



EUROPEAN NETWORK OF HOLY WEEK
AND EASTER CELEBRATIONS
RED EUROPEA DE CELEBRACIONES
DE SEMANA SANTA Y PASCUA

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER IN EUROPE

A Network of Living Traditions



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GUARDIANS OF A HERITAGE THAT IS RENEWED EVERY YEAR

Every spring, Europe revives one of its greatest cultural and religious events.

In cities and towns across the continent, millions of people come together to celebrate a tradition that manifests itself uniquely in each locality.

This is the essence of the European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations.

Different ways of experiencing the same tradition passed down through the centuries.

Welcome to Holy Week and Easter celebrations!

THE ROUTE OF THE HOLY WEEK AND EASTER IN EUROPE: A JOURNEY THROUGH CENTURIES-OLD RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations is a cultural itinerary that invites you to discover religious festivities, many of them with roots in ancestral rites and centuries-old traditions. Its legacy, constantly evolving over time, is kept alive thanks to local communities, who have been the bearers and guardians of these cultural expressions throughout the centuries.

This themed route was created in 2019 with the aim of joining forces in the conservation and dissemination of this valuable tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This is a journey through centuries-old rituals and customs, visiting authentic places where unique elements have been preserved, keeping alive the involvement of committed groups and safeguarding, over time, a rich cultural legacy surrounding these celebrations.

LOCALITIES THAT HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR TRADITIONS OVER THE YEARS





SLOVENIA

1

Skofja Loka

SERBIA

1

Loznica

CROATIA

2

Jelsa
Korcula

ITALY

4

Palermo
Caltanissetta
Enna
Licodia Eubea

MALTA

13

Birgu
Southern Regional

LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER IN EUROPE: RITUALS AND SHARED HERITAGE



Holy Week and Easter celebrations are deeply rooted in European cultural identity and constitute a shared legacy that transcends borders. The European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations invites you to discover a living cultural itinerary, where each community contributes its uniqueness through heritage, social, and cultural elements linked to these celebrations passed down from generation to generation. A series of religious and popular festivities that are unique to each region. This journey not only reveals the richness and diversity of European heritage, but also highlights what unites us: the ability to keep our roots and traditions alive over time.

LENT

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Lent, beyond its liturgical meaning, becomes a period of intense cultural and devotional activity that highlights the deep foundations of Holy Week and Easter traditions in the towns of the European Network. For forty days, devotion translates into a wide and diverse program involving institutions, associations, and neighbors. The agenda includes liturgical ceremonies, musical recitals, exhibitions of sacred art, as well as events in museums and cultural spaces. There are also gastronomic gatherings and exhibitions featuring recipes typical of this time of the year, prepared without meat, that convey the culinary heritage of this tradition. All these expressions, whether cultural, religious, or popular, offer visitors the opportunity to delve into the living essence of local communities.

Special mention should be made of Orthodox Lent, known as Great Lent or Great Fast, a time of deep spiritual reflection and preparation for Easter. During this period, sacred songs, prayers, worship services, and preparatory masses take center stage, accompanied by rigorous fasting that marks the daily life of the faithful. This practice, which involves abstinence, symbolizes the purification of the body and spirit. In this way, Great Lent is not only a ceremonial journey, but also a cultural and communal one, where spirituality is expressed through music, prayer, and shared traditions.



HOLY WEEK

Holy Week is one of the most deeply rooted cultural and religious expressions in Europe. Although its roots are shared, each territory experiences it with its own identity, a reflection of its history, its people, and its way of understanding tradition. Solemn processions, rituals, liturgical ceremonies, popular demonstrations, music, art, gastronomy, and crafts intertwine to shape a ritual where the spiritual and the cultural coexist in harmony. This diversity, combined with a deep sense of belonging, makes European Holy Week a living, shared heritage that is constantly evolving. Through the European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations, this legacy is preserved, enriched, and projected to the world as one of the great hallmarks of our communities.



EASTER

Easter, in both Catholic and Jewish traditions, represents a conclusion: a time of light, hope, and joy that is experienced with the same intensity as the days of Passion in many European towns. Processions, religious ceremonies, symbolic rituals, popular festivals, and cultural expressions make up a period that heralds renewal and reinforces communal spirit. In the towns that belong to the European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations, Easter is expressed through unique rites that reflect local character: from popular performances and blessings in the countryside to festive gatherings laden with meaning. These manifestations, the result of centuries of history, belong to a shared heritage that remains alive thanks to the active participation of communities.

Orthodox Easter is one of the major holidays in the religious calendar, it is full of spiritual symbolism and moments of family and community gathering. After Great Lent, it commemorates the victory of life over death. Among its most significant traditions is the exchange of Easter eggs, usually dyed red, symbolizing life and resurrection. Added to this are the festive banquets that break the fast, along with songs and prayers that reinforce the sense of renewal and shared hope.



**A LEGACY WITH ITS OWN IDENTITY:
A SHARED HERITAGE THAT SETS US APART
AND BRINGS US TOGETHER**



Holy Week and Easter in Europe are much more than religious merriment: they constitute a cultural legacy that manifests itself in multiple dimensions and remains alive throughout the year. In the towns that make up the European Network, local communities keep these traditions alive passing them on from generation to generation.

Youth participation in processions and worship services, the rich cuisine steeped in symbolism, the continuity of traditional crafts, the power of traditional music and the work of museums and exhibition centers define a mosaic that links the past and the present.

