

April Fool's Day April 1st



The history of April Fool's Day (also known as All Fool's Day) can at best be called hazy. It obviously isn't a national holiday (or Bank Holiday as these things are called in GB) however it certainly is famous for its pranks, hoaxes and jokes.

There are many schools of thought as to where and whence its origin. Most seem to agree that it all started in 1582 (and yes, that would be here, in France) when the calendar changed (it went from the Julian to the Gregorian) and January 1st became the first day of the year. At this point, the tradition of an eight-day long celebration to bring in the New Year (from March 25th to April 1st) was terminated.

Communications being what they were at that time, news didn't travel fast, and many 'fools' went on celebrating in the old-fashioned way... Other theories put the tradition down to the weather - spring is, after all, when one begins to sow, to plant, and maybe some were foolish enough to believe that frosts were a thing of the past, and that seedlings would take, only to find that the weather was playing tricks...

Yet another addendum to the book of theories about this famous date, and according to how one interprets the story, long before 1582, Chaucer might have made mention of April 1st in his Nun's Priest's Tale (written in 1392).

Ever heard, or used the phrase, "He doesn't suffer fools gladly." It is of biblical origin (2 Corinthians 11:19)

Mark Twain had a lot to say too :

It's better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it and leave no doubt. --Mark Twain

Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed. --Mark Twain

The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year. -- Mark Twain

Depending on where you live, are all sorts of different rules apply. In England, Wales, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa, jokes are only acceptable until midday, whereas elsewhere (including the US) they last all day. In Scotland, April Fool's actually lasts 2 full days, and has a different name - Hunting the Gowk (= a cuckoo). Those who fall prey to the pranks are known as April Gowks. The 2nd day, called Taily Day is, as its name suggests devoted to pranks concerning the 'tail' or posterior area of the human body. This is obviously where the tasteful 'kick me' signs come from.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD *FOOL*

[Middle English fol, from Old French, from Late Latin follis, *windbag*, *fool*, from Latin follis, *bellows*; see bhel-² in Indo-European roots.]

Word History: The pejorative nature of the term *fool* is strengthened by knowledge of its etymology. Its source, the Latin word *follis*, meant "a bag or sack, a large inflated ball, a pair of bellows." Users of the word in Late Latin, however, saw a resemblance between the bellows or the inflated ball and a person who was what we would call "a windbag" or "an airhead." The word, which passed into English by way of French, is first recorded in English in a work written around the beginning of the 13th century with the sense "a foolish, stupid, or ignorant person."

There is no foole to the olde foole (Heywood, 1564)

Mmmmm - a gooseberry foole!

Here again, no one really knows what the exact origin of the name of this sinfully delicious dessert is. 1598 saw the first written mention, and yet some say that the origins may date back to the 15th century. It is not clear why the word *fool* is used to name this fruit dessert. It is suggested that the name is of French origin, coming from the verb *FOULER*, meaning to crush or press the fruit, as one does with grapes. However, the OED dismisses this derivation as baseless and inconsistent!



GOOSEBERRY FOOL

450g (1lb) Gooseberries
340ml (12 fl oz) Double cream*
25g (1oz) Butter
2 tbsp Sugar

This makes a rather rich dessert BUT you can make it lighter by using either a very thick fromage blanc, or even yoghurt. If you whip plain yoghurt, it will thicken as does cream, and can be used as a great substitute - or you can go half and half!



Any soft fruit, or berry can be very successfully and deliciously used to make a fool!

Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the gooseberries and sugar.

Cover the saucepan and cook at low heat until the gooseberries are soft and mushy (about 30 mins).

Beat the fruit to a pulp with a wooden spoon, or whizz it in a food processor.

Pass the pulp through a sieve, to get rid of the skins and pips.

Taste the gooseberries and if too tart add more sugar.

Let the fruit pulp cool.

Whip the cream and gently fold into the gooseberry pulp.

Divide equally into small glasses.

Chill for at least one hour before serving.

Gooseberry bushes grow amazingly well and don't actually need much attention. But careful - there are several sorts and some of them have quite ferocious prickles!

In French, they are named *Groseilles à maquereaux* because they were often served with mackerel so as to lessen the oily taste!

Guess why they are called **GOOSE**berries in English!!!