

# PANCAKE DAY

Joanna Carter

## BACKGROUND

Pancake Day takes place in England (and other English speaking countries) on Shrove Tuesday which in 2004 is on 24<sup>th</sup> February. In the past, Shrove Tuesday was traditionally a day of feasts to use up all the rich foods such as fat, butter, sugar and eggs which people were forbidden to eat in the period of Lent that leads up to Easter. So making pancakes to eat was ideal as they are made up of these ingredients.

The pancake ingredients also had a symbolic significance at this time of year.

Today people still enjoy eating pancakes on what has now come to be known as Pancake Day. They enjoy inventing delicious new fillings to put inside the rolled up pancake as well as traditional ones such as jam, Nutella®, lemon and sugar and treacle (a very sticky, sweet, toffee syrup). Everybody also has a go at 'tossing' or 'flipping' the pancake. That is throwing it in the air from the frying pan so that it turns or flips over and lands back down in the frying pan (hopefully!).

In some parts of the country there are pancake races where people run through the town with pancakes in frying pans held out in front of them. This tradition started in Oliney in Buckinghamshire in 1445. Legend has it that a woman was late going to church so she ran through the town to get there on time still wearing her apron and carrying her frying pan!

There are many songs and traditional rhymes about pancakes from different parts of the country. This one is from Cornwall:

Eggs ⇒ Creation  
Flour ⇒ The food of life  
Salt ⇒ Wholesomeness  
Milk ⇒ Purity



*Tippety-tippety- tin;  
Give me a pancake and I'll come in.  
Tippety-tippety- toe,  
give me a pancake and then I'll go.*



Here are two more rhymes:

*Who wants a pancake,  
sweet and piping hot?  
Good little Grace looks up and says,  
'I'll take the one on top'  
Who else wants a pancake  
fresh off the griddle?  
Terrible Teresa smiles and says,  
'I'll have the one in the middle'.*

Shel Siverstien

*Mix a pancake,  
Stir a pancake,  
Pop in the pan.  
Fry the pancake,  
Toss the pancake,  
Catch it if you can.*

Christina Rossetti

## Lesson Plans

**1** Why not have a cross curricular lesson and develop English skills, cultural knowledge and maths skills (weighing and measuring) by making pancakes in the classroom?

Here is a recipe to follow:

- 220 g self raising flour
- 500 ml milk
- 2 eggs
- 40 g fat or butter
- pinch of salt

Sieve the flour and salt into a basin and make a well in the centre. Break the eggs and pour into the well. Gradually beat the eggs and flour together, adding the milk little by little until you have a creamy liquid. Beat the liquid for a few minutes to aerate it and leave to stand.

Heat a frying pan with a bit of butter. Pour in enough batter (liquid) to cover the pan. Cook until the top is dry then toss or turn the pancake on the other side until brown.

Fill with lemon juice and sugar or jam, honey, Nutella® etc., roll up and serve.

**2** If you can't cook in the classroom but have plenty of space, play the following game to develop motor and social skills.

Get the class to make false pancakes from clay or pongo.

Divide the class into teams. One half of the team stands in line at one end of the classroom and the rest stand in line at the other end. Each team member needs a frying pan (you could use paper plates). You need one pancake per team. You then start a relay race. The first team member must run to the other end of the class and carefully pass the pancake to the second team member without touching it or dropping it. The game continues until every team member has passed the pancake. The first team to finish wins.

Pancake Day is really what the English do instead of Carnival. There are Carnivals in Great Britain but they happen at different times of the year and for different reasons to the ones that happen in Italy in March.