

EasterEggHistory
By Adlen W. Robinson

I love dying Easter eggs---and probably will continue to do so long after my children are "over it."

The Easter egg has an interesting history---one that spans many centuries across the world. **Originally Easter eggs were painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring and were used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts. After they were colored and etched with various designs the eggs were exchanged by lovers and romantic admirers, much the same as valentines.**

In medieval time eggs were traditionally given at Easter to the servants. In Germany eggs were given to children along with other Easter gifts. Different cultures have developed their own ways of decorating Easter eggs. Crimson eggs, to honor the blood of Christ, are exchanged in Greece. In parts of Germany and Austria green eggs are used on Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday). Slavic peoples decorate their eggs in special patterns of gold and silver

Austrian artists design patterns by fastening ferns and tiny plants around the eggs, which are then boiled. The plants are then removed revealing a striking white pattern. The Poles and Ukrainians decorate eggs with simple designs and colors. A number of eggs are made in the distinctive manner called *pysanki* (to design, to write). *Pysanki* eggs are a masterpiece of skill and workmanship. Melted beeswax is applied to the fresh white egg. It is then dipped in successive baths of dye. After each dip wax is painted over the area where the preceding color is to remain. Eventually a complex pattern of lines and colors emerges into a work of art

In Germany and other countries eggs (including here in America), many people make hollow eggs by piercing the end of each egg with a needle and blowing the contents into a bowl. The hollow eggs are dyed and hung from shrubs and trees during the Easter Week. The Armenians would decorate hollow eggs with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other religious designs. My mother and I tried to

make hollow eggs one year, but it was too labor and time intensive for us. We decided to stick to dying the eggs.

Eggs also play an important part in Easter sports. The Romans celebrated the Easter season by running races on an oval track and giving eggs as prizes. Two most traditional Easter egg games are the Easter Egg Hunt and the Easter Egg Roll. The hunt is simply when children "hunt" for Easter eggs that the Easter Bunny has hidden--either inside or outside. The Easter Egg Roll is when children compete to see whose egg rolls the farthest--usually down a hill or embankment.

Different Ways to Decorate Easter Eggs

1. A Kit...When we were young PAAS was the only way to go. Now you can purchase many different kits with stickers, holders etc.

2. Make your own food color dye.

Combine 1/2 to 1 Tablespoon of food coloring with 2 tsp. vinegar in a cup that is deep enough for the eggs. Add water to about the half way point. Gently place the eggs into the cups. I use a soup spoon to place my eggs in the cups, to avoid cracking. The longer they are left in the dye, the darker the color shade. Experiment with different combinations of colors When you remove the egg from the dye, pat dry with a paper towel and place in a holder.

3. Crayon Resist

Color on the Easter eggs before placing in the dye. Simple Dots, lines shapes swirls... The wax will resist the dye and your picture will show through. If you are dying Easter eggs with little ones and do not want to use dye...The children can simply color the eggs with crayons and leave it at that.

4. Collage Eggs

Adorn your eggs with miscellaneous craft supplies,

Using white or craft glue to attach.

Items to try: sequins, buttons, glitter, or beads.
stickers or even color with markers.

The most important thing to remember is to be creative and have fun!