

EGGS AT EASTER

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It shouldn't take too long to unscramble the symbolic meaning of eggs at Easter.

They've been a part of celebrations at this time of year for centuries.

Eggs and Easter go together like ... well, we'll let Esther Clinton, a folklore specialist at Bowling Green State University, explain:

"Ultimately the egg is about fertility, reproduction, birth, and basically there's two things going on at Easter. One of them is the celebration of Christ's rebirth on a Christian level," she said. "On a more general level, it's: 'Woo hoo! spring is coming!'"

The ancient Persians used colored eggs to mark this season thousands of years ago. So did the Romans.

The connection to Easter is a more recent development, dating to the 13th century. That's when Macedonians became the first Christians known to use colored eggs in their Easter events, according to PAAS Easter egg dyes. Crusaders returning from the Middle East spread the custom of coloring eggs throughout Europe.

Today, eggs remain popular symbols around the world, and not just for Easter. Hard-cooked eggs appear at the Seder during the Jewish holiday of Passover. In Morocco, soft-boiled eggs are handed around to the children of the house the day a baby is born so they can "adopt" the new baby.



The world's largest Easter egg hunt took place in connection with the release of 'Peter Cottontail: The Movie.'



Every year the U.S. produces about 77 billion eggs.

But they're everywhere for Easter — hidden and hunted in homes, rolled in yards, decorated in kitchens. The numbers are staggering. Here are just a few:

77 billion

Approximate number of eggs produced each year in the U.S. (American Egg Board)

1878

Year that President Rutherford B. Hayes started the egg rolling tradition at the White House. (www.whitehouse.gov)

10,023

Number of people who participated in the world's largest Easter egg hunt in April, 2006 at Stone Mountain Park in Georgia for the release of *Peter Cottontail: The Movie*. The hunt consisted of 301,000 eggs. (Guinness World Records)

50

Number of Imperial Faberge Easter eggs recognized by experts that were created for the Russian monarchy. (www.pbs.org)

25

Approximate height in feet of the world's tallest chocolate Easter egg, made by a Rotary Club in South Africa in 1996. (Guinness World Records)

10,283



The number of Easter Eggs — so-called hidden features or novelties that programmers put in their software (computer programs, movies, etc.) — collected by the Easter Egg Archive online.

66,000

Number of Cadbury Creme Eggs produced every hour at the Bournville factory in England. More than 300 million are produced each year. (Cadbury Schweppes)



Cadbury Creme Eggs come out of an English factory by the millions.

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