

Happy Waffle Day! And other holidays named after food

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Today is Waffle Day in Sweden, and the reason why today of all days is Waffle Day I find quite amusing. March 25th is the Feast of The Annunciation according to the Catholic Church calendar, the day on which the archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive a child, the Son of God. Why March 25th? The date was arrived at by the following highly scientific calculation:

1. Everybody knows that Jesus was born on Christmas Day, December 25th.
2. Everybody also knows that pregnancy lasts nine months.
3. Nine months before Christmas is March 25th.

Ipsa facto, habeas corpus delicti, we have determined the date of the Annunciation to be March 25th via incontrovertible logic. In England, the holiday is known as *Lady Day*, a name which is echoed Sweden, where the holiday goes by the name *Our Lady's Day: Vårfrudagen*. Now, if you say *Vårfrudagen* really fast and mumble it, somebody with bad hearing might misinterpret what you said as *Vaffeldagen*, which means *Waffle Day*. Now, Waffle Day is not to be confused with *Pancake Day*, a British holiday which coincides with Shrove Tuesday, the day before the beginning of Lent. Unlike Waffle Day, which is based on a pun, Pancake Day had a practical origin: In olden days, consumption of dairy products was prohibited during Lent, and pancakes were a convenient way to use up your leftover eggs, butter, and milk all at one go. (That is, on years when it isn't cancelled.) And this year, a Polish colleague taught me about *Pączki Day*, a holiday that takes place on the Thursday before Lent and is apparently celebrated by “eating as many pączki as possible.” Pączki are pastries that resemble a jelly-filled doughnut, and the holiday served the same practical purpose as Pancake Day in England.

What food-based holidays exist in your country? Here are a few more to get you started:

- Greece: *Τσικνοπέμπτη* (*Tsiknopempti* = Barbecue Thursday). Eat lots of barbecued meat on the Thursday before Lent.
- East Asia: 中秋節 (中秋节, *zhōngqiūjié* = Mid-Autumn Festival, a.k.a. the Mooncake Festival). Eat moon cakes in late September. The traditional filling is lotus seed paste, but for some reason I imprinted on red bean paste.

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