Dip a flat side into the candy coating and then into the pink sugar. Place them sugar side up on a plate to set.

12. Cut the last 18 marshmallows in half lengthwise to make 18 pairs of feet. Set aside.

13. Put a truffle into the white candy coating and use two forks to evenly coat. Lift it out, let the excess drip, then return to the baking sheet. If the candy cools too much, return it to the microwave for 20 seconds to reheat.

14. Dip the bunny ears in the candy coating, then place on the top of a small truffle. Hold them in place until the coating sets, about 15 seconds. Pipe a pink heart for a nose and a pair of black eyes and mouth.

15. Dip the cut side of a marshmallow tail into the candy coating. Place the tail on top of a large truffle and hold in place until the coating sets. Dip the cut sides of two marshmallow feet into the candy and put them in place. Use the pink icing to pipe a large oval on top of each foot and three small circles underneath for the toes.

16. Set all the truffles into the fridge to chill, about 10 minutes.



# A Cajun Easter

Cajuns, who now live primarily in south Louisiana, descended from Catholic French Canadians driven from the former French colony of Acadia (what is now Nova Scotia) by the British in the 18th century. The formerly French colonists have their own language and traditions, including those that revolve around Easter.

## CRAWFISH

Easter is prime crawfish season, and all around south Louisiana, people celebrate the holiday with crawfish boils. Crawfish are boiled live (think of them as tiny lobsters) with seasonings such as chili powder, red pepper and garlic, and fixins, which include corn, potatoes, asparagus, sausage and, for the more creative, pineapple, artichokes and whatever else would taste good.

Plan for guests to eat about 3-5 pounds of crawfish per person, and they should be eaten outside with plenty of places to ditch the shells.

## EGG POCKING

Egg pocking is a game where two people see who has



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the strongest hardboiled Easter egg by knocking them together until one cracks. That person is the loser. The name comes from Paques, the French word for Easter, though some say that it could also come from the sound the eggs make as they knock together. To pock eggs, hold your egg pointy side up. The egg pocker, if you will, will tap the top of the egg with their

own egg. The player with the last uncracked egg will have good luck in the coming year.

This game is also played around the world; in Greece, it's called tsougrisma, and it even made an appearance in that celebration of Greek culture, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding."

## GUMBO Z'HERBES

The Lenten season culmi-

nates in Good Friday and Easter celebrations, and a Holy Thursday tradition is making gumbo z'herbes, a green gumbo that resembles West Africa's callaloo. Like all gumbos, first you make a roux. Add the trinity — onion, celery and bell pepper — and then, instead of seafood or other proteins, you layer on the greens. Collard greens, mustard greens, turnip

greens, cabbage, kale, chard, beet tops, carrot tops, chicory, arugula, green onions. Whatever you've got that's green is fair game. Season with bay leaves and thyme, salt, pepper and cayenne and whatever other secret spices you have. Because it's vegetarian, it's safe for a Good Friday meal. You can also add a ham hock and enjoy it any other time of the year, too.



# Make Your Own Egg Dyes

While the sizzle of a dye tablet and the pungent smell of vinegar is an Easter tradition at dinner tables around the U.S., you can also make your own homemade Easter dyes with things found in your kitchen.

Start with a base of a quart of water and two tablespoons of white vinegar per color. Bring it to a boil, then add the color ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and it's ready to use.

- For red eggs: Use four cups chopped beets.

- For orange eggs: Use four cups of yellow onion skins. For a bright orange, let the eggs sit overnight. You can also use paprika.

- For a light orange egg: Add four tablespoons of paprika to the water and vinegar and mix until combined. Let the mixture cool before adding the egg.

- Yellow: Add three tablespoons of turmeric.

- Light blue: Add three cups chopped red or purple cabbage. Let the eggs sit overnight for a brighter blue.

- Dark blue: Add four cups blueberries.

- Deep red: Add the skins of six red onions and add an extra



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tablespoon of vinegar. Let the mixture cool before straining.

- Purple: Soak your eggs in red wine.

- Yellow orange: Use three large carrots, shredded.

- Green: Simmer two cups of spinach or a bunch of parsley.

- Brown: Soak the eggs in

two cups of strong brewed coffee.

- Lavender: Soak the eggs in hibiscus tea.

- Pink eggs: Use raspberries, fresh or frozen.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

- If you want to mix colors

or dip the eggs again for a darker, more rich hue, let them dry completely first on a towel. Do not rub them.