To know these expressions is to delve into a diverse common heritage that reflects the shared identity of the European peoples and the enduring relevance of one of its most unique cultural representations.

CHILDREN'S TRADITIONS

Children and young people play a key role in the traditions of the towns of the European Network. They participate in processions, worship services, and activities throughout the year, joining associations, brotherhoods, and confraternities. Children's Processions stand out among its celebrations, since they ensure the transmission of these traditions to new generations. Some are newly created, others have decades of history, but they all reflect the commitment of local communities to keep this legacy alive. To know them is to discover an intimate and essential dimension of Holy Week and Easter.



CULINARY TRADITIONS

Gastronomy is an essential element of Holy Week and Easter in the European Network's towns. During these festivities, homes and restaurants revive traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation that also define the gastronomic landscape of each locality. The European Network has compiled many of them in a recipe book that includes typical dishes and desserts that preserve the flavors and aromas of the past. A cuisine steeped in symbolism that heralds, each year, the arrival of a lively and shared celebration.



CRAFTS AND SACRED ART

Traditions of Holy Week and Easter are deeply linked to the artistic and artisanal creation of each region. Crafts such as sculpture, embroidery, goldsmithing, and musical instrument making have generated, throughout the centuries, a valuable material heritage that defines the identity of these celebrations and that continues growing with the addition of contemporary pieces. The European Network has produced a guide that highlights artisan workshops that, heirs to that ancestral knowledge, are still active today, becoming essential to the preservation and evolution of this cultural legacy throughout Europe.



TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Traditional music is one of the most emblematic and emotional elements of Holy Week and Easter in Europe. Liturgical chants, processional marches, drumbeats, bugles, and bells accompany and give meaning to the rituals, reinforcing the spiritual and symbolic nature of each celebration. Shared across generations, this music is part of the cultural heritage of many communities, adapting to local styles and enriching the identity of each territory where ancient scores, still performed today, are combined with works by contemporary composers.



MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITION SPACES

The European Network of Holy Week and Easter Celebrations includes museums and interpretation centers dedicated to permanently showcasing the richness of this tradition. These spaces not only preserve and promote cultural heritage, but also keep Holy Week alive throughout the year, becoming tourist attractions that draw thousands of visitors as living witnesses to the history, identity, and culture of our towns. Many of them participate in the European Network initiative called “Featured Piece” that showcases objects of greater historical and heritage value.





PLACES THAT KEEP THE ESSENCE OF A UNIQUE CUSTOM ALIVE



Resulting from centuries of history, faith, and collective special, each town in the European Network brings its own unique touch to Holy Week and Easter. The celebrations are very diverse: from solemn processions or children's traditions that ensure continuity, to gastronomic recipes laden with symbolism, unique curiosities or enduring crafts linked to religious art. This variety of nuances makes of each municipality a singular setting where tradition intertwines with everyday life, showing visitors a living heritage that combines the local with the universal.



TRAVELLING THROUGH THE NETWORK

**CELEBRATE, SHARE, AND PRESERVE:
THE ACTIVITIES THAT BRING THE EUROPEAN
NETWORK TO LIFE**



Preserving, sharing, disseminating, and promoting the cultural heritage associated with Holy Week and Easter are some of the main objectives of the European Network. To this end, it focuses its activities on culture, sustainable tourism, education, art, traditions, gastronomy, heritage, crafts, and religiosity as elements of shared legacy.

Below, we detail some of the activities that are planned:

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE



Every two years, the European Network organizes the European Holy Week Congress, a space to reflect on the European dimension of these celebrations. The Conference, held in a different country each year, brings together European experts in various disciplines, promoting the exchange of knowledge about a living heritage that continues to arouse interest among the faithful, scholars, and visitors throughout Europe.

MEETING OF CONFRATERNITIES AND BROTHERHOODS



The European Meeting of Confraternities and Brotherhoods, that takes place every two years, is a space for dialogue among civil associations working for the preservation and organization of celebrations where they can share experiences, reflect on the present, and plan for the future of our traditions from a collaborative and sustainable perspective. The event, which is free and held online, includes round tables with the participation of members of religious brotherhoods, experts, and specialists in the field of culture and heritage.

DAYS OF THE NETWORK



The Days of the Network are a perfect opportunity to discover the immense cultural heritage that forms part of the past and present of our history, with an eye on a future where traditions are kept alive. Throughout October, locations across Europe offer tours, workshops, exhibitions, shows, and other activities to showcase the richness of Holy Week and Easter beyond their liturgical season.

MUSEUM'S FEATURED PIECES



The museums in the European Network preserve and promote the artistic heritage of Holy Week throughout the year. The "Featured Museum Piece" initiative highlights unique works such as sculptures, embroidery or gold and silverwork, showcasing the richness and relevance of these customs as a cultural and tourist attraction.

SCHOOL VISITS



Several museums in the European Network offer educational guides for children aged 3 to 12, with the aim of introducing them, in an entertaining way, to the traditions of Holy Week and Easter in Europe.

HOLY WEEK PHOTO CONTEST



Every year, the European Network organizes an Instagram Photo Contest inspired by Holy Week, with the aim of encouraging participants to capture and share, through images, the details, traditions, and emotions of this celebration in the municipalities of the Network.









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*Discover Europe through its
Most Vibrant Traditions*



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