

Our Very Greek Easter: A Joyous Celebration of Faith and Tradition



Easter, the most important religious feast in Christianity, is celebrated with great joy and devotion in Orthodox Christian communities around the world. Among these communities, the Greeks hold a special place in their hearts for this sacred occasion. Greek Orthodox Easter, also known as Pascha, is an elaborate and vibrant celebration that combines centuries-old traditions, spiritual significance, and a strong sense of community.

Understanding the Significance of Greek Orthodox Easter

Greek Orthodox Easter follows the Julian calendar, which often leads to a different date than Easter as celebrated by Western Christians. This year, Greek

Easter falls on April 25th, a week after the Western Easter Sunday.



Our Very Greek Easter: Orthodox Easter

by Kassi Psifogeorgou ([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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The essence of Greek Orthodox Easter lies in its representation of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Many Greek Orthodox believers observe a strict 40-day period of fasting and prayer called Lent, leading up to Easter Sunday. This period of spiritual preparation is known as Sarakosti, and it fosters self-discipline, inner reflection, and repentance.

On Palm Sunday, the week before Easter, Greek Orthodox churches are adorned with palms and olive branches. This day commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where adoring crowds lay palm branches at his feet. The faithful carry home the blessed palm leaves, believing them to possess divine protection.

Preparing for the Resurrection: Holy Week in Greece

As Holy Week begins, the atmosphere in Greek Orthodox communities becomes increasingly solemn and contemplative. During this time, believers attend special church services, participate in processions, and engage in symbolic rituals to recount the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

On Holy Thursday, many households in Greece partake in the tradition of coloring hard-boiled eggs red, symbolizing the blood of Christ. These eggs, known as "tsougrisma," are later used in the iconic Greek Easter game of "tsougrisma," where participants attempt to crack each other's eggs by tapping them. The one whose egg remains unbroken is said to have good luck for the year.

Friday, known as Good Friday, is a day of deep mourning and reflection. Greek Orthodox believers attend the epitaph procession, a somber parade led by the local priest carrying the symbolic representation of Christ's tomb. The mournful procession moves through the streets as participants sing hymns and offer prayers. On this day, it is common for Greeks to break the fast with a simple meal of lentils or beans, along with vinegar, in remembrance of Christ's thirst on the cross.

Resurrection Saturday, also known as Holy Saturday, is a day of anticipation and excitement. In the evening, Greek Orthodox churches brighten up as worshippers gather for the midnight liturgy, known as the Resurrection Mass. At the stroke of midnight, the priest announces the resurrection of Christ, and the church bursts into a joyous celebration. Bells are rung, fireworks light up the sky, and people exchange the traditional greeting "Christos Anesti" (Christ is risen) followed by the response "Alithos Anesti" (Truly, He is risen).

A Feast Fit for a Greek God

Greek Orthodox Easter Sunday marks the end of the long fast, and families come together to celebrate with a sumptuous feast. The centerpiece of the meal is usually lamb, symbolizing the sacrifice of Christ, and it is often roasted on a spit. Greeks take immense pride in their culinary traditions, and Easter is a perfect occasion to showcase their skills in the kitchen.

One of the most beloved Easter treats in Greece is "tsoureki," a sweet bread braided into a wreath or a loaf. Decorated with red-dyed eggs, it is a symbol of new life and resurrection. Greek households also prepare an array of other traditional dishes, such as "magiritsa" (a lamb offal soup), "kokoretsi" (a roasted delicacy made from lamb innards), and a variety of mouthwatering appetizers and desserts.

Community, Music, and Dance

Greek Orthodox Easter is not just about religious rituals and feasting, but also about strengthening the bonds of community and celebrating life itself. After the Resurrection Mass, people gather at local squares or neighborhoods to continue the festivities. Live music, traditional dances, and spirited conversations fill the air as Greeks come together to rejoice and express their gratitude.

The "syrtaki" dance, popularized by the famous movie "Zorba the Greek," is frequently seen during Greek Easter celebrations. This lively, circle folk dance represents the unity and joy felt by the community in sharing the resurrection of Christ. Everyone, regardless of age or skill, is encouraged to join in the dance and experience the collective jubilation.

Preserving Traditions for Generations to Come

Greek Orthodox Easter is deeply rooted in tradition, and its celebration continues to be embraced by the younger generation. Families pass down customs, recipes, and stories from one generation to another, ensuring the preservation of this rich cultural heritage.

