

Bolludagur – Bun day



This day of pastries is celebrated on the Monday before Ash Wednesday. In Iceland, we celebrate it by eating a lot of pastry buns, filled with cream and jam, and topped with chocolate icing. An old tradition is that children either get, or make their own “bolluvöndur”, a wooden stick with paper decoration on one end, which they use to spank their parents and demand buns by shouting: “bolla, bolla, bolla”.

The tradition itself is a relatively new arrival in Iceland – the first mention of bolludagur in print dates back only to 1915 – but it stems from a much older Scandinavian tradition called *fastelavn*.

Sprengidagur – Explosion day

The reason for the name is that many Icelanders eat a soup made of salted meat and lentil beans and eat it until they metaphorically explode. Other ingredients of the soup are rutabaga, potatoes, carrots and whatever other vegetables you want to add.

Another reason for the day is that it is the last day before Lent. Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday, and the institutional religious purpose of it is to heighten the annual commemoration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For most Icelanders, the day is not religious in nature.



Öskudagur – Ash Wednesday



The first day of Lent is celebrated with children getting the day off at school, they dress up in costumes and go from shop to shop to sing for treats. The name of the day comes from the custom of scattering ashes of blessed palm leaves over the heads of repenting churchgoers. A custom that has mostly died out in Iceland is the öskupoki, or ashbag, which was made from fabric scraps and children, and sometimes adults hung on unsuspecting strangers. The point was to get as many bags on a person as you could without them noticing. For the prank to be considered valid, the person on whom you hung your bag would have to walk through three doorways. Originally, the bag or pouch had a little bit of ash in it or maybe a small rock. This is a custom not found in other countries, and it is a bit of a mystery from where it originated from.

Heimildir: <https://www.re.is/blog/bolludagur-sprengidagur-and-oskudagur/> <https://grapevine.is>



Þorri – an old name of a month

In the old Christian calendar, the names of the calendar months differed from what we know today. **Þorri** was the name of the month beginning in the 13th week of Winter (19. –25. of January). Þorri always starts on Friday which is called **Bóndadagur / Mens Day** (but **bóndi** means a farmer or a husband). During the month of Þorri, it is a tradition to eat certain Icelandic food in a festival, called **Þorrablót**. This special food includes smoked lamb, specially-treated shark, dried fish and pickled food.



Góa

The next month was called **Góa**, which started in the 18th week of Winter, always on Sunday (21. –27. of February). The first day in Góa is called **Konudagur /Woman’s Day**. Then it is very common for husbands to buy flowers for their wives, sons give their mother flowers, and boyfriends their girlfriends.



When both the months, Þorri and Góa have passed, we who live in Iceland allow ourselves to begin to think about better weather and sunny days of the spring, which is just around the corner.

Sumardagurinn fyrsti – The first day of Summer

In our optimism, we also celebrate the first day of summer, **sumardagurinn fyrsti**, which always is around the 21st – 23rd of April – often in cold weather and even snow! But fortunately, sometimes, we can celebrate in sonny weather and some plus degrees!
The first day of summer is always on Thursday.