- Gently rub the eggs with oil to prevent the color from changing over time.

- To make speckled eggs, add more vinegar to create a

bubbly effect in the dye.

- For ombre eggs, start by dyeing a batch of eggs and take one out every few hours.

- Dye your eggs one color, then add oil to the second color you wish you use. Dip the egg in and let it soak. The oil will create a marbled effect.



# White House Easter Egg Roll

Every year at Easter, the South Lawn of the White House comes alive with fun for the whole family, including a story time, games, entertainment and the Easter Egg Roll. Let's learn more about this great American tradition.

## HISTORY

Capitol Hill was a great spot for 19th century District of Columbia children to roll eggs (and themselves) down on Easter Monday. In 1876, Congress had enough and forbade the Capitol grounds to be used as a playground. In 1878, President Rutherford B. Hayes fought back, saying the kids could come roll eggs on the White House lawn if they wanted to.

They wanted to.

Since Hayes' day, presidential families have hosted scores of children to roll eggs on the lawn. Each first family put their own spin on things, too. President Benjamin Harrison first added music by inviting the Marine Band, "The President's Own" to his 1889 celebration. John Philip Sousa himself directed the band in their trademark marches and the band continues to entertain egg rollers to



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this day.

## KEEPSAKES

The wooden eggs that are now the traditional keepsakes of the White House Easter Egg Roll first made their appearance under President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan in 1981. The Hollywood

couple hosted a hunt that year for eggs that bore the signatures of famous people. Now, each year's egg is designed to reflect the special theme of the event and inscribed with the signatures of the president and first lady. Each child under 12 gets an egg as they exit the South Lawn gates.

## LOTTERY

The attendees of the Easter Egg Roll are decided by lottery. Both the signing up for the lottery and any event tickets won are free of charge for children under 13. Only one application is allowed per household and you can choose up to five different time preferences. Each

application requires at least one child under 13 and up to two adults. There is a limit of six tickets per household.

In 2022, lottery winners were joined by military families and families from the USS Delaware, named for President Joe Biden's adopted home state.



# Caring For a Bunny or a Chick

Spring is the time for baby bunnies and itty-bitty chickies. If the Easter Bunny is planning on leaving your family some cute little fuzzballs in the basket this year, remember that those little babies soon get bigger and that either pet is a multiyear commitment.

## TAKING CARE OF A BUNNY

Think of getting a rabbit as the same kind of commitment level as a dog or a cat, rabbit advocate Natalie L. Reeves told Chewy.com. Except they're much more delicate, with bones that break easily.

"Rabbits are very different than almost any animal on earth, as they are domesticated pets, yet they have very little in common with our dogs, cats or birds," Dr. Tiffany Margolin, DVM, said. "In truth, they are most like the horse in that their digestive system is the most important and susceptible part of their bodies when it comes to health."

Rabbits are intelligent, social creatures that want to be part of the family. So they will need a safe space indoors that is at least four feet square in size, Chewy says. It should have



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enough room for a litter box and heavy bowls for food and water that aren't easily overturned. There should also be places for them to hide and flat areas that aren't wire to protect delicate bunny feet. You'll also need bedding, such as a soft paper litter.

As cuddly as they look, most rabbits do not like to be picked up. Chewy suggests laying on the floor and reading or doing another quiet activity and letting the bunny come to you. Once she does, pet it gently on

the head and cheeks or upper back. Stay away from the tail.

Rabbits should be spayed or neutered to prevent unintentional breeding and will need yearly vet exams. Monitor it carefully for changes in its behavior, particularly with regard to eating habits.

"Rabbits are prone to get gastrointestinal ailments (which can be fatal) if not treated successfully," Margolin said.

Talk to your vet about your rabbit's diet, but it should

include a grassy hay and, for adult rabbits, a pellet food with leafy greens as a treat.

## TAKING CARE OF CHICKS

Baby chickens are adorable, but they can be a fair amount of work, especially for new chicken parents. Baby chicks don't like to be alone (neither do grown chickens, for that matter) and for that reason, many breeders won't sell you just one chick.

When you get your chicks home, they'll need a safe

brooding area with walls at least 18 inches high and free of drafts. You also want to keep it away from other household pets such as dogs and cats. Put a screen or a towel over your box. You will also need to provide a safe heat source for the baby chicks until they are fully feathered. The temperature at the bottom of your brooder box should be 95-100 degrees for the first two weeks, then reduced about 5 degrees each week until the chicks are a month old. Be careful with brooder lamps because they are a heat source and, as such, can start fires.