As the sun sets on Greek Orthodox Easter, the memories of the joyous celebration, the deep spirituality, and the sense of unity stay imprinted in the hearts of all who partake in this unique experience. Greek culture flourishes as

the faithful come together, reminding everyone of the significance of faith, tradition, and the power of community.

So, come and immerse yourself in the vibrant spirit of Our Very Greek Easter, and witness the beauty of a celebration that stands as a testament to the unwavering faith and rich cultural heritage of the Greek people.



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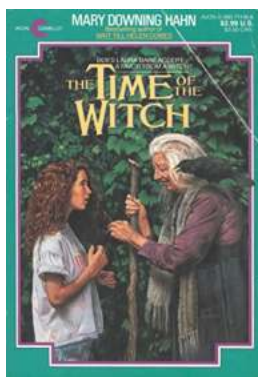
*** Tom's family is flying to Greece for Easter to visit Yiayia, Papou and the rest of their extended family. He's so excited to get acquainted with all the Greek traditions of the Holy Week. So, he writes a letter to his best friend describing what he and his brothers did every day, starting from Lazarus Saturday to Easter Sunday.***

Travel to Greece through this gorgeously illustrated book and learn about the Holy Week in Greek Culture from a Christian perspective. Read about the wonderful traditions that still carry on and the delicious Greek meals planned for the special days!

This book is a keepsake gift that children can enjoy all over the world, focused on the Greek Orthodox Easter.

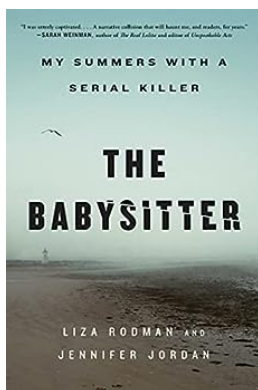
Visit the author's page for a video representation and more illustrations.

Our Very Greek Easter is aimed at children aged 7-12 years and is written in playful fonts. However, the reading ability is very subjective; what will be right for one child won't necessarily be right for another of the same age. The vocabulary is extensive, with many adverbs and adjectives and a rich telling. As children grow older, they can re-read the story, discover new meanings and enjoy it as much as the first time they read it. It may well be suitable for older children depending on how enthusiastic they are about the theme.



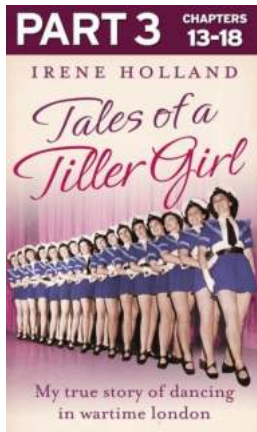
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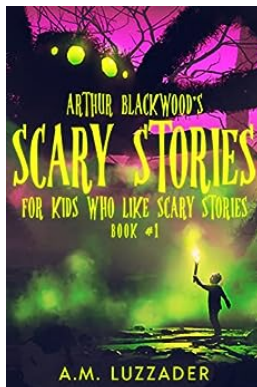
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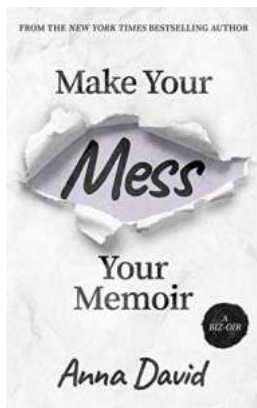
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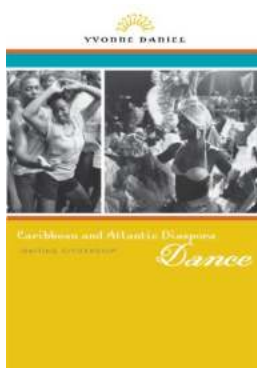
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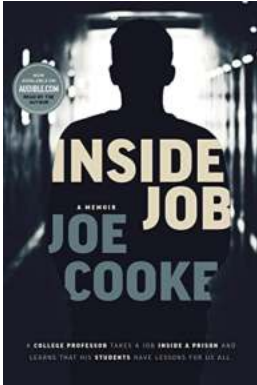
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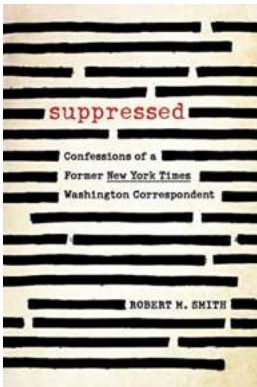
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