

THE WHITE HOUSE
The Visitors Office

History:

- 1) This will be the 134th year since the first White House Easter Egg Roll.
- 2) The Easter Egg Roll is the largest public event at the White House.
- 3) Easter Egg Roll is a White House tradition dating back to 1878 and President Rutherford B. Hayes, but there are records of informal egg rolling events as early as President Abraham Lincoln's administration.
- 4) Beginning in the 1870s, Washingtonians from all social levels celebrated Easter Monday on the west grounds of the U.S. Capitol. Children rolled brilliantly dyed hard-boiled eggs down the terraced lawn. Soon a concern for the landscape led to a bill that banned the rolling of eggs on Capitol grounds. In 1876, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the bill into law.
- 5) In 1878, Easter Monday celebrants who were not allowed to roll eggs on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol headed up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. The children knew about the low hills on the South Lawn, and hoped their egg rolling games would be permitted there. President Rutherford B. Hayes instructed his guards to let the youngsters through the gates.
- 6) By 1899, the White House Easter Egg Roll had become quite popular, with over 8,000 people in attendance.
- 7) The Easter Egg Roll did not take place from 1917 to 1920 during World War I because of rationing, as well as 1943 to 1945 during World War II. In 1942, egg rollers were sent back to the Capitol grounds, the very place from which they had been ousted 64 years before.
- 8) President Harry Truman did not host an egg roll. During 1946 and 1947 food conservation efforts caused him to reluctantly cancel the affair. Then from 1948 through 1952, his renovation of the White House made the South Lawn a construction zone.
- 9) President Dwight D. Eisenhower revived the tradition after its twelve-year hiatus.
- 10) President Nixon was the first to include the White House Easter Bunny in the festivities.
- 11) First Lady Grace Coolidge was known for her love of pets, but none were more famous than her pet raccoon, Rebecca, which made an appearance at the White House Easter Egg Roll in the 1920's.

- 12) In 1889, he had the United States Marine Band, known as “The President’s Own,” play lively tunes while the children romped on the South Lawn. John Philip Sousa, who directed the band, took delight in treating the egg roll guests to rousing marches. Sousa honored the occasion in his 1929 composition “Easter Monday on the White House Lawn.” U.S. Marine Band concerts were always a highlight of the event, and they continue to provide egg roll celebrants with music to make this day even more special.
- 13) On Easter Monday, 1885, young egg rollers marched into the East Room, hoping for a personal audience with President Grover Cleveland.
- 14) In 1981, President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan hosted a hunt for wooden eggs that bore the signatures of famous people. Wooden eggs soon became the official White House egg roll keepsakes.

Ticketing:

- 15) Over 35,000 total tickets have been given out for 2012 Easter Egg Roll.

Eggs:

- 16) The eggs are available in four fun colors – purple, blue, orange, and green – and include the stamped signatures of the President and First Lady.
- 17) For the first time, there is an additional red egg stamped with BO’s paw print.
- 18) All eggs once again were crafted in the United States from Forest Stewardship Council-certified hardwood.
- 19) 14,500 hard-boiled and dyed eggs are used between the egg roll and the egg hunt, and an additional 4,500 hard-boiled eggs will be provided for the Egg Dying station on the South Lawn.
- 20) The White House also has “chirping eggs” for visually impaired visitors during the Egg Hunt.
- 21) The Official Souvenir Wooden Egg is given to all children at the event age 13 and younger.
- 22) The National Park Foundation produces and sells the White House Easter Eggs.

Easter Egg Packaging:

- 23) Made from Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) – certified paperboard
- 24) SFI® paperboard uses **no wood fibers from controversial sources** such as illegal logging and fiber sourced from areas without effective social laws.

- 25) The printed carton is **easily recyclable** when collected and processed in a municipal or community Paperboard Recycling Program.
- 26) Features **vegetable oil-based inks** and a **water-based** coating.
- 27) The packaging has also been designed to minimize waste and environmental impact, helping to create a 'greener' Easter egg and Easter egg packaging.

Activities:

- 28) The activities are centered on the theme "Let's Go, Let's Play, Let's Move", encouraging healthy and active living in coordination with the First Lady's "Let's Move" initiative. Some of the activities include:
- 29) Professional athletes associated with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition in the Sport's Zone will teach children to catch and throw, as well as coaching them through an obstacle course to test their new skills!
- 30) Family Farmer's Market, a look at healthy eating with celebrity chef demo stations
- 31) Hop To It! - a non-stop dance party at the White House complete with hula hoops and dance workshops.
- 32) The White House Easter Egg classics will also be back this year. These activities include the Egg Hunt, the Storytime Stage and, of course, where all the fun begins, the Egg Roll.

Poster Contest:

- 33) The White House held a poster competition and invited elementary and middle school students nationwide to submit poster designs for the 2012 Easter Egg Roll. Students from over 20 states submitted entries. First Lady Michelle Obama selected winning designs for the 2012 Official Easter Egg Roll program cover and 2012 Official Easter Egg Roll Poster. Posters will be handed out as a prize to children who win the Easter Egg Roll or Egg Hunt.

2012 Easter Egg Roll Program Cover Artwork



The program cover artwork was created by Breonna Bailey, a 7th grader from Macfarland Middle School in Washington DC. Breonna is 13 years old, and her favorite subject is reading. Her favorite book is *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney.

2012 Easter Egg Roll Poster Artwork



Reed Preston Lindsey, a nine-year-old attending Anderson Elementary in Booneville, Mississippi, was the co-winner of the contest. His artwork was chosen as the 2012 Official Easter Egg Roll Poster. Reed won first place in the Mississippi Public Broadcasting writing contest two years in a row for writing and illustrating *Roscoe Wants a Red Feather* and *Troy's Next Stop.....Mars!* respectively.

Ceremony:

- 34) The First Lady is the official host of the White House Easter Egg Roll.
- 35) The event cannot officially be called the "White House Easter Egg Roll" until the opening ceremony and the Easter Egg Bunny makes an appearance.

Volunteers:

- 36) The White House Easter Egg Roll is made possible by the hard work of over 1200 volunteers.

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