



SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

After the death of winter Saint Patrick's Day is a welcome sign of spring. A day for a wearer of the green for Irish and non-Irish alike. It's a celebration of the emerald isle's patron saint trying to separate the fact from the blarney.

The story of Saint Patrick's Day goes back to fifth century Britain, where a sixteen-year-old boy Maewyn Succat was kidnapped by Irish marauders. He remained a shepherd's slave in Ireland for six years until a vision directed him to escape. Back home in Britain Succat had another vision beckoning him to help the people of Ireland. So he took his vows as a priest, adopted the Christian name Patrick and in 432 A.D. returned to Ireland on a mission. In his autobiography, 'The Confessio', Patrick wrote about converting the Irish to Christianity while building schools and monasteries along Ireland's north and west coast. One popular myth has Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland; the truth is there were never snakes on the island. This is probably a metaphor for Patrick cleansing the island of paganism. Another myth has Patrick using the shamrock to teach the Holy Trinity. This legend is possible but Patrick never wrote about it. So why does the holiday fall on March 17th? Supposedly it's the day Patrick died in 461 A.D. Since then Irish Christians have marked the anniversary as a holiday. Beginning in the Middle Ages Irish Catholics would close shop and attend church to honour the feast of Saint Patrick and it was time to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day falls within Lent, the season before Easter when Catholics give up their vices as penance. The feast of Saint Patrick was a one-day reprieve when Irishmen could down a pint or two of ale. This custom really took off. The first Saint Patrick's Day in colonial America occurred in Boston 1737 with a parade organized by the Charitable Irish Society. New York City followed in 1762. Today New York's Fifth Avenue parade is America's most famous, largest and rowdiest Saint Patrick's Day traditions. During the 1840s, when Ireland was starving from the potato famine, millions were forced to leave. The mass migration sent Irish to Canada, Australia and America. As the Irish settled in their new countries they brought along old customs and invented a few more. In the United States it became customary to wear green on Saint Patrick's Day. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the smell of corned beef wafted from Irish-American neighbourhoods. The traditional Irish meal was boiled bacon and potatoes but in the States immigrants would find a cheap piece of beef, tenderize it with brine and slow-cook it with cabbage. The dish remains a delicious Paddy's Day tradition. As the Irish in America gained influence in politics and culture their exclusive celebration became a nationally recognized celebration. And it all began over 15 hundred years ago when a boy was torn from his family. Little did he know that his life would inspire parades, fashion and yes the hoisting of a few pints to toast this special day

Comentario [i1]: Deceptive nonsense.

Comentario [i2]: someone who attacks in search of booty. A kind of pirate.

Comentario [i3]: To call with a wave, a nod or other gesture.

Comentario [i4]: An earnest promise to perform a specified act or behave in a certain manner, especially a solemn promise to live and act in accordance with the rules of a religious order:

Comentario [i5]: To cleanse: to remove dirt from

Comentario [i6]: Any of several plants, such as a clover or wood sorrel, having compound leaves with three small leaflets, considered the national emblem of Ireland.

Comentario [i7]: The 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday until Easter observed by Christians as a season of fasting and penitence in preparation for Easter.

Comentario [i8]: Temporary relief, as from danger or pain.

Comentario [i9]: Beer

Comentario [i10]: Rowdy: Disorderly; rough

Comentario [i11]: A drastic, wide-reaching food shortage.

Comentario [i12]: To send floating through the air or over water.

Comentario [i13]: Make tender

Comentario [i14]: Salt water used for preserving and pickling foods.

Comentario [i15]: To raise

Comentario [i16]: To raise a glass and drinking in honor of or to the health of a person or thing.