



EASTER THEN & NOW

Easter Brings Eggs, Bunnies And...Germans?

(NAPSA)—This March 31, it may be appropriate to wish friends and family “*Fröhliche Ostern.*” That’s because a Germanic influence is prevalent throughout many American Easter traditions. In the home and around the table, we have adopted such German customs as the Easter Bunny, egg hunts and the traditional Easter meal.

Of all the symbols associated with the holiday, the egg (which represents fertility and new life) is the most identifiable. The custom of boiling eggs and decorating them with vivid colors belongs to Germany, where Easter eggs were colored to represent the sunlight of spring. These eggs, along with other Easter gifts, were given to children as part of the festivities.

Today, most children prefer a delicious assortment of chocolates, handmade truffles, pralines or candies in their Easter baskets. Not surprisingly, Germany reigns as Europe’s top exporter of confections. For centuries, the country has served as the creative center for confectionary arts, offering delicious assortments year-round.

The Easter Bunny also seems to have its origins in Germany, where it was first mentioned in writing in the 1500s. The bunny serves as a symbol of the new life of spring and Easter because it is known to be the most fertile of animals. Children in Germany believe that if they are good, the *Osterhase* will lay a nest of colored eggs and hide them throughout their home. In the early 1800s, the first edible bunnies were made in Germany of pastry and sugar. To this day, bunnies made of the finest German chocolate or marzipan are overwhelmingly popular.

In addition, Easter trees have long been part of Germany’s Easter celebration and are some-



Many of our beloved Easter traditions are derived from German culture.

times seen in American communities. Easter trees consist of hollow eggs, which are dyed and hung from shrubs and trees throughout the week of Easter. With this colorful decoration, you can bring the spring season into your home and enjoy this beautiful tradition with your whole family.

In keeping with German culinary traditions, why not add variety to the typical Easter lamb by trying different recipes using the finest German food products. For instance, accompany your Easter dinner with a combination of robust breads, gentle cheeses, tangy pickles and flavorful mustards. What do you do with all those leftover boiled eggs? In Germany, they’ve come up with a delicious way of preparing them, in a dish called *Eier in Senfsosse* (eggs in mustard sauce)—a delicious favorite in the days following the holiday.

For traditional German holiday and other recipes, visit the Web site at www.cmanorthamerica.org or call 1-703-739-8900—and rediscover the cuisine of Germany.