St. Patrick’s Day Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. On what date is St. Patrick’s Day observed in Ireland?
   - A. March 17
   - B. March 7
   - C. March 21
   - D. April 17

   Correct answer: A. March 17
   The feast of St. Patrick falls on March 17. Ireland marks it as a national public holiday.

2. Which plant is traditionally worn as a small sprig on St. Patrick’s Day?
   - A. Heather
   - B. Rosemary
   - C. Shamrock
   - D. Ivy

   Correct answer: C. Shamrock
   A sprig of shamrock is traditionally worn on the day. The plant became one of the best-known symbols associated with Patrick.

3. In a popular story about St. Patrick, which animals did he drive out of Ireland?
   - A. Wolves
   - B. Snakes
   - C. Foxes
   - D. Owls

   Correct answer: B. Snakes
   The story of Patrick banishing snakes is part of the folklore about him. The snake has become a familiar image at the festival.

4. Which river is famously turned green during the St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in downtown Chicago?
   - A. The Milwaukee River
   - B. The Illinois River
   - C. The Mississippi River
   - D. The Chicago River

   Correct answer: D. The Chicago River
   The city’s downtown festivities include coloring a stretch of the Chicago River green. The practice joined the local celebration in 1962.

5. What holiday is called ‘Lá Fhéile Pádraig’ in Irish?

A. St. Brigid’s Day
B. St. Patrick’s Day
C. All Saints’ Day
D. All Souls’ Day

Correct answer: B. St. Patrick’s Day
Lá Fhéile Pádraig means St. Patrick’s Day. Pádraig is the Irish form of Patrick.

6. In his Confession, about how old did Patrick say he was when he was taken captive and brought to Ireland?

A. 16
B. 8
C. 25
D. 40

Correct answer: A. 16
Patrick’s account places him at about sixteen when he was taken captive. The Confession is one of the surviving writings attributed to Patrick himself.

7. Galway City Museum describes the decorated crosses children wore on St. Patrick’s Day in the 1800s. Which description matches a typical badge?

A. A carved wooden harp worn on a belt
B. A miniature cast-iron bell attached to a shoe
C. A tile painted with a map and sewn into a coat lining
D. A cross on a base of card, decorated with colored paper or ribbon

Correct answer: D. A cross on a base of card, decorated with colored paper or ribbon
The badges often had a paper or card base, a cross in the center, and decorations such as ribbons or bows. Children wore them as part of the observance.

8. In 2023, An Post issued St. Patrick’s Day stamps showing a lion motif from an illustrated medieval manuscript. Which manuscript supplied the design?

A. The Book of Armagh
B. The Book of Durrow
C. The Book of Kells
D. The Lindisfarne Gospels

Correct answer: C. The Book of Kells
Ireland’s postal service took the lion motif from the Book of Kells. It issued one design for national mail and another for international mail.

9. Under the Bank Holiday (Ireland) Act of 1903, when was the bank holiday to be observed if March 17 fell on a Sunday?

A. The following Monday
B. The preceding Saturday
C. The following Friday
D. The next Sunday

Correct answer: A. The following Monday
The 1903 law extended the bank holiday to March 17 or to the next day when the date fell on Sunday. The next day in that case was Monday.

10. Croagh Patrick in County Mayo is the site of a traditional pilgrimage called Reek Sunday. In which month does the main annual pilgrimage traditionally take place?

A. September
B. March
C. May
D. July

Correct answer: D. July
The main Reek Sunday pilgrimage traditionally takes place on the last Sunday in July. It is a separate observance linked to St. Patrick and to the mountain that bears his name.

11. A curator finds George Washington’s March 16, 1780, order for the next day at his winter camp. Which change in camp routine can the order itself support?

A. Washington declared St. Patrick’s Day a federal holiday for the whole country.
B. Washington scheduled the usual work parties for an extra shift.
C. Washington directed routine work parties to stop for St. Patrick’s Day.
D. Washington changed the observance to the following week.

Correct answer: C. Washington directed routine work parties to stop for St. Patrick’s Day.
The order directed that routine work parties stop for March 17. It documents an observance at Washington’s winter camp in Morristown, New Jersey.

12. Adriaen Collaert’s 1603 engraving places episodes from Patrick’s life around a central figure of the saint. Which claim can that print support most directly?

A. The artist witnessed the events and drew them as they happened.
B. An artist in 1603 presented the saint through several stories in one picture.
C. Patrick dictated the engraving’s captions during his lifetime.
D. Every scene in the print came from Patrick’s account of his life.

Correct answer: B. An artist in 1603 presented the saint through several stories in one picture.
The print dates to 1603, long after Patrick’s lifetime. It documents how the artist presented several stories together in one image.

13. An exhibit says St. Patrick’s Day observances in what is now the United States began in the 1700s. Spanish colonial records from around 1600 describe a public observance of San Patricio in St. Augustine. How do those records affect the exhibit’s claim?

A. The records establish the year when the feast was first celebrated in Ireland.
B. St. Augustine celebrated the feast annually without interruption from then onward.
C. The holiday reached St. Augustine from a nineteenth-century New York parade.
D. They document an observance in what is now the United States before the 1700s.

Correct answer: D. They document an observance in what is now the United States before the 1700s.
San Patricio is Spanish for St. Patrick. The records show that the community in St. Augustine had an early observance in what is now Florida.

14. Traveler Thomas Dinely described shamrock wearing in Ireland in 1681. Which statement is directly supported by his account?

A. Shamrock wearing was part of the holiday for some people by 1681.
B. Patrick himself taught with a shamrock during his lifetime.
C. People across Ireland began wearing shamrock for the first time in 1681.
D. Everyone who observed the day wore shamrock in 1681.

Correct answer: A. Shamrock wearing was part of the holiday for some people by 1681.
Dinely’s description is evidence that some people wore shamrock in his own time. The National Museum treats the story of Patrick teaching with the plant as a later belief.

15. The National Museum of Ireland dates a bell traditionally linked to Patrick to the eighth or ninth century. An inscription dates its protective shrine to about 1100. Which conclusion fits the evidence?

A. The shrine was made before the bell it now encloses.
B. The inscription dates the bell and shrine to the same year.
C. The bell is older than the shrine made to house it.
D. The inscription records the date Patrick began using the bell.

Correct answer: C. The bell is older than the shrine made to house it.
The museum treats the bell and its decorated shrine as objects from different periods. The inscription helps date the later shrine, while the link to Patrick is traditional.