

# SHROVE TUESDAY

## Shrive (From Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

### verb

\ 'shrīv , especially Southern 'srīv \ shrived or shrove\  
'shrōv , 'srōv \; shriven\ 'shri-vən , 'sri- \ or shrived;  
shriving

### Definition of *shrive*

#### transitive verb

**1 : to administer the sacrament of reconciliation to**

**2 : to free from guilt**

#### intransitive verb

**archaic : to confess one's sins especially to a priest**

**Shrove Tuesday**, the day immediately preceding Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent in Western churches). It occurs between February 2 and March 9, depending on the date of Easter.

*Shrove*, derived from *shrive*, refers to the confession of sins as a preparation for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages. Although the day is sometimes still used for self-examination and introspection, Shrove Tuesday eventually acquired the character of a carnival or festival in many places and is often celebrated with parades. As the final day before the austerity of the Lenten fast, Shrove Tuesday also has many customs pertaining to food. Pancakes are traditional in a number of European countries because eggs, sugar, and fat, commonly forbidden during the Lenten fast, are used up so they will not go to waste; the day is known as Pancake Day or Pancake Tuesday in Ireland and in many Commonwealth countries. Similarly rich pre-Lenten treats, sweet *paçzki* are traditional in Poland, and king cake is an iconic part of Mardi Gras (“Fat Tuesday”) in New Orleans.<sup>1</sup>

It started when Pope St. Gregory prohibited Christians from eating all forms of meat and animal products during Lent around A.D. 600. He told St. Augustine of Canterbury, a founder of the

Christian church in southern England, to enforce those same fasting rules in England. So Christians made pancakes to use up their supply of eggs, milk and butter in preparation for Lent.

When the tradition spread throughout Europe, people in France followed the trend. They made waffles, crepes and a dessert many know as king cake to utilize their dairy products. They called it Mardi Gras. And the English named it Pancake Day.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shrove-Tuesday>

<sup>2</sup> From <https://www.cnn.com>