Chicks need bedding such as pine shavings that will need to be changed daily. They will also need water and chick starter feed in separate containers. If the chicks aren't drinking, you may need to dip their beaks into the water to show them how it's done. Never let baby chicks go without clean water.

Provide chicks with a roost so they can perch off the ground and, as they start to feather out, take them outside in an enclosure. Provide them with a tray of sand so they can take dust baths and keep themselves clean.

Always wash your hands after handling your chicks as chickens can carry salmonella, even if they are clean. Clean their waterers and feeders regularly, as well as their brooder boxes and enclosures. At six weeks old, move them outside to a secure hen house so long as it's not too cold in your area.

# Good Friday

Good Friday is traditionally the day when Christians around the world commemorate Jesus' crucifixion.

In the earliest celebrations, Good Friday was a day of sorrow, penance and fasting. Until the 4th century, the last supper, Jesus' death and his resurrection were observed in one event the evening before Easter. But since then, they've been broken into three parts.

## IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Unlike Easter and other Christian holidays, Good Friday has not led to a more secular set of customs and practices, perhaps because of the intense religious connotation.

In the Roman Catholic church, the liturgy of Good Friday consists of the reading of the passion narrative, the adoration of the cross and then communion. Similar services also take place in Anglican and Greek Orthodox churches. In Protestant churches, services are somber, with the cross draped and the altar bare.

## HOLIDAY

Many Christian countries mark Good Friday as a holiday. In the U.S., 12 states observe it as a state holiday: Connecticut, Texas, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana,



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New Jersey, North Carolina and North Dakota.

American stock markets are closed and while many retail stores remain open, some will close early. Public schools and universities also are often close, though it may be part of a spring holiday or spring break.

## BLACK FAST

Some people may choose to fast, taking nothing but water,

bread, herbs and salt. It's the most rigorous form of fasting, sometimes limited to just one meal per day and that with no meat, eggs, butter, cheese or milk. In fact, the meal may be as paltry as bread, salt, herbs and water.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS

In some religious communities, adherents may participate in Stations of the Cross or Way

of the Cross, a ritual involving either praying to pictures of Jesus' crucifixion or even a reenactment. The stations are:

- Jesus is condemned to death.
- Jesus is made to bear the cross.
- Jesus falls the first time.
- Jesus meets his mother, Mary.
- Simon is made to bear the cross.

- Veronica wipes Jesus' face.
- Jesus falls a second time.
- The women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus.
- Jesus falls a third time.
- Jesus is stripped of his clothes.
- Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- Jesus dies on the cross.
- Jesus is taken down from the cross.
- Jesus is placed in the tomb.



# Plant an Easter Garden

Spring has sprung for most of us, and flowers popping up and fresh green leaves unfurling have many families itching to get outside. A great way to commemorate the season is to plant a spring garden. Here's how to get started.

## WHAT DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Gather the family together and plan what you want to grow. This is a great activity for the whole family. Find your USDA growing zone to help you pick plants that will thrive in your area. You can also contact your area agricultural extension service for a list of plants that will do well in spring.

Other than that, you'll need to think of what you want to grow. Are there cooks in the family? Think about fruits, veggies and herbs. Flowers are also a great choice. Think about if you want fragrance in the yard, cut flowers or if you want perennials that will come back year after year.

## PICK YOUR SPOT

Most vegetables and flowers need to have at least six hours of sunlight, so find a spot in your yard that gets plenty of sunshine. If you have more



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shade than rays in your yard, don't worry, there are plenty of other plants that love shade, too. Talk to the experts at your local garden center for some great ideas for shade gardens.

You'll also want to avoid slopes so that your plants are watered evenly and pick a spot that's visible so you and your family can enjoy it. Make

sure it's near enough to water so that it's easy for you to water your new garden.

## PREPARING YOUR GARDEN

If there's sod, slice that up and remove it. Work on the soil to improve it with compost, or ready-made organic soil and conditioners. Dig these into your existing soil

and water it just enough that the soil is moist before planting.

Read the requirements for plant spacing and depth before you start planting and make sure to plant after all danger of frost has passed. Once your plants are in the ground, water them but not too much. Once the roots are established, you can ease up

on the watering.

You can also cover the top of your garden with a layer of mulch for moisture retention and to keep weeds out. Put at least two inches of mulch over the surface of the soil. Make sure it's an organic mulch such as bark, cocoa bean shells or compost that will also help nourish the soil as it decomposes.