

St. Patrick's Day



St. Patrick's Day, feast day (March 17) of St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland. Born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century, he was kidnapped at the age of 16 and taken to Ireland as a slave. He escaped but returned about 432 CE to convert the Irish to Christianity. By the time of his death on March 17, 461, he had established monasteries, churches, and schools. Many legends grew up around him—for example, that he drove the snakes out of Ireland and used the shamrock to explain the Trinity. Ireland came to celebrate his day with religious services and feasts.



St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.



It was emigrants, particularly to the United States, who transformed St. Patrick's Day into a largely secular holiday of revelry and celebration of things Irish. Cities with large numbers of Irish immigrants, staged the most extensive celebrations, which included elaborate parades. Boston held its first St. Patrick's Day parade in 1737, followed by New York City in 1762. Since 1962 Chicago has coloured its river green to mark the holiday. Irish and non-Irish alike commonly participate in the "wearing of the green"—sporting an item of green clothing or a shamrock, the Irish national plant, in the lapel.



St. Patrick's Parade, Dublin



St. Patrick's Parade, Chicago



Irish Blessings

May your pockets 



be heavy and your

heart be light. May
good luck pursue you



each day &

night

