

# The Legend of the Easter Bunny

All around the world, bunnies are special because they stand for the coming of Spring, hope and new life. The winters are long and dark, and the warm sun tells us that it's time for babies of all kinds to be born, including bunnies!

But bunnies don't lay eggs, so why do they deliver them on Easter Sunday?

## Before The Bunny

The Legend of the Easter Bunny has a lot to do with the movement of the Earth. Before we can celebrate Easter and hunt for Easter eggs, we have to have the **vernal equinox** (vernal means "Spring" and equinox means "equal night"). The vernal equinox happens on one day in March each year, and on this day there is an equal amount of daylight and darkness. And on this day each year, Spring officially begins!

The second step before the Easter Bunny can do his job is that there must be a full moon. The first Sunday after this full moon is Easter!

## Why Eggs?

Chickens lay eggs, not bunnies. So how did they get the job of hiding eggs each Easter?

The answer comes from a different legend that involves the goddess Ostara (also known as Eastre or Eostre). People centuries ago believed that Ostara brought the Spring. One year she was late, and she found a poor bird whose wings had frozen in the snow. Ostara felt bad about this, so she saved the bird but he could no longer fly. Ostara decided to turn the bird into a rabbit who could run very fast. In order to remember that he used to be a bird, Ostara gave this rabbit the ability to lay eggs of all different colors on one day a year, which for us is the day we celebrate Easter.

## How Do They Do It?

If you've ever seen a bunny, it's easy to wonder how the Easter bunny lays and then delivers all of those eggs. In America, the Cottontail Bunny is the one who hides the eggs for us to find. The bunnies are nocturnal, which means they are awake and active at night. They have large eyes and ears to help them travel in the dark, sneaking into your backyard to hide brightly colored eggs.

But why do they do it? Bunnies hide themselves easily, and are able to see the joy of kids who are searching and filling their Easter baskets with eggs. Plus, the grass and leaves in our backyards make a yummy snack for these hungry and busy bunnies!

Resources:

History of the Easter Bunny (<http://www.professorshouse.com/family/holidays/history-easter-bunny.aspx>)

The Easter Bunny (<http://bunnyhollow.org/bunneyeastermoon/bunneyeastermoon.html>)

Hopping Down the Bunny Trail (<http://enature.com/articles/detail.asp?storyID=563>)