

By Paul Ciampanelli Mar 29, 2013 Easter Bunny Origins

These days, Easter is primarily a religious holiday. But in the mainstream consciousness, the day still maintains very old, non-Christian customs, including the legend of the Easter Bunny, a Santa-like rabbit who delivers colored eggs, candy and other treats to well-behaved children. But where did the Easter Bunny myth come from, and does it have anything at all to do with Christian traditions? Read on to learn



all about the origins of the Easter Bunny. Aside from the aspects of the modern Easter celebration that are specifically Christian, much of the holiday is overtly dedicated to the advent of springtime and new life. Rabbits have long been symbols of fertility and rebirth because of their oft-noted capacity for reproduction. As a result, they are often seen as the animal kingdom's top The origins of secular Easter traditions can be traced back to a pre-Christian Germany in the 13th century, when people in that region still worshipped pagan deities. One of these was Eostre, aka Eostra or Ostara, a goddess of spring and fertility who was honored with feasts during the month of April. It's from her that the holiday of Easter takes



Rabbits and hares were symbols of fecundity, vitality and moon worship in pagan traditions even preceding the Teutonic goddess Eostre. The image of the moongazing

hare, for example, was a widely observed symbol in ancient times. Pagans believed that to see a moon-gazing hare was a good omen of growth, rebirth, abundance, new



Part of the modern Easter Bunny tradition is that it delivers eggs on Easter, both as gifts and as hidden prizes for children to find on Easter egg hunts. It's no wonder that rabbits and eggs should be so closely tied as Easter symbols, since both are powerful symbols of fertility and new life. The concept of a rabbit who delivers eggs on Easter The goddess Eostre has more to do with Easter than just granting the holiday its name and old pagan traditions. There's also a particular myth that may have contributed to the idea of the Easter Bunny. The story goes that one winter, Eostre encountered a bird who was starving and cold. The goddess transformed the bird into a rabbit Between Christmas trees and the Easter Bunny, we owe a lot to the German immigrants who brought their holiday traditions with them when they came to America. In the 1700s, Germans first imported the concept of Osterhase (the German name for the Easter Bunny) to Pennsylvania. The children's custom of making nests for the Easter While Easter is now primarily observed as a religious holiday and the secular customs of the Easter bunny are generally thought of as wholly separate from Christian beliefs, the histories of the religious and the secular aspects of Easter are more entwined than you may think. Early Christians celebrated Passover at this time of year.