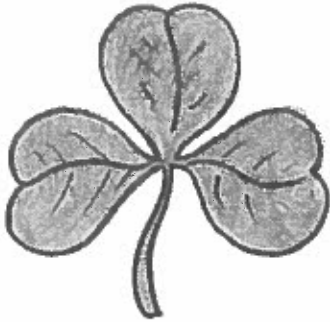


SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

WHY DO WE WEAR GREEN ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY?

Traditionally, the color green represents Ireland, or the Emerald Isle. However, according to legend the color green also has the magical power to make people invisible to leprechauns or other fairy creatures. That means that wearing green can save you from getting pinched by these mischievous fairies. If you don't wear green on St. Patrick's Day, watch out!



WHY SHAMROCKS?

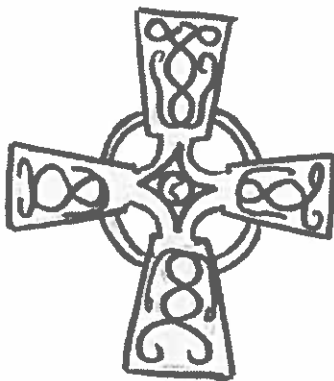
In ancient Ireland a shamrock was a symbol of the rebirth of spring, and was considered a sacred plant. In the 1600s the shamrock became a symbol of Irish *nationalism*. During the time when the English were invading Irish land, people would wear shamrocks as a symbol of their *heritage*.



WHERE DID THE LEPRECHAUN COME FROM?

The "lobaircin", or leprechaun, most likely originated from Celtic folklore and their belief in fairies—tiny men and women who had magical powers, used for both good and evil. In Celtic tales, leprechauns were the ones who mended shoes for other fairies. They were grumpy and mean-spirited, and best known for their trickery. The leprechaun was never a symbol of St. Patrick's Day, but in 1959 a Disney film was released that transformed the leprechaun's image into that of a cheery, good-hearted soul.

WHO IS SAINT PATRICK?



St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, although he was actually born in England. As a youth he was taken prisoner by the Irish and held in captivity there for six years. During that time he became a *devout* Christian. It is said that he heard God's voice, which helped him escape captivity, and that later he had visions of an angel, who told him to return to Ireland as a missionary. It is widely believed that Patrick was the one who introduced Christianity to Ireland. It is also believed that he died on March 17, which is how St. Patrick's Day was born.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY TRADITIONS

St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated on March 17 in the U.S. for many years. It is a day to recognize Irish heritage. Here are some of the traditions associated with St. Patrick's Day.

Green or a Pinch!



It is traditional that those of Irish heritage must wear green on St. Patrick's Day. Those that don't can be pinched as punishment!



Turn It All Green

Ireland is nicknamed the "Emerald Isle" because of its green landscape. Green is therefore the color of St. Patrick's Day. Around the country, people celebrate by coloring things green, including rivers and fountains!



The White House fountain colored green for St. Patrick's Day



The Chicago River tinted green for St. Patrick's Day.

Irish Food

Irish food is popular on St. Patrick's day. Favorite dishes include corned beef and cabbage, colcannon, made with potatoes and kale; and Irish stew. Cakes and ice cream are usually green with green decorations.



Green cake with shamrock icing

Parades

Cities across the country hold parades on St. Patrick's Day. The parades usually include Irish dancers and Irish music, often played by bagpipe bands.



St. Patrick's Day parade in 1915



Q&A

What day is St. Patrick's Day?

What happens to those of Irish heritage if they don't wear green on St. Patrick's Day?

What type of band often plays Irish music in St. Patrick's Day parades?

What is Ireland's nickname?

