

# Games

## Rolling Easter Eggs



The traditional Easter fare of Russian Orthodox Christians is *kulich* (Easter cake), *pascha* (a sweet cream-cheese dish) and painted Easter eggs.

Presenting people with Easter eggs, accompanied by three kisses and the traditional Russian congratulation *Khristos voskresye* (Christ Has Risen), begins during the Easter service, at the moment of the singing of the special troparion hymn.

The custom of painting Easter eggs dates from the first century BC. A popular Easter amusement was to then roll the eggs, beginning on Easter Sunday and often continuing throughout the whole of Easter week. Eggs were rolled down a hillock or a special chute. Only when the egg hit an object lying on the ground, could its owner claim the egg for himself. The winner was the person whose egg rolled the furthest.

Often the entire village would turn out to watch the rolling of the eggs.

The custom is in fact linked to a pagan belief in the power of magic. The egg symbolized the birth of new life on earth and its contact with the earth was supposed to awaken and fertilize the earth after winter.

Taken from *Play and Passion* published in 1999 by Palace Editions from the State Russian Museum