

Harvest Festivals

Around the World



twinkl

What Is a Harvest Festival?

Harvest festivals are celebrations of the food that grows on the land.

They happen at different times of the year around the world and are held when crops are harvested.

Read on to learn how harvests are celebrated around the world.



Britain

In Britain, harvest festival is usually celebrated near the end of September.

Some people sing songs, pray and sometimes go to church.

Food is often collected in baskets to give to people in need.



Photo courtesy of fourthandfifteen (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Britain (Scotland)

In Scotland, some people celebrate a wheat harvest called Lammas.

People make bread from the first wheat harvest and take it to church to eat.



Photo courtesy of mnem (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

America and Canada

In America and Canada, harvest celebrations are called 'Thanksgiving'. Thanksgiving is in October or November.

Most people celebrate by having a family dinner with lots of different foods, like roast turkey with lots of vegetables.



Photo courtesy of mnem (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

America and Canada

They celebrate when Pilgrims (who had just arrived in America) had their first successful crop of wheat. Pilgrims and Native Americans celebrated by sharing food with one another.

Thanksgiving is a national holiday in America. Everyone gets the day off!



Italy

Italy is famous for its food. Pizza, pasta and especially olive oil. It takes a lot of time and care to grow the olives, and that means that harvest time is very special.

The local olive harvest brings many people in the community together. A priest blesses the new oil at a service in church, and many towns have delicious feasts for everyone to enjoy.



Africa

In west African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, there is a celebration called The Festival of Yams, which celebrates the yam harvest. The festival usually takes place in August.

Yams are a vegetable, similar to a sweet potato.

Many people celebrate by dancing and sharing the yams with the village.



Thailand

In Thailand, the locals of Chanthaburi celebrate the fruit harvest. They have some very interesting fruits: durians, rambutans, longans, and mangosteens.

They have competitions and art displays, and make floats from thousands of tropical fruits and vegetables.



India

In India, there are many different harvest festivals because lots of different foods grow there. The different crops are celebrated and shared, and sometimes cattle is worshipped too.

Many of the festivals are celebrated with family and friends. Food and drink are shared, new clothes worn and sometimes gifts are given.



Indonesia

In Indonesia, rice is eaten with most meals.

During the rice harvest, villages are covered with bright flags, and simple temples made of bamboo are put in the corners of the rice fields. Small dolls made from rice stalks are placed in rice stores to keep evil spirits away.



Argentina

In Argentina, when they harvest the grapes for wine, it is a very special time.

Crowds fill the streets to watch amazing parades and there are festivals with musicians, food and entertainers. Dancers take to the stage before a Harvest Queen is chosen. The queen then sets off a fantastic firework display.



Barbados

Barbados has a special name for their harvest, which is 'Crop Over'. They celebrate it in June when it is time to harvest the sugar cane.

The whole island celebrates this day with concerts, dancing and competitions to find out who the fastest cane cutter is.

In the past, they used to celebrate by decorating carts and animals in brightly coloured flowers.



China

The Harvest Moon festival is an important event in China and many people look forward to it.

Many believe that the moon is brightest at this time in the year, so it is the best time for harvest, but also friendships. People may try to see friends and family they haven't seen all year.

Families may enjoy picnics and different kinds of moon cakes. Children can enjoy brightly lit lanterns and puppet shows.



Poland

People can celebrate the harvest in Poland by lighting bonfires and throwing flowers into rivers.

Poland used to have an especially interesting tradition. At harvest time, a crown of straw was put on a village girl. The mayor of the village then put a cockerel on the crown and girl was led away from the fields by musicians. It is said that if the cockerel crowed, it was considered good luck for the year ahead.





twinkl