

Origins of the April Fool's Day tradition

April 1st, April Fool's Day, sometimes called All Fools' Day, is one of the most light-hearted days of the year. Its origins are uncertain. Some see it as a celebration related to the turn of the seasons, while others believe it stems from the adoption of a new calendar.

It is worth noting that many different cultures have had days of foolishness around the start of April, give or take a couple of weeks. The Romans had a festival named Hilaria on March 25, rejoicing in the resurrection of Attis. The Hindu calendar has Holi, and the Jewish calendar has Purim. Perhaps there's something about the time of year, with its turn from winter to spring, that lends itself to lighthearted celebrations.

April Fools' Day is observed throughout the Western world. Practices include sending someone on a 'fool's errand,' looking for things that don't exist, playing pranks; and trying to get people to believe ridiculous things. Most of us get caught in an April Fool's joke. It's all part of the tradition and fun.

By Linda Gerow